

the Opposition; and if we were not in Opposition and they were, we should perhaps put the matter to rights. Then again, it is felt pretty strongly on this side of the House that the prosecutions during the timber trouble were largely influenced by the Government. And when that is rightly or wrongly our belief, how is it possible for us to work hand-in-hand with Ministers? So many little things of this sort crop up during recess, that it is not easy for us to amalgamate. It is very easy for some public men to advocate that course, very easy for some organisations, because, fortunately or unfortunately, they are of very small dimensions, like the organisation of the gentleman I have mentioned, who combines the functions of leader, whip, premier and secretary. His is not now an important party, or one that is felt in Australia. It would not do for the Opposition to agree altogether with the Government; because the Opposition have for several months been trying to get Parliament to meet to do some business, and at the same time the business of the Ministerialists has been to dodge Parliament. I wonder whether it would be possible to keep Parliament from meeting until the end of the year, or a few days earlier. Was the idea to shorten the session, thinking it would extend till the end of December no matter when we met? The Whip (Mr. Gordon) says "my word?" and I expect he knows. He is in the confidence of the Government, and ought to know. We believe there should possibly be a longer session, not longer sittings but a longer session; and we believe that if Parliament could have met earlier, some proposed works could have been sooner put in hand. Therefore we do not wish to see time wasted after Parliament opens. And while we admit that any remarks on the Address-in-Reply are not a waste of time, we believe that if Parliament had met earlier the time given to the Address-in-Reply would now have elapsed, and more good would have resulted from that than from the visit of our representatives to Queensland. I have occupied more time than I originally intended; and if there are items to which I have not referred, I shall have ample opportunity to do so in future, so I will

reserve my remarks, with the promise that I have made to refer to the dock.

On motion by Mr. Gordon, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at nine minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 16th July, 1907.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

SUPPLY—MESSAGE.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation out of Consolidated Revenue and Loan Funds of the sum of £639,303 for the services of the year ending June 30, 1908.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, By-laws of the Municipalities of Coolgardie and Leederville; 2, Agricultural Land Purchase Act—Regulations; 3, Cemeteries Act—By-laws and Balance sheets of various Boards; 4, Land Act—Timber, Guano, and other Regulations.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. Holman as to Mr. H. Brown.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): I desire to make an explanation with regard to a certain statement I made in the House last Thursday when I referred to the member for Perth as being the secretary of a gas company. He has informed me that he has never held that position, and I withdraw the statement. The remarks I made were as follow:—"He is the paid secretary for any position he can get, and those positions range from secretary of a building society, secretary of a cricket association, and secretary of a gas company or a roads board." As the member for Perth informs me that he has not held the position of secretary of a gas company and says he has never done so, I wish this part of my speech to be deleted.

PRIVILEGE—PRESS REPORTS.

Urgency Motion as to Contempt.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): I desire to rise on a question of privilege. I am sorry indeed that I have to do so, but I think it is incumbent on members of the Assembly when they have reason to call on this House for protection, to adopt the only course that can be followed, and that is to bring the matter before the House. I intend to move under Standing Order 139, which reads as follows:—

"Any member complaining to the House of a statement in a newspaper as a breach of privilege, shall produce a copy of the paper containing the statement in question, and be prepared to give the name of the printer or publisher, and also submit a substantive motion declaring the person in question to have been guilty of contempt."

I will show the House exactly what it is: I complain of, and I will read certain extracts from newspapers to which I take strong exception. The references I complain of refer to the remarks I made in the House on Thursday last, and I am sure that those members who heard me speak will bear me out in the explanation. I have to give with regard to the matter. What I desire to take exception to is the report which appeared in the *Morning Herald* of Friday, July 12th, and which deals with that portion of my speech in which reference is made to the Judges of the Supreme Court. The report in the *Morning Herald* is as follows:—

"The Speaker called the hon. member to order, and said he must not reflect on the character of the Judges.

"Mr. Holman: I am not reflecting against the Judges.

"Mr. Foulkes: Then whom?

"Mr. Holman: I am referring to the magistrates.

"The Speaker said it was necessary that he should draw the attention of the House to some reference that had been made to the fact that he had previously acted too generously towards the hon. member. He ventured to differ from that view. He gave the hon. member every latitude, but he did not think he had exceeded it, although he had at times sailed pretty close to the wind. He quoted from *May* to show that Judges of the Supreme Court were among those against whom reflections could not be cast. He mentioned that, and hoped that the hon. member would not exceed the privilege he possessed."

During my speech, and in fact in any speech that I have delivered in this Chamber, I never for one moment reflected upon the character of any Judges. I recognise the position they hold, and in my opinion the position of Judges should be sacred seeing that they are standing between the rights of the people and the Throne itself. They are there for our protection, and if we criticise them we criticise the bulwarks of the nation. I also desire to take exception to a report which appeared in the *Coolgardie Miner*

of the same date, and which states as follows:—

“Speaking on the Address-in-Reply, Mr. Holman, referring to the timber industry, adversely criticised the Judges, and was rebuked by the Speaker, who read an extract from *May* to show that a Judge was amongst those against whom no reflection could be made.

I will leave it to you, Mr. Speaker, or any other member whether I for a moment criticised or made a remark of any kind against any of our Judges. In the “Personal” column of to-day’s *Morning Herald* there is a paragraph which to the mind of the writer may seem a sort of withdrawal of the *Herald’s* remarks; but in my opinion it only makes those remarks much worse. The paragraph is as follows:—

“During the debate in the Assembly on Thursday evening, the Speaker took occasion to warn the member for the Murchison that he must not reflect on the Judges. Mr. Holman protested that he was not reflecting on the Judges; and the Speaker replied that it had been intimated to him that he has previously acted too generously to ‘one hon. member’ in this connection. By a typographical error this appeared in the *Herald* parliamentary reports as ‘the hon. member.’ The Speaker was evidently referring not to Mr. Holman but to the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy), whose remarks on the previous day he criticised as ‘sailing pretty close to the wind,’ though not in his opinion exceeding allowable latitude.”

I take it upon me to say that you, sir, during the remarks you made, did not refer at all to me as a member. Your remarks referred to the whole of the members of this Chamber, and not to any one individual; and I think that here we have a gross breach of privilege and contempt of the members of this House, when any newspaper singles out one member for criticism which is not deserved. I may say, speaking of the same reports, that last year, on more than one occasion, in both newspapers I have mentioned, I was criticised most

unfairly and in a great many cases untruthfully; and I shall not stand that any longer. So long as I am a member of this Chamber and so long as I abide by the Standing Orders, I claim the protection of this House in respect of any remarks I may make here, knowing that at any time, if any member considers he has been treated unfairly or unjustly, or has been accused of some offence of which he is not guilty, he will receive the undivided support of every member of the Chamber. As to our Judges I say again that never in this Chamber or out of it have I criticised any of them; for I maintain that the position they hold should be above criticism. If I had anything against any Judge of this State I should bring the matter before the House and deal with it in the only proper manner. I may say that some reporters, either intentionally or because they do not know their business, seem to take a delight in trying to misreport some members of this Chamber; and although of the majority of reporters I do not complain, yet on several occasions, by certain individuals, we find we are treated most unfairly. If I were to single out some of the reporters who have reported in this House in the past, and were to quote some of the remarks they have made during their rounds of the various departmental offices, members might think I was saying something not exactly correct. But I have known some reporters who have reported in this House and who, when dealing with certain Ministers of the Crown, have stated that they could always get a whisky and a cigar from some of those Ministers, which they could not get from any of the Labour members. This goes to show that even among the reporters we have men who are not worthy of the positions they hold; but I am pleased to say that the majority of the reporters, like the majority of other workers, try to fulfil the trust placed in their hands. I have taken this step so as to bring the matter at the earliest possible moment before the House. I do not think I made any improper remark during the speech in question, except one remark made in the heat of the moment, in

reference to the member for Perth (Mr. Brown). That was the only time when I went farther than I should have gone; and at the earliest possible moment I took immediate steps to rectify that error. Personally I do not object to any criticism so long as it is fair; but I maintain that the newspaper statements which I have read are absolutely untrue, and by their publication the publishers have committed a contempt of this House. I beg to move :—

“That in the opinion of this House, the statements published in the *Morning Herald* of July 12th and 16th and the *Coolgardie Miner* of July 12th, in which His Honour the Speaker is reported as having rebuked the member for Murchison for adversely criticising and reflecting on the Judges, are untrue, and being a grave reflection on the member for Murchison, the publishers of the said newspapers are guilty of contempt of this House.”

I move this, feeling that I will receive from the House that protection to which every member is justly entitled.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) : The hon. member's explanation of the words used is, I think, one which we can accept. Yet although he did not criticise the Judges, his criticism was rather severe on those presiding over the lower courts; and the fact of his stating that justice was prostituted in the courts of the country would probably lead the reporters to interpret his speech as they did. At the same time, one of the newspapers he referred to, the *Morning Herald*, has in to-day's issue attempted at least to rectify the mistake which has been made; and I think that the hon. member, recognising this endeavour on the part of that publication to remedy matters, might at this stage allow the subject to drop. As a matter of fact we know that it is a breach of privilege to publish in any manner the proceedings and the debates of Parliament; but provided the publication is correct, that privilege is waived. I do not think it necessary to debate this motion at any length. One paper having acknowledged that its report

was not absolutely correct, if the fact be pointed out to the other paper I feel sure that it will make the same correction. I would therefore suggest that the hon. member, having drawn attention to the matter, should simply allow it to drop.

Mr. T. WALKER (Kanowna) : I think, too, that nothing can be gained by carrying this motion to extremes; but I consider we should place on record the fact that the hon. member has been grossly misrepresented and wronged. There is too much of this misreporting those whom I may call some of the unpopular members of the House; and if any member has been unjustly treated in that respect, it is the member who suffers under the present grievance. And I regret that the Premier, in suggesting that the matter should now be allowed to lapse, should himself have somewhat justified the attitude taken by the newspapers in question. There is absolutely no justification for misreporting the interruption of the hon. member by Mr. Speaker. The Speaker himself went to particular pains to explain that his remarks were the result, not of the hon. member's speech, but of some statements made at a previous sitting of the House—[*The Premier* : On the previous evening]—and were also necessary because someone had been sufficiently busy to buttonhole Mr. Speaker during the day and to take him to task, as if Mr. Speaker was not qualified to look after the affairs of this House. And it was in resentment of that presumption of some hon. members—

The Premier : Not necessarily. I take it the hon. member, from the manner in which he is looking at me, is indicating me as the person referred to. It does not necessarily follow, I take it, that any hon. member spoke to the Speaker.

Mr. WALKER : I am very sorry indeed because he being the most attractive figure on that side of the House I keep my eyes firmly fixed on him, should think I am necessarily referring to him; I do not do so. Mr. Speaker himself stated that some member, or somebody—

I take it nobody would be so presumptuous outside the House to take hold of the Speaker's ear and tell him that he had done wrong—I take it that it was some member of this House. The position is that somebody has done it. Mr. Speaker explained that he was reading the authorities on the point in order that he should give some understanding to the House as to what their privileges were in this respect; that is why he did it, and only for that reason. I am sorry the Premier spoke in the way he did. He said this as justifying the Press in the course they had taken, that if the hon. member did not commit the grave offence of which he was accused by the newspaper the hon. member did commit another offence when he said that justice had been prostituted in our lower courts.

The Treasurer: In the courts of the land.

Mr. WALKER: The Premier did not say in the courts of the land, but he said in the lower courts.

The Treasurer: In the courts of this country.

Mr. WALKER: Did not the hon. member say that the member for Murchison said something that might be construed into a reflection on those in the lower courts? Did he not give the House to understand that? Have I lost my senses; because if the hon. member did not criticise the magistrates and use that word, why did he go to the trouble to explain it to this House if it were not so? Is it reasonable the reporters may have misunderstood him, and were so foolish that they thought he was talking of the highest tribunal of justice in the land? Not at all. In the course the hon. member has taken was he not perfectly within his rights as a member of the House in protesting against the action of the courts of justice, for had not justice been prostituted, nay strangled, in some of our so-called courts? The hon. member is justified in the course which he has taken, and there is no justification whatever either for the Premier or members to construe that in a general way, that he was attacking justice or the Judges. It was not

justice, nor Judges, but the prostitution of justice in the recent actions which had been carried on that the member complained of, and he was right in doing so. The hon. member and others were fighting an unpopular cause and were victimised again and again; they had to suffer for the sins of others, and the hon. member has been treated with opprobrium and contempt simply because he was fighting for a struggling cause; and because he had got unpopular in that respect is it fair that the Premier and members should injure him farther and hold him up to public ostracism? That is what it has come to. This House I think should take notice of it. I take it by this small debate the House has taken notice of it, and the hon. member does not wish to press the matter to extremes, but will allow it to drop now, but he could not allow it to drop without some kind of protest or correction being made.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) : I recognised fully when Mr. Speaker made the statement the other evening on the action to which the hon. member for Murchison calls attention, the Speaker was referring to statements made by me on the previous evening, and he was good enough, and I appreciate the action which he took, to draw attention to the reflection I made on the Judges. I wish to say here, although I did not tell you, Mr. Speaker, personally then, but I tell you now and I tell the House, I resent, and most strongly resent, any member of the Chamber going to Mr. Speaker and drawing attention to any remarks which are made in the House and which have been allowed to go unnoticed. You, Mr. Speaker, were good enough to say I had not gone outside the Standing Orders, and anyone who will read my speech will see the same. I know perfectly well that some member of the House did go to you, but I think it was his place to have come to me.

Mr. Bolton: He should have objected to it in the House.

Mr. TROY: I ask any member to read my remarks in the current issue of *Han-*

surd, and he will see I gave the Judges credit for good intentions. I said, for instance, of Mr. Justice Parker:—

“As far as he was concerned I believe he was always guided by his lights, and to the best of his ability he gave his award; but some of his awards were absolutely ridiculous.”

I said I gave the Judge credit for honesty of purpose in his awards, but I said his awards were ridiculous, and this was borne out by the action of Mr. Loreing who raised the wages himself. I say then whilst I am prepared at any time, just as the member for Murchison says he is prepared, to be rebuked if I go outside the bounds of the Standing Orders, I resent attention being drawn to a matter for which I am not condemned by Mr. Speaker. If the member had not been such a busybody as to have bone behind my back, if he had taken note of the remarks made by the hon. member for Perth in seconding the motion for the Address-in-Reply, he would have had more reason to ask the Speaker to rebuke that member than to ask him to rebuke me. The member for Perth on the Address-in-Reply said that the workers even went to the extent of appointing one of their own representatives a Judge in the Arbitration Court, and they also appointed the Supreme Court Judge who acts as President. He farther said, “The President of the Court was appointed by yourselves, being appointed in the fortunately short reign of the Labour Government,” implying that the Judge was appointed by the Labour Government in order to farther their ends and the requirements of the workers before the Arbitration Court. Whilst I accept the blame thrown on the shoulders of the member for Murchison, I say there was no cause in the first place for any interference, because as you, Mr. Speaker, deemed, and were good enough to say, there was no violation of the Standing Orders, and I strongly resent any member of this Chamber going behind my back and drawing the Speaker's attention to a matter which has been allowed to pass unnoticed, as not deserving of censure in any degree.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): I am very pleased that the member for Murchison has moved the motion. I remember well the stage when you interrupted the member, and up to that stage the member for Murchison had in no way reflected upon the Judges of the Supreme Court of this State, nor could any of the statements made by the member for Murchison by any stretch of imagination be construed into the ruling which you read from page 316 of *May*. The hon. member had then made some remark about the magistrates or justice being prostituted in this country. I hold, as I interjected then, that the hon. member was not dealing with the Judges but with the magistrates, and the Standing Orders of this House and *May* do not apply to magistrates. I want to say here, however much the Press have erred, a member of this Chamber at that stage erred tenfold—the member for Claremont. When the member for Claremont rose and made a statement, which I suppose will appear in *Hansard*—I have not looked it up—pointing out the necessity of having what you, sir, read from *May* typewritten and handed to the member for Murchison, and when the member for Murchison was fighting such a battle as he was fighting—it has been described as an unpopular fight—when the hon. member was insulted in such a manner by the member for Claremont, the member for Claremont should be proud that he was so far removed from the member for Murchison, or I believe the remark would have been resented. An hon. member must resent that sort of thing. I am sure that I would have done so. I do not wish to make any threats, but I promise the member for Claremont that should he interject in a similar tone when I am addressing this House he will get his deserts. I wish also to say that when you, sir, so kindly read from *May*, with the object perhaps of putting the member for Murchison in a cooler frame than you possibly thought he was, I gathered from you that because some member in this Chamber, perhaps the day before, had reflected on our Supreme Court Judges, not in your opinion but in the opinion of someone outside this

Chamber—[*Mr. Troy*: Inside the Chamber]—I am not too sure, I want to convey to the House the impression you, Mr. Speaker, conveyed to me, that you did not believe the hon. member in question, whoever he may be, had reflected on a Supreme Court Judge, or that he had exceeded his privileges in debate in this House, but that someone—I am not prepared to say who it was—had drawn your attention to it, and believed that the hon. member did, and that you were lax in your duty. You remarked that perhaps you might have been over-generous, but that was all you could say. You believed that the hon. member had not exceeded his privileges. I desire to be fair and to say that I do not think, with all due respect to you, sir, that in reading from *May* at that particular stage, pulling up the member for Murchison, the hon. member was to be made a scapegoat; because the hon. member had not transgressed the rules of the House on that point, though some member had the day before; but because *May* was resorted to at that particular stage the member for Murchison was made a scapegoat. I want to say that the hon. member is justified, when it is farther published in the Press incorrectly. [*Mr. Holman*: Falsely.] Since I have been in this House I have had nothing to thank the Press for, unless it was for abuse. I am well prepared to hold my own with the Press on the public platforms of this State or in this Chamber; for I do not care how mighty the pen may be, I know that if a man's cause is right he need not fear the Press nor anything in this country. That is the stand I take, and the cause of the member for Murchison was just, right through that timber dispute. I compliment him. I am pleased to know he is a member of the party to which I belong, and to know that he was able to so nobly defend the position as he did in a long-continued struggle. I am pleased to know that my friends on this side of the House were associated in raising funds to prevent women and children from starving; because there was—a Combine. This is not the first time the Press, since I have been in the

House, has been taken to task; and the very paper in question. It will be interesting to know whether on every occasion this newspaper has been taken to task it has been the same reporter who has falsely reported the proceedings of this House. If it be, it is just about time some steps were taken by this House to have somebody with a fairer mind to report these proceedings for that journal. I do not know who the man is, but I think it is about time some inquiry was made. The editor and the proprietors of this paper were defended from this very bench where I am sitting, two sessions ago. Members of this House must protect themselves; the dignity of this Chamber must be upheld; and no paper shall malign it while I am in the House without my raising my voice against it. I notice that no matter what is done on your right, sir—unless a Labour Government is there—the Press will not misrepresent them, not in any derogatory spirit at any rate; they may misrepresent them to put them right in the eyes of the country, but they will not misrepresent them to put the true light to the people of this country; but I notice that every opportunity is seized by the Press to put members of this side of the House wrongly in the eyes of the public. It is only when the members of this side of the House address the people of the country on the political position that the people are addressed in the language of truth. I am not frightened of the *Morning Herald*, nor am I frightened of Granny Hackett of the *West Australian*. I am not afraid of them, and I am pleased to know that the member for Murchison is not afraid of them. Men who fight unpopular battles will not be fighting them if they are afraid of the Press. The capitalistic journals of Australia have been hounding me down for 25 years, but I am still in existence fighting the same old battle, and it has to be fought over and over again. Until the people of this country have a faithful paper to report them, they will always be fighting. I am pleased the hon. member has brought this motion forward. I am sorry for the spineless attitude of the Premier. As Leader of

this House, the Premier should be the very first to protect its privileges. When the Press know that the Leader of the House they are attacking is spineless, how much more will they attack us? The Premier should have taken a stand becoming a Premier on this point, and should have told the Press in no uncertain language what he thought of misrepresentation of this Chamber. I am not anxious that the hon. member should withdraw his motion.

Mr. Holman: I am not going to withdraw.

Mr. TAYLOR: I would rather the the House decide by a vote whether we are going to allow Parliament to be run by the Press. It is generally understood that the Government are run by the Press; but I want to know whether hon. members will sit in silence and allow this House to be run by the Press. I hope the hon. member will not withdraw his motion.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan): The subject matter of the complaint of the member for Murchison is that a certain newspaper attributed the remark made by you, sir, as being addressed to him, and put a construction on it that was of the nature of a rebuke. Is that not so? I think the hon. member is perfectly justified in rising in his place in the House and protesting against, in the first place, the interpretation put on your remark by the newspaper, and in the second place against attributing that remark to himself; because having read *Hansard*—I was not in the House at the time the incident took place—it is perfectly clear that what you, sir, did was, you pointed out to the members the dangers of invading the Standing Order if they were to go into a certain line of criticism which possibly they might drift into. It can in no way be said that your remarks bear a reflection or are a rebuke on the hon. member then speaking. [*Member*: It does not say so.] I understood from the hon. member's remarks that the newspaper said so. First of all with regard to observations relating to the conduct of Judges, what the member for Murchison said to-day is absolutely cor-

rect, though perhaps he did not go quite far enough, because he has left out of account one very important element, namely, by a special part of our constitution we have placed our Judges in a particular position, and we have reserved in that Constitution a special manner of dealing with them if they are guilty of any offence. For that reason, if for no other, altogether apart from the view taken by the hon. member that it is derogatory to the administration of law to attack Judges—altogether apart from that view, the Constitution provides a proper and efficient means; and that being so, it is improper to resort to any other means.

Mr. Walker: You do not need to go to the Constitution, because the Standing Orders provide for it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When I say Constitution I mean everything, including our Standing Orders. The hon. member knows that the Standing Orders are framed under our constitutional powers. I hold the view that we are liable at times to entirely forget the position occupied by Judges, and to forget also that they would not be allowed—and it would be impossible for a moment to tolerate their doing so—to reply from the Bench to any criticisms from Parliament or from any platform; therefore it is not in my opinion anything that should be resented to bring home to hon. members that position, inculcating in their minds a proper respect for the Bench, which we in return exact from the Bench, and to insist on maintaining the Standing Orders of the House. The position the hon. member has taken up here to-day it seems to me is fully vindicated. The hon. member having drawn first of all the attention of the House to the incorrect report which attributes to him remarks that were not directed to him, and secondly, though he has not gone that far, having pointed out that the interpretation put on those remarks, that they were in the nature of a rebuke, is incorrect—the hon. member having vindicated his own position, and having made the circumstances of the case perfectly clear to the House, I for one hope with the member for Kanowna that the matter need not be pursued to any

other end. Because what would he do, if the hon. member does wish to pursue it any farther? Does he wish to call upon the publisher or printer to appear at the Bar of the House? [Mr. Holman: The House would do that.] Of course should the House carry the motion it must go the step farther. It seems to me it is taking a step in the wrong direction to declare this is a gross breach of privilege, and not to go farther. Is it not right to stop at this point, when the hon. member has had an opportunity of explaining his grievance and of putting his true position before the House, instead of going on because we know that any member of this House could bring newspaper editors to the Bar of the House every day in the week. [Mr. Collier: So they ought to be, and hanged—some of them.] If every member of this Chamber were to take every opportunity when observations are made about them in the Press, to bring the publishers before the House, we would do nothing else but debate those matters. The reason why members treat in a large measure good-naturedly observations in the newspapers is that they know first of all that the reporters are not infallible but make mistakes, and secondly they know it only increases the importance of the matter to take notice of it. For my part, I wish to say that when a member has taken the action the hon. member has done I am prepared to support him to the full extent of making his protest, of pointing out to the House the injustice done him, and of drawing the attention of the House to the conduct of the paper in question. But I am not prepared to go farther, as, if I were, I should have to be prepared to go to all lengths. We should do nothing but discuss the conduct of the papers if we were to take the course he suggests with regard to the comments which so often appear in the papers as to our conduct.

Mr. HOLMAN (in reply as mover) : One cannot but regret the action the Premier has taken on this question. He knows that as Leader of the House he is looked to by members to protect and uphold the rights of the Chamber ; and I consider that to-day he

has been sadly wanting in carrying out the duties of his position. The alleged apology which appears in the *Morning Herald* to-day only aggravates the offence ; in my opinion it was no explanation at all and made the matter appear in a worse light than it did before. It is remarkable that no other reporter in the gallery but the one who reported that portion of my speech for the *Morning Herald* placed the matter in the light that was done in that paper, showing that that individual, whoever he is, had some ulterior motive in misreporting me. This was done on more than one occasion last session. If this is allowed to go on, the sooner any individual who presumes on his position in the Press gallery is turned outside and not allowed to come here the better. When we have to speak in a matter like this we do not deal with the individual who has transgressed, but also we have, in a measure, to deal with other reporters who have always tried to do their duty in a fair and just manner. You, Mr. Speaker, rose and quoted extracts from *May* during the time I was speaking, and I may say that this is in some measure responsible for my bringing forward this motion to-day. I am well aware of Standing Order 134, which reads as follows :—

“Whenever the Speaker rises during a debate, any member then speaking or offering to speak shall sit down, and the House shall be silent, so that the Speaker may be heard without interruption.”

As soon as you rose, Mr. Speaker, I sat down ; but in your opening remark you made it clear that you did not intend the remarks to deal with me at all. The remarks you made were as follow : “I am sorry to have to make this reference now, because I am sure no one could object to the hon. member’s speech.” Farther on, after I had made an interjection, you said : “I am glad to acknowledge that the hon. member has been exceptionally good in his remarks.” That shows that those remarks were not meant for me. Perhaps the reporter was a boy who was sent from the *Morning Herald* ; but if he were one of the old hands, and used his position in the same

way on previous occasions in regard to me, then he did not know his work, for he misreported me. It is significant that every reporter in the gallery, with the one exception, correctly reported the remarks I made. Such being the case, that reporter is not fit to be in his position. An individual such as he is too small fry for any one of us to waste time in dealing with. So far as I am personally concerned, I do not intend to deal with a man like him; but the question may go farther, and if similar action is taken by the Leader of this House as the Premier has adopted to-day, any individual outside the House may presume on the rights thus obtained and do exactly as he likes. No matter who the member is, and whether he is on the Government side of the House or on this, the Premier should be the first to defend him against false attacks. I regret that for the first time in the history of Parliament the Premier was weak and spineless, and allowed the privileges of this House to be transgressed and a member to be attacked. I maintain that no withdrawal or apology has been given. However, I am prepared, now that the matter has been brought forward and placed before those who are not responsible for the remarks appearing in the papers, to allow the latter to have an opportunity of withdrawing, and of saying whether they will be just and honourable and do the right thing. Then, if they do withdraw, I will be perfectly satisfied to allow the matter to close. If I transgress they can give it to me as much as they like; but if I conform to the Standing Orders of this House I will not be falsely attacked by any paper. If it were an individual I had to deal with myself, I would very soon deal with him; and he might have a bit livelier time than he has in listening to me to-night. [*Mr. Scaddan*: They are light-weights up there.] I do not care whether they are light-weights or heavy-weights. [*Mr. Taylor*: Some of them are bulky.] Perhaps by being bulky they are in a better position to get whisky and cigars than the light-weights. If the publishers of the papers do the honourable thing—

and I think they will do it—and admit that the reporter has made a mistake I will let the matter rest; but if not, I will bring it up again, and we will then see whether the Premier takes the same miserable stand as he has done to-day. I beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to say only one word. I cannot take part in the debate, but it is due to the hon. member to say that he never deserved a rebuke, nor did he receive one at my hands. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) has put my action in a nutshell.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS BY THE PREMIER.

Timber Combine and his alleged Interest.

The PREMIER: I have a little explanation to make in connection with another matter. One hon. member (Mr. Holman) has criticised my action to-night as being weak and spineless; but if the occasion arises when it is necessary to take steps to protect an hon. member it will then be quite time to show the House whether such a description applies to me. At the same time I regret that the hon. member should insinuate that I am not prepared at all times to protect the privileges of the House. Just as I arrived at the House, at 4.30 o'clock, the hon. member brought me---

Mr. Holman: It was at 4.20 p.m. I tried to ring you up but could not get you.

The PREMIER: In any event I did not have an opportunity to peruse the paper; but I gathered from him that the paper had made an effort to remedy the mistake made. Recognising that, and believing that the statement in this morning's paper had been an endeavour to remedy the mistake, I consider I was justified in asking him to drop the matter. I do not admit that by taking that action I was waiving any of the privileges of the House, and I resent the statement made by the two hon. members who have spoken. I would like to say that on more than one occasion I per-

sonally have not only been libelled by the Press, but also by many members of the House, and in connection with this trouble of which we have heard so much. [Mr. Walker : This is not an explanation.] I am leading up to the explanation. It has been stated on more than one occasion that the Government sympathised with the Timber Combine, and that I was personally and financially interested as a shareholder in that corporation. I emphatically deny that I have ever held a share or been in any way connected with Millars' Karri and Jarrah Company ; and I want to make that clear, for it has been stated on the public platforms of this State that I am interested.

Mr. Walker : By whom was that stated ?

The PREMIER : All round the country ; I do not know exactly by whom.

Mr. Hayward : I have heard it, anyhow.

The PREMIER : I wish to give it an emphatic denial ; and anyone who says such a thing outside, I will tell him what I think of him.

Australians Returned from South Africa.

The PREMIER : I also take this opportunity of drawing the attention of the House to misstatements of facts Mr. Holman made on Thursday afternoon last. He stated that when a mistake he has made is pointed out to him he is always ready to acknowledge that he had been wrong, and would withdraw any misstatements he had made.

Mr. Walker : I am very sorry to interrupt the hon. member ; but this is altogether outside of any explanation. He is making accusations against hon. members to which they have no chance to reply. This is most unfair and an abuse of the privileges of the House. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to confine the hon. member to an explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER : The Premier is entitled to an explanation ; and he informed me previously to the sitting of the House that he would make one. But I hope he will confine himself to that explanation.

The PREMIER : It is in connection with the statement made by the member for Murchison, that in the first instance when he said—

"The Premier has paid the fares of a large number of men from South Africa. These men were supposed to have originally come from South Africa, but when they landed here it was found that they did not know anything about Australia and had never been here before. . . . We know that a large number of persons landed here a few weeks ago, whose fares had been paid."—

I desire to give the House the actual facts in connection with these repatriated Australians. This is a matter in which I was personally concerned ; and if I did not take this method of bringing the matter before the House I would not obtain a chance of explaining the position of affairs. Some time ago the Prime Minister reported that a number of Australians in South Africa were desirous of returning to the Commonwealth. He wired in regard to the matter :—

"Passages here estimated £7. Proposed each State endeavour find employment for any who are brought to it and collect passage money wherever possible, Commonwealth bearing half any loss resulting from non-payment." In reply I wired :—

"If Commonwealth arranging as suggested, will fall in with scheme, provided those returning here are West Australians of good character. Cannot guarantee employment."

At the same time, the Agent General notified me that the Secretary of State for the Colonies was inquiring whether we would pay the return fare of "respectable and genuine Western Australians stranded in South Africa," such fare to be repayable from future earnings ; but as Mr. Deakin had informed me that his Government were carrying out the proposal outlined in his telegram of the 6th February, and as it was understood that the Federal authorities had arranged with the commercial agent for New South Wales in South Africa (Mr. Valder) to attend to the selection of the persons to

be repatriated, the Agent General was notified accordingly and was told to take no farther action in the matter. The next step was that the Commonwealth Government advised me of the impending arrival by certain steamers of batches of the repatriated Australians belonging to the respective States. Being in Melbourne at this time, I called at the Prime Minister's office, and was shown a copy of a telegram which had been despatched to the Acting Premier. The telegram sent to Mr. Wilson is as follows:—

"Referring previous correspondence repatriation Australians from South Africa, Commonwealth agents advise that steamer "Cycle," Melbourne and Sydney only. Glad learn whether you wish arrangements made with shipping companies for passages from port of disembarkation to Fremantle. If desired, prepared arrange passages as "Atlantic" advises 27th. Glad immediate reply. Commonwealth agent was authorised to arrange for return to respective States."

In my letter to the Prime Minister I distinctly stated that the Government were not prepared to go farther than had been originally arranged, namely, to bear one-half of any loss incurred through non-payment of the £7 passage money advanced by the Federal authorities to respectable and genuine West Australians. It was then ascertained that the Commonwealth Government had been advised that their agent in South Africa had exceeded his instructions, and had not shipped the Western Australians direct to Fremantle; that persons other than "respectable and genuine Western Australians" were being sent to our shores, and that the number would in all probability exceed the total of one thousand distributed over the whole of the States. Shortly after arriving in Sydney I wrote to the Acting Prime Minister confirming my statement that the Government would not go beyond what had been already arranged. When the two boats arrived and the papers signed in South Africa were carefully examined, it was soon seen that persons other than those intended had embarked for this State. My

colleague then sent the following telegram to the Prime Minister:—

"More than half repatriated Australians ex 'Burrumbeet' in no sense Western Australian. This State only prepared share any expenditure for natives or residents of Western Australia. Letter follows."

To which Sir John Forrest, then Acting Prime Minister, replied:—

"Regret you consider large number repatriated Australians ex 'Burrumbeet' not Western Australians. We did our best, and could not provide against misrepresentations. We employed the official agent of New South Wales in South Africa. You could not have done more than we did, and it is unreasonable to blame us or to refuse to pay."

On the 17th June and 9th July the Government's representations were again confirmed by letter, in one of which communications I stated:—

"In consequence of the long strike in the timber trade still continuing there is a considerable number of men out of employment, and you will no doubt appreciate the reluctance of the Government to aggravate this condition unreasonably. Under normal conditions the matter would be less noticeable, but for the reason already stated the Government does not consider it should be called upon to make provision for such indiscriminate and pauper immigration. I regret that you should have considered the view of the Government unreasonable, but seeing the great care that is being exercised in the class of immigrant introduced (the possession of capital or *bona fide* agricultural qualifications being essential), and the terms agreed by me with your Government being in respect of 'Western Australians of good character,' I feel sure that you will see that the protest contained in the telegram of 13th inst. is justified by the facts."

Those are the facts of the case, and I think members will recognise that the Government have done all that they possibly could to see that the Commonwealth adhered to their first arrangement that

only Western Australians of good character should be returned.

Mr. Holman: I accepted your explanation when you interjected the other night.

The PREMIER: I think the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) referred later on to the matter.

Mr. Bolton: Not to the repatriated Australians, but to the Scandinavians.

Immigrant Scandinavians, how brought to West Australia.

The PREMIER: I should like also to say a few words about the Scandinavians.

Mr. Johnson: Is not this somewhat foreign to the matter before the Chamber? Has the motion been withdrawn?

Mr. Speaker: The motion was withdrawn, and the Premier having previously notified me that he intended to make an explanation, he is now making that explanation.

Mr. Johnson: Was the withdrawal put to the House?

Mr. Speaker: Yes. This is another question.

The PREMIER: My other explanation is as to the statement that the Scandinavians brought out were brought with the assistance of the Government. When the statement was made I interjected that it was not so. At the same time, I was desirous of obtaining from the hon. member (Mr. Holman) the papers referring to the question, with the object of sifting the matter and of seeing under what authority this Mr. Larsen acted. I find that Mr. Larsen was appointed at a certain remuneration, during the régime of the Daglish Government, to engage some twenty-four Scandinavians. But Mr. James, now Sir Walter James, gave him at the time to understand it was essential that these men should be qualified agricultural emigrants, and men who would be capable of settling on the land. Mr. James stated, in engaging Mr. Larsen:—

“When the emigrants you send are settled on the land, the State will pay half the cost of sending to Australia their wives and families or their intended wives. This will apply only

if the settlement takes place within 18 months of arrival. My idea is that these men should if possible be retained in groups, say of four or six, employed near enough together to enable them to meet, and thus prevent any feeling of isolation.”

Then he mentioned the districts to which he would recommend their being sent. This clearly establishes the fact that the men were sent out for agricultural purposes only. The Agent General wrote farther:—

“I shall want to know, a month before each emigrant leaves London, the date of his intended departure, and sufficient particulars in relation to him to enable me to advise authorities in Perth, so that farmers may be communicated with.”

That was the only engagement Mr. Larsen had, and it was given him at the time of his appointment when the Labour Government were in power. Since then he has never been engaged by any other Government, and his engagement ceased when he sent out the twenty-four Scandinavians.

Mr. Walker: The incident referred to happened in October last.

The PREMIER: Yes; but the point I am trying to make is that as the hon. member (Mr. Holman) said these men were assisted out by the Government, I say the Government knew absolutely nothing about the men to whom he referred.

Mr. Holman: They were engaged through your Government Labour Bureau to go to the mills, “as per contract with the Western Australian Government,” and that appears on their steamer tickets.

The PREMIER: Whoever is responsible for that is responsible for forgery. I wish to explain that the Government knew nothing about it; that those men did not have even the privilege of assisted passengers, namely reduced fares; but the hon. member stated that when they arrived here they had to refund I think £18, instead of £13, of their passage-money.

Mr. Holman: That is in their contract.

The PREMIER : The then Premier, Mr. Daglish, wrote that he did not consider the proposal a good one, to which Mr. James replied that he had committed himself to the proposal, and that it was necessary for Mr. Larsen to complete his agreement, but that he (Mr. James) had specially stipulated that these men should be duly qualified agriculturists. Some Scandinavians arrived in September, 1906. I take it those are the men referred to. This was during the term of office of the present Government. The whole of these men paid their own passages, and I think I gave that information to the House in reply to a question by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath), asked in September of last year. I simply wish to make this explanation so that the hon. member (Mr. Holman) may be aware of the fact that the Government had absolutely no connection with the engagement of these men ; that if they have been engaged, some private arrangement has been made by Mr. Larsen, who, prior to his engagement by the Daglish Government as immigration agent in Denmark—

Mr. Daglish : That is wrong.

Mr. Johnson : He was never engaged by the Labour Government.

The PREMIER : He was appointed by the Agent General during your term of office.

Mr. Johnson : On the Agent General's own responsibility.

The PREMIER : Prior to that, Mr. Larsen had done a considerable amount of work, which Mr. James considered good work, on behalf of the Queensland Government, by importing Scandinavians to that State. I make this explanation so that the hon. member may be aware of the actual position the present Government have taken on this question.

Mr. Johnson : Will the Premier say whether, in view of the statement of the member for Murchison, the Premier will take action to dispense altogether with the service of Mr. Larsen ?

The PREMIER : I should like to point out that we have had absolutely nothing to do with Mr. Larsen.

Mr. Johnson : Your Agent General has.

The PREMIER : I will read a letter to the point, sent after the Rason Government came into office. The then Colonial Secretary (Hon. W. Kingsmill) wrote to the Agent General :—

"Farther to my letter of 27th ult. with reference to the question of immigration, I shall be obliged if you will inform me what are the exact terms of the engagement of Mr. Larsen to lecture in Europe, as I do not regard his appointment with much favour."

To this the Agent General replied :—

"Mr. Larsen was never engaged to lecture in Europe or elsewhere, but was paid a commission and out-of-pocket expenses in connection with the Scandinavian emigrants sent to the State. My arrangements with Mr. Larsen were fully explained to the Government when made."

Mr. Johnson : Then he gets a retaining fee from the present Government ?

The PREMIER : No ; absolutely none. He is not connected with the Agent General's staff at all.

Mr. HOLMAN : The explanation of the Premier has cast some doubt on what I stated. I still maintain that my statement is correct. In explanation, I should like to point out to the Premier that when he interjected as to these men who came from South Africa—

Mr. Gordon : Is the hon. member in order in reading from *Hansard* ?

Mr. Speaker : No ; not from this session's report.

Mr. HOLMAN : I am only refreshing my memory, because I desire to be absolutely fair. If I have made any misstatements I shall be the first to withdraw. I have no intention to try to injure the Premier or anyone else. He will remember that in reply to an interjection by him I stated that in this matter I could only go by what I read in the papers ; I said "I know that a large number of persons landed here a few weeks ago whose fares had been paid," and the Premier mentioned that they had been paid by the Commonwealth Government.

I then allowed the matter to drop, and in respect of it I made no accusation against the Premier. As to the other matter, I did charge the Government with assisting those Norwegians who had come to Western Australia assisted by Mr. Larsen, with contract notes and boat tickets of which I hold the originals; and the accusation I made against the Government was that those men were engaged through the Government Labour Bureau and sent to the timber mills. They were sent from Millars' office to the Labour Bureau, went through a crowd of men who were waiting there, and were then sent to the mills. I maintain that is absolutely unfair; and the other night I made some remarks like these:—"Millars were too cunning to give them work at their office. They send them to the Labour Bureau. And although these men cannot speak a word of English, they go through a crowd of men waiting at the Labour Bureau, and are given work at the sawmills." To show that what I state is true, here is a passenger's ticket for the s.s. "Omrah," leaving England for Fremantle, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane on the 19th October, 1906. The fare is £13; and here is given the name of the passenger, while underneath appear the words "as per contract with the Western Australian Government." As I have said, I intend to supply the Premier with the whole of the documents I hold. I should have given them to him on Friday last had I not previously handed them to another member. I intend to give the Government every assistance to thresh out the matter.

The Attorney General: How long have these documents been in your possession?

Mr. HOLMAN: About a couple of months; but I had to get them translated, and that cannot be done in a day, because few can do the work. I may say a number of papers I sent out for translation has not been returned. I intend to get them complete, hand them to the Government, and allow them to deal with the matter. As I stated clearly in my speech, these immigrants, in addition to being misled and brought out here, have in my opinion been robbed; and it is the duty of the Government to see that these

men are protected to the utmost extent. I fail to see that anything in the Premier's explanation shows that I made any unfair or untruthful statement.

The PREMIER: When I stated that Mr. Larsen was appointed during the term of the Daglish Government, the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) said "he has different instructions now," and the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) said "he is now carrying out the instructions of the present Administration." Surely that is incorrect, if I am able to prove by evidence obtainable from the files that Mr. Larsen has no connection at all with the Government, is not an employee, and is not working under commission from the Government.

Mr. Troy: Who supplies the money?

Mr. SPEAKER then proceeded with the business, calling on the first Question.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CROSSING. FREMANTLE WHARVES.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Railways: Is it the intention to provide additional crossing for vehicular and other traffic from Phillimore Street to the wharves at Fremantle? If so, when?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Mr. Norman, the Chief Engineer of Ways and Works, Victorian Railways, visited this State to make an independent inquiry as to the practicability of farther access to the wharf by a level crossing at or near Phillimore Street. After careful inquiry he has reported adversely on the project.

QUESTION—WORKS DONE AT DERBY, EXPENSES CLAIMED.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Works: When will the steamer fares from Derby to Fremantle, also half wages during time occupied in travelling, be paid the men who were engaged at Fremantle for work at Derby last November, in accordance with the agreement on which the men were engaged, and for

which demand for payment has been made to the Department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The men were engaged at Fremantle at 12s. per day, the Department paying passage up, and half wages while travelling. If they gave satisfaction during the course of work, they were to receive fare and also half wages for the return trip. During the work the men struck for a higher wage, and an arrangement was made to give them 14s. per day. This broke the agreement upon which they were engaged. The Department, however, is making inquiry as to rate of wages ruling at Derby for similar work during this period, and if it is found that the 14s. does not exceed the ruling wage, fares and half wages for return trip will be paid; but if the men took advantage of the pressing nature of the work and the scarcity of labour to secure a wage higher than the ruling rate, the Department will make no payment for the return trip.

QUESTION — FACTORIES AND WAGES BOARDS.

Mr. VERYARD asked the Premier: 1, Is it his intention to amend the Factories Act during the present session? 2, If so, will the amendments embrace the recommendations, more particularly that of the appointment of Wages Boards, reported to the House by the Select Committee on "Alleged Sweating" during the last session of Parliament?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, It is proposed to consolidate and amend the Factories and Early Closing Acts under the title "Factories and Shops Act." The recommendations of the Select Committee have been duly considered when framing the amendments. It is also proposed to extend the jurisdiction of the Act, and to alter the Constitution of the Court of Arbitration so as to embrace the functions of a Wages Board.

QUESTION—TITLES OFFICE, RETIRED COMMISSIONER.

Mr. WALKER asked the Attorney General: Is there any objection to lay

on the table of this House all correspondence and papers relating to the retirement of Dr. Smith, K.C., from the Commissionership of Titles?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: I have to request the hon. member to move in the usual way that the correspondence and papers be laid upon the table of the House.

DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth day.

Resumed from the previous Thursday.

Mr. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): It seems only a short time since Parliament was prorogued; but a good deal has taken place during that time, and certain matters will, I think, require our careful attention. One matter I wish to mention at this stage is the amendment of the Arbitration Act. I can remember the time very well when all the workers of this State were most anxious to have an Arbitration Act passed into law. They considered that if such an Act was passed there would in the future be no question in dispute or hardly any question that would not be capable of settlement as between employer and employee. We have had lately a strike which has affected not only the men engaged in the industry, but many people particularly in the south-western district, who were largely interested in the timber mills. A case was referred for the decision of the Judge, and two assessors were appointed to assist him. Unfortunately the decision given by the court did not meet with the wishes and expectations of the employees, and they decided not to work any longer at the wages fixed by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Holman: That is not so.

Mr. FOULKES: I am reminded they were quite justified in doing so. I am not here to-day to argue that question. A good deal of discussion took place in connection with that strike, as to whether the gentlemen sitting in the Arbitration Court were capable of settling an industrial dispute of the character brought before them. We are all agreed as to the desire of our Judges to be fair, and I listened with the greatest interest to

the speech delivered the other night by the member for Mount Magnet. He said he did not, for instance, impugn the impartiality and the desire of the Judges to do justice, and he admitted that the Judges and the Judge in this case desired to do justice as between employer and employee. I should like to remind the House of the fact, that when the Arbitration Act was passed there was the utmost unwillingness on the part of Judges to act as Judges in the Arbitration Court. [Mr. Troy: There still is.] The Judges of that day pointed out that unfortunately by reason of their inexperience in industrial disputes and the carrying on of various businesses, they were precluded from being able to judge what was an adequate wage in the disputes that might be brought before them. That was the feeling of the Judges when the Act was passed in 1900. Since then other Judges have also expressed, I believe publicly, but I am not sure if they have expressed it publicly, but I know every Judge throughout Australia is very loth indeed to act as Judge in a dispute in connection with the payment of wages in industrial concerns. A Judge unfortunately by reason of his past training is not able to form an opinion as to what are the best wages that should be paid in various industries. He has had in most cases no business training, nor does he know much about the lives of the various employees who come under his notice. Therefore it has been brought forcibly before me, and I cannot help coming to the conclusion that the time has now arrived when we should cease to ask a Judge of the Supreme Court to act as Judge in the Arbitration Court. It would be of immense advantage to relieve the Judges of this work, and we should turn elsewhere and see if we cannot get men who have experience in various industries to act. I would class the various industries as much as possible. I would class all those industries connected with mining, all those connected with agriculture, and all those connected with timber concerns, in different classes. I should give power to the two assessors appointed by the employer and the employee, to decide between them upon some third

person who is willing to act as president of the particular court in connection with a particular dispute. I believe if that system were adopted we should see probably the opinions of the various Arbitration Courts listened to with more respect in the future than they have unfortunately in the past. If there was any inability on the part of the two assessors to come to terms as to who was a fit and proper person to act as umpire, because you can only call the position that of umpire, in the case of any disagreement, I should give leave to the two assessors to apply to the Supreme Court to appoint some gentleman. It is well worth a trial, and I hope when the amending Bill is brought forward to deal with the question the Government will consider the suggestion I have just made. There has been a great deal of discussion unfortunately in the debate as to the action of Mr. Magistrate Roe. So anxious were the men when this Arbitration Court was being established that the Act should have a fair trial that a clause was inserted in the Bill that any person who aided and abetted a strike was to be punished, and various penalties and fines were to be imposed on him. Certain men were brought before Mr. Magistrate Roe and charged with the offence of aiding and abetting in the strike. Mr. Roe came to certain conclusions, I do not say whether he was right or wrong, it would not be correct for me to express an opinion on that point, but I think it would have been more dignified if the member for Murchison had not attacked the magistrate as he did the other evening, for coming to the decision which he did.

Mr. Bath : The hon. member is wrong in saying that the provision was put in the Arbitration Act itself ; the alternative of imprisonment is provided in another Act, the Criminal Code.

Mr. FOULKES : What I said was that this Act contained a provision for various penalties, so I was quite correct. I was saying that I thought it would have been more dignified if the member for Murchison had not attacked Mr. Magistrate Roe.

Mr. Collier : You cannot consider dignity where justice is concerned.

Mr. FOULKES : What I said was that I thought it would have been more dignified for the member for Murchison not to have attacked the magistrate who passed these sentences. Mr. Roe is a man who sat for many months as a Judge of the Supreme Court, and I consider he is quite capable of sitting as a police magistrate. I am quite certain of this from what I know of him that he is at all times anxious to do justice between man and man. Unfortunately the member for Murchison was found guilty by Mr. Roe and fined £25. If we are to allow members of Parliament to come to this House to have their cases tried over again, it will be impossible for us to carry on the proceedings of this Chamber in a proper manner. I admit I myself was very much to blame the other evening for making the suggestion which I made at the time, that Mr. Speaker should hand to the member for Murchison a copy of the ruling which Mr. Speaker was good enough to give to the House. I apologise now to the member for Murchison for having made that suggestion ; but I still think I may be excused for having made the suggestion, for there is nothing I have resented since I have been a member of this House so much as the unseemly attacks made on magistrates and Judges in this State. It is quite true that our Standing Orders make the regulations with regard to not attacking Judges, but I think the same rule should apply to the various resident magistrates.

Mr. Walker : And justices of the peace ?

Mr. FOULKES : I have the utmost respect for some justices of the peace, even for the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Subiaco.

Mr. Walker : "Even."

Mr. FOULKES : They are justices of the peace ; and as they are members of the British race they would, like other justices of the peace, try to do their duty and mete out justice between man and man. The Labour Government, when in office, appointed various justices of the peace, and I give them credit for having done their utmost, like all Governments, to see that any men appointed would do

justice between man and man. There has been a great deal of discussion lately and considerable anxiety on the part of the community with regard to the finances. It is true our deficit has increased during the last year or two, and I believe it now amounts to a considerable sum ; but in my opinion there is not the slightest cause for anxiety on the part of the people of this country, and my reason for coming to that conclusion is that the people are apt to forget we set aside a sum—perhaps the Treasurer can tell me the exact amount, I believe £250,000 a year—towards a sinking fund. If we had not set aside that sum we should have had a surplus last year. I believe that no other State in Australia has anything like the same amount set down as sinking fund, and the other States realise this and give us credit to a certain extent for having our sinking fund. At the recent Premiers' Conference our Premier mentioned that we could not afford certain matters on account of having a deficit ; but the other Premiers said "Deficit ! Why there is no deficit at all ; you have a sinking fund of £250,000." That shows how good our credit is. [Mr. Illingworth : We borrowed on that basis.] True ; but I do not believe it has had the slightest effect on the people who take up our bonds. [Mr. Walker : What would they do if we repudiated ?] It is not a question of repudiation. I suggest to the Treasurer that he should approach some of these bondholders—this scrip is held in some cases in large sums—to see if there would be any objection to their relieving us of the obligation of the sinking fund. I believe there would be none. [Mr. Bath : Not if we give them consideration.] I do not believe they would ask for a consideration. At any rate it is well worth trying. If the Treasurer found on inquiry that the bulk of our scrip was held in large blocks—I am not dealing with the small holders—and if they could relieve us of the obligation we entered into to provide this sinking fund, it would be well worth considering. [Mr. Walker : It would be humiliating to the State.] There is no necessity to ask for it publicly, as there are many ways of arranging it, and I believe it is well worth

trying. There is another matter that is causing considerable anxiety to the community here, the question of the administration of our railways. There has been a good deal of dissatisfaction expressed, not only here but outside, with regard to the management of our railways. I am well aware that some years ago we passed a Railways Act whereby certain powers were given to the Commissioner of Railways; and I believe it has been said in this House by various Ministers, both present and past, that the effect of that Act has been to confer practically the supreme control of our railways on the Commissioner of Railways. I do not admit that to be the case. I still consider that we have a large amount of Ministerial control over these railways; and to prove that I should like to mention two or three facts which I think should be sufficiently convincing to show the Minister for Railways that we have Ministerial control. I know of instances where the Minister for Railways has approved of rates suggested by the Commissioner of Railways, and where afterwards he has reduced those rates. As an instance, take the various agricultural railways recently built. In that case the Commissioner of Railways fixed certain rates for goods and passengers along those lines, and these rates were formally approved of by the Minister; but several months afterwards we found that those rates were reduced, I believe under instructions and by the order of the Minister for Railways. We find too that certain large railway works have been constructed. For instance take the construction of the duplication of the line from Perth to Armadale which cost a considerable amount of money; I believe it has cost something like £30,000. That work was constructed, I do not say by the direct authority of the Minister, but at any rate the Commissioner of Railways constructed that railway and received the sanction of the Minister for that work. [*Mr. Gull: Afterwards.*] I will mention another instance. In Perth a short time ago the Commissioner of Railways proposed making some additions to the Perth railway station, and plans were drawn for

the works under the instructions of the Commissioner of Railways; but afterwards people who lived near that railway station complained of the proposed additions, and the member for Perth brought the matter before the House and protested against these additions being made. It had this effect that the Minister for Railways gave instructions for these works to cease. I should mention that previously the gentleman who was Minister for Railways at the time—I believe it was Mr. Rason—denied that he had given his approval for these particular works; but when the papers were brought forward there was the signature of the Minister; there was his writing showing his approval of these particular works. So there is an instance where the Minister had approved of these works but afterwards gave instructions that the additions were not to be carried out. It is another instance showing that the Minister practically was able to over-ride the decision of the Commissioner of Railways. I can give another instance. I have dealt so far with the question of fixing rates, showing where the Minister has been able to fix rates, also to reduce them; I have shown where he has ratified and approved of the construction of various railway works, and also where he has given instructions that certain proposed railway works were not to be carried out. I can now give an instance of where the Minister has interfered with regard to the fixing of wages. A short time ago I think certain men in Geraldton complained that they were not getting a proper rate of wage. The Commissioner of Railways decided on the amount of wages that should be paid to these men, and the scale that he approved I think was in existence about a week or a fortnight. These men complained, and the Minister I believe on his own initiative—at any rate he approved of it—gave instructions that the rate of these men's wages was to be increased. [*Mr. T. L. Brown: They could not get men to take the place of the others, so the department had to do it.*] I am not here to argue whether these decisions on the part of the Minister were right or wrong: I dare say they may have been

right or they may have been all wrong; but I desire to show the House that repeatedly we have had instances of the power of the Ministers to supervise and to control these railways. I hope I have established that fact, that hitherto we have had a Minister who has, when he thought fit, interfered with the railway management. Having regard to the fact that we have had Ministers who have not refrained in cases where they thought fit to take part in the management of railways, I think they have evidently realised that they are responsible to a certain extent for the management of these railways. I should like the House to give consideration to that fact. During the last few months we have had various reports published in the Press made by Mr. Chinn, and I am sure the House will agree with me that the thanks of the House and of the general public are due to Mr. Chinn for the valuable information he has given us with regard to the management of these railways. It seems strange to me that an outsider like Mr. Chinn should be able to give us such valuable information with regard to the cost and management of our railways, when the persons who are responsible for the management of these railways do not appear to be able to do so. There have been repeated complaints on the part of the public about the high rates charged for freights. I know in my own case I have repeatedly brought this matter before various Ministers. For instance take the case of the agricultural lines which I view with considerable interest. I mentioned to the Premier the various high freights and passenger rates charged to the general public who use these railways, and I found that I could get no satisfaction. I remember very well at the time I was told that I was always complaining. I quite admit that I always have complained of the high freights charged upon our railways, but unfortunately in each instance that I complained to a Minister—I am speaking not only of this particular Ministry, but of past Administrations, Labour and non-Labour—I was invariably met with the reply that our Ministers had no control over our railways and that it was

the Commissioner of Railways who was responsible. It is most unsatisfactory that our railways should be run under these conditions. Either our Ministers are responsible, or they are not responsible; and indeed I have always tried to impress on the various Railway Ministers since our railways have been run under the present Railways Act, that if they do not approve of the various schemes and proposals made by the Commissioner of Railways they should not, like automatons, sign their approval to the various schemes suggested by the Commissioner of Railways if they do not approve of them, but that it was their duty to object to them and to bring the matter up before Parliament. During the last few years we have had the most extraordinary things done in that Railway Department. For instance when a railway station, that magnificent structure, was built at Fremantle during the last few years, not so much under the auspices of the present Minister, but under at least three or four Ministers, all of them when the matter was brought before them, like helpless creatures said that they could do nothing at all, and allowed an enormous waste of money on a piece of extravagance like that railway station that has cost something like £40,000. [*Mr. Davies*: Cheap if it was required.] I do not know that it was required. I am certain it was not necessary to spend a huge sum like that in building a railway station. [*Mr. T. L. Brown*: That sum would build a spur railway.] I do not regard the building of an expensive station as a remunerative piece of business.

At 6.15, the Speaker left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. FOULKES (continuing) : At the time of the adjournment I was referring to Mr. Chinn's reports with regard to our railway system. One cannot help regretting that Mr. Chinn did not make these reports say 12 months ago, for if they had been made public at that time, it would have meant a saving to this country of something like £100,000. One is almost forced to regret that he has

not been in a position to act as Minister for Railways during that time. If he had done so, I feel sure that this State would have saved something like the amount which I have mentioned. Ministers and members of this House realise how much we require a large revenue in order to carry on the Government of this country. We have had Ministers and many members advocating additional taxation, and they have complained that there is not sufficient money to carry on with and to meet the increasing demands which are being made upon the Government. Here we have a huge business which, it has been shown, can with careful management be worked much more inexpensively than it has been in the past. I venture to think that if more careful attention is paid to the working of the railways during the next 12 months there will not be the slightest need of imposing fresh taxation on the people. Mr. Chinn's reports show conclusively to my mind that it is not new taxation that is required, but merely the more careful management of our railways. The Premier in a speech he made recently at Bunbury, admitted the fact that the management of the railways had cost far too much money in comparison with what it cost to run a similar department in Queensland. He has practically pledged himself to say that our railways will be carried on at less expense in the future, but I would impress upon the Government that it will not do to let the railways drift as regards management, and it behoves them to pay more particular attention to that branch of the service. We had it announced in the House last week by one Minister, I think the Premier, that it is proposed to appoint a new Commissioner of Railways, who is to be a man of world-wide experience. I regretted to hear him say that he did not propose that this gentleman should commence his duties before January 1st of next year. That means that six months must elapse before the appointment is made. I think the time has arrived when the Government should take immediate steps to appoint a man to take charge of the department. I regret that they did not

think fit six or twelve months ago to make inquiries for a fit and proper person for the position.

The Minister for Railways : What would you pay a highly qualified man ?

Mr. FOULKES : If you get the right man, I would be agreeable to pay him say £3,000 a year.

The Minister : In order to do that we would have to amend the Act.

Mr. FOULKES : I would not object to any amendment of the Act in that direction. I think that all parties in the House are prepared to assist in amending the Railways Act, as has been indicated. We all knew that Mr. George's time as Commissioner would expire at the end of June, and provision should have been made to fill that position at once. In December of last year a Bill should have been introduced giving power to the Government to amend the Act in the direction required, such amending Act not to take effect until July 1st of this year. It is quite true that the Minister gave a pledge last session, or some time last year, that the Government would not take any steps with regard to appointing a new Commissioner until Parliament was consulted. It is easy enough to consult Parliament and a motion should have been tabled last session, whereby the feeling of this House could have been obtained as to whether they thought there should be one or three Commissioners. Unfortunately, by waiting until Mr. George retires, a considerable amount of delay has been occasioned. I recognise the fact that it will take three or four months before we can obtain a suitable man, but I would suggest to the Minister for Railways that he should at once table a motion so as to find out from the House whether they desire to have one or three Commissioners appointed. [Mr. Bolton : Or none at all.] As the hon. member says, or none at all. The sooner that fact is ascertained definitely the better. Even to-morrow the Minister should introduce a motion to that effect. [*The Minister for Railways* : I will bring a Bill down very shortly; as quickly as possible.] That is rather vague. It is a most pressing matter and one of the most urgent things

that we have to attend to this session. I would strongly urge the Minister to say that at any rate next week a Bill will be introduced, and that in the meantime he will take steps to advertise in England or anywhere else in the world he thinks fit, giving due notice that the Government of this country require a man to act as Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. Taylor: You might get him on the spot.

Mr. Bolton : The Bill has not become law yet.

Mr. FOULKES: As to the question of Ministerial control of the railways, I admit that the present Minister has a good deal to attend to. He holds not only the position of Minister for Railways, but also that of Minister for Mines. This is a most unfortunate allotment of Ministerial functions. There are three Departments of this State that require most particular and urgent attention ; they are the Mines, Agriculture, and Railways, and they are the three most important Ministerial Departments. What do we find with regard to them? Two of the most important ones are handed over to the control of one Minister; these are the Railways and the Mines. The post of Minister for Mines is quite sufficient for any one man to look after, and it is impossible for him if he wants to travel about our mining districts, which is very necessary, to spare time for any other Department. He will find now that, owing to the North-West having developed from a mineral point of view as it has done within the last few months, it will be impossible for him to travel through these districts and look after that work properly in addition to undertaking the control of the Railway Department. Then there is the Agricultural Department controlled by a gentleman who has bestowed a great deal of attention to his work, but it is well known that he unfortunately is only able to devote three days of the week to it. That means that we have one Minister and a half attending to the three most important Departments of this State. [*Mr. Taylor:* Which is the half?] One Minister attends half his time. The other Departments are not so heavily worked. Take the Treasury.

While I quite agree that this is a very important Department it is not a heavy one to attend to. We know that when Sir John Forrest was Premier of this State he took that Department because, I suppose, he concluded that it would be necessary to devote a great deal of time to the duties of Premier, and therefore would not have time to look after a large Department as well. [*Mr. Taylor:* He ran the whole concern.] He realised, I feel sure, that it was a light Department. Then we have the Department of the Attorney General, and all of us know that this is not a heavy Department. The Attorney General is an able man, and I feel sure that he will agree with me that his duties are not particularly burdensome. [*Mr. Taylor :* Read his speeches at Kalgoorlie, where he said that he had no time to leave his office.] Then there is the Works Department. I admit that there is a lot of work to do in that Department and there can be no doubt that the member for Fremantle has given satisfaction in the way he has carried out his duties as head of that Department. I congratulate him and also the member for Menzies (Hon. H. Gregory) for their success; the latter upon the manner in which he has carried out the work of the Mines Department; but none can congratulate him or anyone else who has held the post of Minister for Railways for the last three years upon any success they have gained in administering that department. A good deal of attention has been given to the question of land settlement and immigration. I would like to call the Government's attention to the fact that this question of immigration is receiving the attention not only of this Parliament and Government, but also, judging from the speeches that have been made by the Prime Minister and Sir William Lyne lately, by the Federal Parliament as well. They propose to give this matter their very serious consideration. Sir William Lyne, judging from the speeches he has made during the last few years, is not particularly favourable to the system of immigration; but from the speech he made when in Perth a few weeks ago we can see how strongly he has been impressed with the

success which Canada has achieved in attracting immigrants to her shores. I feel certain we shall soon find that the Federal Government will give this matter their earnest attention, with the result that a certain volume of immigration will come to Australia; and it behoves us to see that we do not neglect to secure immigrants from Great Britain and Ireland. Judging by the recent statements of Sir William Lyne on the eve of his departure from London, he does not seem to consider Western Australia a good country for immigrants; therefore we shall meet with considerable competition from the Federal Government, who appear to know very little about our agricultural lands; and it will be necessary for us to pay even greater attention to immigration, otherwise we shall find that whatever number of immigrants do come to Australia they will not come to this State, for the Federal Government will endeavour to see that they go East. From what I have seen in our agricultural districts we have a splendid prospect before us. I do not pose as an agricultural authority, but I have had the good fortune to come in contact with a great number of agriculturists who have taken up lands in various parts of the country, and the vast majority of them are most sanguine as to the future. This State has witnessed an enormous development in agriculture and land settlement generally. Of recent years a large area of land has been taken up, and during the last two years a great advance has been made in the system of cultivation. Only a few years ago there were only three systems of land cultivation carried on. Under one system the sole idea of the farmers, more particularly in the Eastern Districts, was to grow corn, and in the South-Western Districts they devoted themselves entirely to running cattle in the bush, while in the North-West they relied entirely upon wool-growing. During the last two years the scene has changed, for the people in the South-Western and the Eastern Districts are beginning to see that our land is capable of growing grasses quite as good as those of the Eastern States. A large sum of

money has been spent here in various experiments with grasses. Only a few weeks ago I met a large farmer in the Katanning District, who told me that he was spending no less than £56 in buying a particular variety of grass-seed. I thought this was a large sum to expend on one variety; but he told me that for the last two years he had been experimenting with that grass, and realised that it would probably be a great success. We all know what splendid times the Eastern States are having; and the prosperity they enjoy is entirely owing to the success of their farmers and squatters. I feel sure there is a good time coming amongst the farmers and other settlers here. Of course, in some cases there are failures, as there must be in every trade; and unfortunately, some of these men have not been able to carry on as we should like; but taken as a whole, they are most sanguine about the future, and I must congratulate the Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department (Hon. J. Mitchell) on the successful manner in which he has carried out his duties. The Agricultural Bank Act, passed last session, has done great good. [*Mr. Angwin* : The people will not apply for the money.] The statement that people do not apply to the bank for money shows, unfortunately, that the hon. member does not know much of the subject. The Agricultural Bank is inundated to-day with applications for loans; the loan money has been the means of starting in business a great number of men; and much credit is due to the Minister for introducing the amending Bill. I have nothing farther to add, except to say that we need not be disheartened during the next year or two, as I feel certain that the State has splendid prospects, and that all we need is more careful management of the Railway Department and due attention to the mining industry.

Mr. P. COLLIER (Boulder) : In dealing with the motion for the adoption of the Address, the first question that occurs to me is, how have the Government carried out their administrative

duties during the parliamentary recess ? We have been told during the last week or two, both in the Press and on the platform, that party politics should be dropped ; in short, we have been told we should be patriotic. Personally, if patriotism means that we should refrain from criticising the administrative acts of the Government during the recess, I hope that not only in this House but throughout the State there will be an abundance of non-patriots. If we go back to the close of last session, we shall remember that the cry of the Government was that they should be allowed to go into recess. We were told that the country required continuity of administration. That cry not only proceeded from the Government, but had become the parrot-cry of Government supporters throughout the State—that the country was languishing for sound administration. How have the Government carried out the promises then given ? No sooner did the House adjourn than the Treasurer skipped away to the flowery land of the geisha girl, and he stayed there for no less than four whole months ; and I can only say, if it is possible for any man soundly to administer his department at such a distance, his billet must be easy indeed. The only benefit the State had from him during the whole four months was, I believe, that the messenger in his department could go on the first of each month to pay into the bank to the Treasurer's credit a sum of about £83, totalling, I believe, £332. That is a sample of sound administration in the Treasurer's department. [*Mr. Scaddan* : About Ministerial expenses when travelling ?] I am not taking them into consideration. I have no objection to Ministers' travelling about to make themselves acquainted with the requirements of the different portions of the State, but I do object altogether to Ministers' travelling to foreign countries. [*Mr. Troy* : He was looking for markets.] Markets, perhaps, for the product of some private business, but not affecting the welfare of this State. The next department to which I shall refer is that controlled by the At-

torney General ; and in doing so I say it is my intention, notwithstanding what has been said by some members on the other (Government) side, to criticise the administration of justice during the last six months in this State. I altogether differ from those members who say it is unfair for a member of this House to indulge in criticism of men who, it is said, are not able to reply. I say I have been sent here, and I consider it my duty to criticise any public servant so far as the forms of the House will allow me to do so, when I consider he is doing that which is inimical to the welfare of the people. I did expect that the Attorney General, particularly as he had given close attention to his department, would have effected some reform. When that gentleman went to Kalgoorlie he told us that he had been unable to accept many invitations to visit different parts of the State, because he found that if he absented himself for even one day from his department his work fell into arrear. On the other hand we are told by the member for Claremont (*Mr. Foulkes*) that the department of the Attorney General is not a very hard one to administer. If that be so, I wonder how the other Ministers who have, for a considerable portion of the recess, been absent from their departments, have got along at all. I consider, with the member for Murchison (*Mr. Holman*), that the manner of administering justice in our police courts is a crying scandal. We had an exhibition of this at Fremantle, when quite recently a foreigner who arrived on our shores, and was perhaps unacquainted with our laws and language, was by the resident magistrate sent to prison for one month without having an opportunity of calling any witnesses or any evidence in his defence. With regard to that, a public body in Fremantle, I believe, made a request that the magistrate should be removed, and received a very indignant reply from the Attorney General. Coming to the resident magistrate in Perth I have only this to say. In the Perth police court, throughout the timber lockout case, no man who sat there and listened could come to any other conclusion than that

the magistrate was biased. Just as a sample, he was called on to decide whether the occurrence in question was a lockout or a strike. That was the issue placed before him. But he went out of his way to comment on the action of a member of this House, and said that the advice given by the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) to the men, as to the quantity of work they should do for a certain wage, was dishonest advice. Now I contend it had nothing to do with the magistrate whether that advice was honest or dishonest. That it was dishonest I do not allow ; but assuming for a moment that it was dishonest, it was entirely outside the magistrate's jurisdiction to comment on the fact. He had to decide whether the stoppage of work was a lockout or a strike; and the speech on which he commented did not in any way assist him in arriving at a decision. I intend to refer to a few of those magistrates, to show that it is time a radical change was made in the composition of our police court benches. Only last week a case was being tried in Kalgoorlie, with the resident magistrate presiding. In that case the manager of the Great Boulder mine (Mr. Richard Hamilton), and two working miners, were charged with a breach of the Mines Regulation Act ; and in giving his decision the resident magistrate said :—

"I consider, on the weight of evidence, although Martin (one of the working miners) removed the men, that he did not instruct them not to pass to and from that way. He said he did, but all the workmen say that he did not. In this respect he was negligent, and Fordham was injured. I fine Martin £5. With regard to Mr. Hamilton my opinion is that all reasonable precautions were taken to make the place safe as soon as practicable when it was found to be dangerous. I don't see what he could do. It was Martin who was to blame. The charge against Mr. Hamilton is dismissed."

That is the kind of snobbery which should not be expected in courts of justice. The two men who were miners were called Martin and Fordham, but the other defendant who was the Chairman of the

Chamber of Mines and the Manager of the Great Boulder Mine was called Mr. Hamilton. That may be a very small matter, but it is an instance of the class bias of those gentlemen who preside on the police court benches. The next matter I feel called upon to deal with is in connection with the department controlled by the Colonial Secretary. And in dealing with this department in the first place I come to the attitude of the Government in regard to the timber dispute. The Colonial Secretary I believe administers the Inspection of Machinery Act, or he is supposed to. It was to him that the request was made that the Act should be administered impartially. It was brought under Mr. Connolly's notice that at Yarloop a man was in charge of an electric lighting engine who had no certificate, and although an inspector was sent down to make inquiries as to the truth of the allegations, which were proved to be correct, still no action was taken. The Minister justified himself by a section in the Act which provides that machinery used for domestic purposes may be exempt from the Act. It was an extraordinary reading of the Act to say that an electric light machine at Yarloop can be construed into a domestic machine because it supplies a few lights to the town of Yarloop. A case occurred at Jarrahdale. A man was in charge of a machine at Jarrahdale for over a fortnight and the attention of the Minister was called to the fact, and an inspector was despatched there to inquire into the truth of the statement. Although the inspector reported that the facts were as stated, the Minister declined to take any action. We have had the Premier tonight, and frequently members of the Government, waxing indignant because members in Opposition charged them with assisting the Combine. What can be said of a Minister who declines in a specific case like that to take action? It proves the contention of the Opposition that the Government all through have shown a leaning towards the Combine. There is another matter that occurs to me that happened in recess. A deputation waited on the Colonial Secretary with reference to the action taken by the Gov-

ernment referring to the rules of unions in regard to political action, and the Colonial Secretary on that occasion gave the most extraordinary reply I ever heard in my life. He was asked by a member of the deputation to point out the section of the Act under which he had acted, that unions could not use their funds for political purposes, and he replied that there is nothing in the Act which prohibits it, but that it was not thought of when the Bill was going through the House. Did not think of it! So presumably the Colonial Secretary took it on himself to read that into the Act. We have to-night had repeated by the member for Claremont a remark which has done service throughout the State for many years, and that was in reference to the Minister for Mines. The member said the Minister for Mines was the best Minister that the department has ever had. Nobody takes the views of the member for Claremont as being of any value in connection with mining; at the same time this remark has been repeated so frequently around the banqueting table and in after-dinner speeches by Ministers themselves, that they are beginning to believe it is true. During last session this House passed an amending Mines Regulation Act, and Section 5 of that Act regarding the appointment of inspectors and their duties provides that the Governor may appoint fit and proper persons who have had no less than five years' experience in underground mining work, and have passed an examination prescribed by the Minister, to be inspectors of mines. I do not know how it is, but notwithstanding the fact that this Act did not come into force until 1st June this year, six months after the date it was passed, in the meantime the Minister for Mines availed himself of the opportunity to appoint two additional inspectors.

Mr. Heitmann: He made the appointment.

Mr. COLLIER: He made the appointment which has been charged against him, and as far as I am concerned I firmly believe he delayed bringing the Act into operation so as to make these appointments and evade this section in

the Act. The Minister's reply to that charge appeared in Saturday's morning paper, and this is what he says :—

"On February 22, 1907, applications were invited by advertisement in the Press for two inspectors of mines, candidates being notified that they must give details of mining experience, and that they would be expected to present themselves for examination, if thought eligible after examination of their credentials by a board of examiners. Applications closed on March 16, 1907. A board of examiners, consisting of the State mining engineer, the director of the School of Mines of Western Australia, and inspector of mines W. F. Greenard, was appointed on March 18, 1907. The board met on March 23, 1907, and considered the applications of 62 candidates. The two who were finally chosen were already holders of certificates granted after examination, one in New South Wales, the other in England, which, in the opinion of the board, rendered farther written examination unnecessary, but both were required to come up for *viva voce* examination by the State mining engineer, which both passed quite satisfactorily. The requirements of Section 5 of the Mines Regulation Act, 1906, were complied with throughout, as to underground experience and examination, notwithstanding that the Act was not brought into operation till June 1, 1907."

I contend that is a distinctly inaccurate statement. The requirements of the Act were not complied with. It is true that the Minister states that these two gentlemen passed examinations, one in New South Wales and the other in England, but what the nature of the examinations was we are not given to know. We know nothing at all about the examination of the gentleman in New South Wales, and as for the examination passed by the gentleman in England it is worth very little. I have very little knowledge of England; but I believe there are no great gold mines there, that mining in England is confined chiefly to coal mining, and the nature of the work in coal mines, copper mines, or tin mines is

so different from what it is in gold mines, that examinations in England are valueless as far as this country is concerned. [Mr. Bath: The other candidates did not get a chance.] Those were the only two called up for examination, and the Minister says, or it says here, "they shall pass an examination prescribed by the Minister." In this case it was not an examination prescribed by the Minister, and that was evading the spirit and the intention of the Act. The Act does not give the Minister power at any time to say what the nature of the examination should be. No matter how the Minister for Mines may wriggle over the matter, he absolutely evaded the spirit and the intention of the Act. [Mr. Johnson: He did not get the best men.] He did not get the best men. In this matter members of the Government side will bear with me a little while. Only last session we were practically scoffed at in endeavouring to get conditions in that Act that would safeguard the lives of the men engaged on the mining fields. I am sorry to say that a large number of members on the Government side paid little regard to our requests at that time. We find that during last year there has been an increase in the number of fatal accidents, from 34 to 40. That is an increase of six over the number for 1905, and 14 of these fatal accidents took place on the East Coolgardie goldfield, that is practically on the Boulder Belt. During 1906 there were 479 serious accidents as against 270 in 1905, and 153 in 1904; the Minister explains these figures by stating that mine managers are beginning to be more careful in reporting serious accidents.

Mr. Scaddan: He said that last year, when there were more accidents.

Mr. COLLIER: It was a legitimate argument last year, because new regulations were introduced in 1905 and in the beginning of 1906, and what was considered a serious accident in 1906 did not constitute a serious accident in 1905; but there has been absolutely no change in the method of reporting accidents during the last two years, so that explanation of the

Minister for this increase is not a correct one.

Mr. Scaddan: It was stated that there were one thousand accidents, and this was given in reply to a question asked in the House last year.

Mr. COLLIER: Of the 475 accidents last year in our mines, 335 were on the Boulder Belt. If that proves anything, it proves there has been an insufficient number of inspections there; and I may tell the House that at one period last year, in December, there was only one inspector, Mr. Hudson, in charge of the East Coolgardie Goldfield. That is a scandalous state of affairs. Year after year mining is becoming a more dangerous occupation on these goldfields; the mines are continually getting deeper and the nature of the work is becoming more dangerous, therefore there is greater need for efficiency in the matter of inspection; but in spite of that, one man was left in charge of a whole district like Kalgoorlie and Boulder during one month last year. The State Mining Engineer admits that the inspectors do not inspect the mines more than once in three months. An inspection of that nature is a farce and of no value whatever. While we are unable to give sufficient money to pay for inspectors, I notice that only yesterday a deputation from the Chamber of Mines waited on the Colonial Secretary and on the Minister for Mines—by the way it was a secret deputation, and it is extraordinary that whenever a deputation from the Chamber of Mines wishes to interview the Minister, it is done quietly, no one knowing anything about it, but if any member from the Opposition side of the House wishes to take a deputation to a Minister, it must be done publicly and the Press admitted. Both these deputations waited on the Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Mines on Monday. [Mr. Scaddan: It was a private matter.] I have a fair idea of their request, that increased police protection should be given to the goldfields to cope with the gold stealing, and I have no doubt their request was granted. There was a paragraph in one of the newspapers last week, that it was the inten-

tion of the authorities to double the detective force on the goldfields. But while money can be found for doubling the detective staff and for safeguarding these wealthy mines, no money can be found for doubling the staff of our inspectors, a matter of much greater importance to my mind. Showing that the inspections were wholly inadequate, I need only say that during the whole of last year there were only nine prosecutions for breaches of the Mines Regulation Act. I venture to say that I could walk over the Golden Mile any day in the year and point out where the Act is being evaded in more cases than nine. Three of these breaches took place in Kalgoorlie; one being the prosecution of a manager for allowing a sand dump to be worked in an unsafe manner, whereby one of the workmen lost his life; and he was actually fined £2 and £3 18s. costs. That is the value of the workman's life. When fines of that nature are imposed, it makes no difference whether the managers are prosecuted or not. We have been told by the Premier that during his trip to Brisbane, which he claims was absolutely necessary in the interests of the State, he was surprised at the unfederal spirit shown by the representatives of the different States at that conference. The Premier states that at the Brisbane conference a shibboleth was almost universal, "What was best for my State!" I say that the opinions expressed at that conference, and the feelings of those constituting the conference, are no guide to the feelings of the people of the Eastern States. If there was an unfederal feeling shown by the different delegates at that conference, it does not show that Western Australia will not get a fair deal when the matters affecting her interests are threshed out in the Federal Parliament; and that is just the reason why I hold that the Premier's trip to Brisbane was absolutely a farce, because no matter what decisions were arrived at by that conference, they had no binding effect whatever, they could only be in the nature of suggestions, which the members of the Federal Parliament may reject with scorn, if they choose, when these come

before them. That being so, a gathering of Premiers in any portion of the Commonwealth to deal with matters which a Federal Parliament alone has the right to decide is an absolute waste of time.

The Premier: Why did the Federal Government, as represented by the Treasurer, ask the Premiers to discuss the questions?

Mr. COLLIER: I am not prepared to say why a gentleman like the Federal Treasurer should ask anything. All I can say is that the Federal Treasurer does not represent the federal feeling of any portion of Western Australia; not of my portion at any rate, nor practically that of any constituency in this State. We were told by the Premier, in his speech at Bunbury, that the State has practically turned the corner, that we are on the high road to prosperity again. The Premier became quite poetical and talked about "the tide of fortune bringing us on to prosperity." He said that with careful administration of the finances this was going to be brought about. Nobody would accuse the Premier of being humorous or in any way sarcastic, but I am inclined to think that the Premier was inclined to be sarcastic in regard to the Treasurer when he said that with careful administration of the finances the State would be on the high road to prosperity. If we turn to the principal industry of the State we find that the prosperity the Premier speaks about does not exist. We are informed in the Governor's Speech that mining development during the past year has progressed most successfully. It seems to me that Governors' Speeches will shortly become famous for inaccurate statements; because if we look at the facts we will find that it is not so. Last year our gold yield decreased to the extent of 160,769 ounces. [*Mr. Hudson: Dividends kept up.*] That is another matter. Not only in gold, but there was a decrease in the value of minerals to the extent of £580,190. It has been said that the decrease in the gold yield amounts to very little after all, because it has perhaps been brought about by the decreased production of one or two mines; but looking over the whole of

the State we find that it is not so, because in 1906 there were forty-eight producing mines less than there were in 1905, while leases also decreased. We find that in 1906 the leases in force decreased, as compared with the previous year, by 296 with an acreage of 2,903. That shows, if it shows anything, that the tendency of our mining industry is, as it has been for some years past, in a decreasing direction; and it is not to be wondered at if we look at the report of the Mines Department and see the amount the Government spent last year in assisting prospectors. It has been the stock argument of the Minister for Mines that it is the policy of the Government to at all hazards assist the prospectors; and that cry has been taken up by members on the Government side of the House representing farming constituencies who have not perhaps taken sufficient interest in the subject to know that the statement is not correct. We find according to the report that in the whole of the year the amount spent under the Mines Development Act of 1902 amounted to £16,994 only, and there were one or two questionable items included in it, such as water supply for Bulong, £2,500 and other items. I hold that if our mining industry is to be maintained a considerably larger sum than that must be spent every year. It is ridiculous to expect that we are going to develop our outback goldfields by the expenditure of a paltry sum of that kind. Double that amount is very often spent on some spur railway in the bush which is not going to pay working expenses to my mind for many years to come. It is the duty of this State, in order to find mines which are going to take the place of our mines that are fast working out, to spend at least £50,000 a year in assisting prospectors to open up new goldfields. If that is not done, in my opinion there is a serious future before the mining industry of this State. The Premier of course in his optimism relies on the farming industry to pull the State through. He boasts that last year we succeeded in inducing 883 immigrants to immigrate to this State. Why, I say

that our immigration policy is becoming the laughing-stock of the world. We have bureaux in London, bureaux at Fremantle, and immigration bureaux at Melbourne. It will be hard for a tourist shortly to go anywhere but he will strike up against a Western Australian immigration bureau with a staff of officers. [Mr. Gordon: What do we want better than that?] If we could only exchange the hon. member for some of the immigrants I should say they would be welcome. But does it pay us to go to all this expense for lecturers in the old country, and officers of that kind, and bureaux in order to gain an addition of 883 during the year? [Mr. Bath: We did not gain that number.] We did not gain that number. That is the number that arrived in the State; but I have no doubt a considerably larger number left our shores. While we are chasing round after these immigrants and using the taxpayers' money to get them, men who have been here for the last 10 or 12 years helping to develop the State are leaving our shores and going back to the East. It only needs a wise policy on the part of the Government to get all the immigration required without this forced system of immigration. New Zealand has increased her population during the last 10 or 12 years. The arrivals over departures there have been something like 50,000; but New Zealand did not gain all that population by these frantic efforts of agents, lecturers and bureaux scattered all over the world. She adopted a wise policy of legislation and the people drifted there naturally, just as population will drift, like water down hill, while there are inducements to go to a country. No money spent on forced immigration will be a success if the conditions in the country will not allow the people, when they arrive here, or those already in the State, to earn a decent living. It is just like putting water into a sieve; put it in at the top and it runs out again at the bottom. Our land settlement policy has been boomed a good deal lately, and the other night the Premier claimed that it did not matter whether those who were taking up our land were residing on it or not, so long as the land

was being worked. I say that it matters a great deal indeed. It is distinctly unfair to a man who takes up land under the non-residential conditions that others should take it up under the residential conditions on better terms and be allowed to evade the conditions. That has been going on for years in the State. I pointed out some time ago where men who took up land years ago under residential conditions have not been complying with the Act; and no attempt has been made to compel them to do so. I know of men on our goldfields who took up land under the residential conditions, who have never been near their land and have no intention of going near it. I have no desire to prevent their taking up land, but let them do it under clauses of the Act which will allow them to reside wherever they like. Whenever it comes to a gentleman's privilege to deliver a policy speech we generally have a budget of figures regarding the wealth of the country. We are told how rich our mining resources are, how rich our agricultural resources are, and our pastoral industry; but it appears to me that the wealth of a country does not depend upon the total wealth of these different industries. If we look round this State we have to ask ourselves who owns this wealth? It is not a matter of the total wealth of our mining industry, or any other industry, but it is a matter of how that wealth is distributed and who owns it. We certainly have one of the richest gold-mining countries in the world; but who owns our gold mines, and where does all the wealth of them go? Except that which is paid in wages, every penny made is going out year by year. Last year our mining industry paid dividends to the extent of £1,994,000, practically just under two millions. The value of the gold output in 1896 amounted to £1,168,000, in 1906 it had risen to £7,623,000, and in that time we paid a total in dividends of about £15,750,000. I ask any hon. member what have we as an asset for all this? We have nothing but a small hole in the ground, and in a few short years when the wealthy mines are worked out—and it is no use disguising the fact that the

richest mines are being worked out rapidly—we shall have merely the satisfaction of knowing that the mining industry has produced gold to the value of £70,000,000 or £80,000,000. That will be of very little use to the people who will be left here and who will have to pay the interest and sinking fund on the various works of the State carried out while the mining industry was in a "boom" period. It seems to me that we are living in a fool's paradise. It is the duty of the people in this State to get a far greater share of that wealth than they are doing at the present time. We are obtaining now merely a beggarly sum of about £95,000 a year from the dividend tax; that is wholly inadequate considering the vast rate at which the mines are being worked out. It is the duty of the Government to take at least double that amount, or say £250,000, from those dividends, and set the sum aside in order to assist prospectors and perhaps thereby discover some mines which will take the place of those which are being worked out. The proposal of the Government with regard to the subsidising of the cattle kings in the North-West seems to me a highly unfair one to the taxpayers of this State. The Governor's Speech referring to the pastoral industry states:—"Magnificent as have been the developments in the pastoral industry during the past ten years the present season is confidently expected to eclipse all previous records." If this statement be true, why cannot these gentlemen provide their own freezing works? [*Mr. Bolton*: So they would if they were left alone.] I believe they would. The Minister for Works when speaking a fortnight ago told his audience that what they had to fight was socialism; the so-called anti-socialistic Government is always harping upon the socialism of the Labour party. What we on this side of the House have to fight is the iniquitous brand of socialism propounded by the Government. There is socialism for the cattle kings, also for the farmers in the direction of getting advances from the Agricultural Bank, dairying experts, purchase of cows, pigs and lambs, and all that sort of thing,

and we have an expert travelling round the world trying to discover parasites. [*Mr. Angwin*: He should have gone to the Treasury.] Yes, he is going on the wrong road. This same brand of socialism is providing rabbit-proof fences for the squatters in the North-West; but the question is where is the socialism for the people? While all this money is being given to these wealthy magnates, these combines and these monopolists, where is the money for the people? And where is it proposed to set aside any sum for those people who have to earn their own living? There is not one penny of assistance for them, and the monopolists will be enabled to get their talons on the throats of the people. The Minister for Works said that, in connection with the establishment of these freezing works in the Far North, regulations will be introduced to safeguard the interests of the small pastoralists. I have had experience of regulations in connection with wood lines on the goldfields, and I would like to ask the Minister for Mines how are we to expect that the Government will enforce regulations when they refuse to enforce an Act of Parliament with regard to the Timber Combine? It is imposing upon the credulity of the people to say that the regulations will be of any effect. With regard to the regulations for the haulage of firewood and other requisites of the mines on the fields, my experience is that they are not worth twopence. I know of wood companies on the fields which to-day are charging 100 per cent. over and above that charged by the Government. The Treasurer need not look surprised, for it is an absolute fact, and this is being done with the consent of the members of the Government. Apparently they think it is a fair increase to allow a private individual to obtain 100 per cent. above that charged by the State, and in face of that they express some surprise that State enterprises are not paying. As to the proposal for the reform of the Legislative Council I have little faith in the sincerity of the Government in carrying it out. Last session we were told that it was the intention of the Government to reduce the franchise for the Legislative Council, and the Attorney

General, in his pre-ministerial days, went to Kalgoorlie and told an audience there that, whoever was in power, the first measure to be brought forward must be one for the reduction of the franchise of the Legislative Council. In his dramatic fashion he said that a Government which neglected to carry that out would find there was a terrible awakening for them in the future. Throughout the long session last year no effort was made by that gentleman to bring the matter forward. It is true he brought up—I believe two days before the end of the session—a Bill dealing with the question. [*Mr. Bolton*: One day.] Yes, it was one day. In trying to explain his attitude a few weeks ago in Kalgoorlie, the Attorney General said that he was unable to bring the Bill forward earlier as he had not sufficient time owing to the undue amount of criticism indulged in by members of the Opposition. We spent weeks and weeks of our time, and wasted it, on “tin-pot” Bills such as the Police Offences Bill, Second-hand Dealers Bill, and the Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill, and one would imagine that a measure which the Attorney General thought was of such vital importance would have been brought forward, and that at all hazards we should have been given an opportunity of dealing with it. However, when we come to consider the reason which was given for not introducing it, perhaps we will be able to understand why the Attorney General acted as he did. He stated that it was necessary for a measure of that kind to lie on the table of the House of Commons for 18 months before it became law. [*The Treasurer*: Oh, no.] That is the statement he made, but I do not know if it is a fact or not. He said it was necessary that any measure for the altering of the constitution would take 18 months before it could become law, and that it had to remain one session on the table of the House of Commons. [*The Minister for Mines*: They do not have a session of 18 months.] The hon. member knows what I said, and he will admit that if he be honest. What I said was that the Attorney General stated it would take 18 months for the Bill to

become law, seeing that it had to lie for one session on the table of the House of Commons ; at all events if that is not the statement I made it is the one I wish to make. Perhaps in view of the fact that we are to have elections for the Legislative Council next year the Government thought it wise that this amendment should not operate at that time. I would like to know why the Government propose a £15 franchise ? What virtue is there in £15 ? I am quite unable to understand why the qualification should be that sum any more than that it should be £25. If a property qualification is justified at all, £25 is equally justifiable as £15. If the Government are honest in their intention to bring about a reform in the Legislative Council, they should abolish the property qualification altogether. The Attorney General's somersaults in this matter are in keeping with a good many of his other actions since entering political life. When a candidate he said he believed in a land tax without any exemptions whatever. He is absolutely opposed to the expenditure of loan funds on a rabbit-proof fence, and he suggested that if there were no other way of raising funds, the squatter should be made to pay. He was also at that time a strong advocate of the Esperance railway ; now he has gone over to those who, he previously claimed, were responsible for the centralisation policy which had taken place in Perth. It seems to me that what a parliamentary candidate proposes, a portfolio disposes of. The point that shows up the Government in its true generosity is that in regard to electoral reform which provides for preferential voting. I do not know much about the system of preferential voting myself, not having had any experience of it ; but, as usual, the Attorney General knows all about it, and in explaining the matter to an audience at Kalgoorlie he said :—

“ The effect of preferential voting would be hostile as a general rule to a Government majority. For that reason the question had always been dropped by any party in power. The party who were in power were quite content as a general rule to remain sufferers in office. However, they

ought to make an attempt to disassociate themselves from being swayed by personal motives or personal ends. When an Opposition were weak it was a dangerous position of affairs for the country.”

It appears from what he said that while all other Governments in the different States have been afraid to tackle this question, as it would mean increasing the strength of the Opposition, it is left for the present generous Government, who are so solicitous for the welfare of the Opposition, to bring in a measure of this kind in Western Australia, and so tend to strengthen their ranks. [*Mr. Bath* : Do you remember how he advised as to how the new measure would work ?] He stated that under proportional representation the Government could never hope to have a majority of an exorbitant nature. [*Mr. Bath* : Read the illustration.] It is unnecessary to give the illustration now, it is too childish. Just imagine the generosity of the Government in bringing in a measure to strengthen our ranks ! Perhaps he was remembering that the Opposition are likely to appear after the next general elections in a different guise ; and his generosity therefore may not be quite so great. The proposed amendment of the Arbitration Act has been much in evidence, and with it I am quite unable to agree. We are told it is proposed to appoint as representatives of the employers and the employees men who are experts in the different callings in question. Now if the Arbitration Act has failed anywhere, it has failed because the Presidents of the Court have not been experts in the callings dealt with. While I agree it is highly desirable to have as representatives of each side men who have an expert knowledge of the trade on which they are to adjudicate, I say it is more desirable that we should have as President of the Court one with an expert knowledge of the trade ; and so long as we have as President a Supreme Court Judge, so long will the court be a failure. The failure results not from any shortcomings of the President, but because it is impossible for any man whose environment has been set apart altogether from

the industries on which he has to adjudicate to give satisfactory decisions. It is impossible for a man who has practised law all his life, and who has perhaps very little knowledge of commercial and industrial matters, to grasp thoroughly the intricacies of the different industries which come before him for consideration; and for that reason I hold there is greater necessity for altering the *personnel* of the President than for changing the representatives of the employer and employee.

Mr. Bath: The great trouble is the legal restrictions the court places on its own jurisdiction.

Mr. COLLIER: That is so. Before I sit down it is my duty to refer to one matter mentioned the other night by the member for Murchison (*Mr. Holman*); the action of the Attorney General in releasing a person on the goldfields, imprisoned in what is known as the sweated sovereigns case. I do not wish to discuss the details of the case; but in justice to the Attorney General, I, as one who knows the whole of the circumstances, and knows the fresh evidence that was placed before him, must say he was absolutely justified in his action. Nobody will say for a moment that I hold a brief for the Attorney General; but I do say that the man released, of the three imprisoned, was one whom the Attorney General did not know, and who had never lived in the Minister's district, nor did the Attorney General know any of that man's friends; and one of the men not released is one whom, I believe, the Minister does know personally, he having been a resident of the Minister's electorate. Therefore, as one who knows the whole of the facts, I say that the Attorney General's action is perfectly justified. A word as to the reference made last week by the member for Perth (*Mr. H. Brown*) to the Opposition. The hon. member, like a good many outside the House, believes that he hurls some sort of an insult at other members when he describes us as agitators. Speaking for myself I say that the epithet conveys no insult to me, nor to any other man who knows anything of the history of human progress; for throughout the

centuries the men who have been described as agitators have been responsible for the progress of the human race; and in every age the Browns of the day have sneered at those men as agitators. Every milestone along the path of progress and advancement has been erected by the work of agitators; and it is because of their work that men like the member for Perth are able to enjoy the privileges which they enjoy to-day.

Mr. W. T. EDDY (Coolgardie): With other members who have spoken, I desire to congratulate you, sir, on your again presiding over this Assembly, and also to express my loyalty to our Sovereign, quoting the words in his Excellency's Speech, which mean, I take it, our loyalty to the positions we hold as representatives of the people of this State, a part of this great Commonwealth, which is no small part of the Empire. Although many of the speeches in this debate have been charged with great quantities of defamatory matter and other harsh statements, it is pleasing after all to know that the best of good humour has so far prevailed, and I hope that the same good feeling will exist to the end of the session. [*Mr. Taylor:* Do not throw down the apple of discord.] The member interjecting moved recently an amendment to secure an early hour of sitting, and spoke of the times we had last session, when the House sat till the early hours of the morning listening to his long speeches. The "hear, hears" that came from the Opposition benches were, I hope, genuine when the Premier remarked that he hoped we should not indulge in any early-hour sittings this session. Strong accusations have been hurled somewhat broadcast, and it is pleasing that they have all been accepted with very good grace. It seems to me that the privilege of Parliament gives members great freedom, almost too much. It is a case of "I'll have a drink with you in the Corridor, but will give you fits from my seat in Parliament." This may be all right at times, but it is a question whether a member may not go too far. That, however, is just by the way, and after all is a matter for ourselves and

our electors to determine. The bill of fare presented by the Government must certainly be classed as bounteous, and of the 25 paragraphs contained in the Governor's Speech I intend to touch only on two or three which I think are of greatest importance, and probably on two or three other questions that may not appear in the Speech at all. I must congratulate the Premier, who I think should be congratulated all round, on the attention given to the mining industry. [*Labour Members* : Oh !] Notwithstanding the interjections and the laughter of the Opposition, I say that no Government since the commencement of Parliament in Western Australia have given more attention to the great mining industry than have the Moore Government. Notwithstanding the harsh remarks made about the present Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory), the department could not be in more capable hands than his. To carry out the duties appertaining to his important office is no easy task in this vast State ; and the manner in which the Minister has tackled his work is worthy of commendation. He described his last "jaunt," as members opposite call it, to the Nor'-West as a holiday, a fine and instructive holiday. I call it no holiday but a hard task, involving rough travelling through hundreds of miles of dry country, camping out early and late—a mode of travelling very different from that practised in other States where accommodation is much better and more easily obtained. I call it no holiday, and I know of no man in this Parliament who could or would do the all-round hard work the Minister has done, and then class it as a holiday. The financial load which the State has to bear is felt by the mining as by other industries. We notice that during last year a loss of £800 has been made on the public batteries; this against a profit of £2,000 for the previous year, showing the necessity for most careful and economic administration. Although many of us advocated the reduction of battery charges, we cannot blame the Minister for not acceding to every request made at all times and from all parts of the State. We must also con-

gratulate the Minister on many of his projects which have turned out fairly profitable. I will refer first to the slimes plants, of which we have in this State only two ; one at Mulline and the other at Norseman. The departmental estimate for the erection of the slimes plant at Norseman was £2,500. The Minister, thinking the estimate much too high, ordered that the work should be done by private people, and they erected the plant for £1,700. [*Mr. Scaddan* : You are well informed.] It is quite true, and you will have an opportunity of refuting any statement I make. [*Mr. Scaddan* : Have you any doubt about your own statement ?] None whatever. And again, after a month's test of the slimes plant at Norseman, the treatment work was carried out at a cost of 6s. 6d. per ton against a cost of 10s. 6d. at Mulline. The Minister must also be praised for his intention to introduce light batteries, small plants that can be cheaply removed from place to place ; for after all, the cartage of ore is one of the greatest reducers of value, and retards the progress of the industry. The intention of the Government to erect small plants and to test values is certainly to be highly commended. The question of water supply is one of the most important affecting the mining industry, and it is satisfactory to know of the good work done during the last year or two. I shall now refer to one or two schemes : first, the splendid supply provided at Meekatharra, in the district of the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), where an expenditure of £10,000 has enabled the water to be taken right into the town, a distance, I believe, of about nine miles ; and yet the hon. member states that the Government have done nothing. Also at Leonora, in the constituency of another Oppositionist (Mr. Stuart) a splendid supply has been provided for the town and mines, at a cost of £16,000 or £17,000 ; and yet we are told that the Government have done nothing. Again, at Ravensthorpe, in Mr. Hudson's electorate, several large dams have been provided at a cost of £8,500, and at Norseman the mines have been provided with water at a cost of

£12,000 ; yet right along the line members opposite arise to tell us that the Government have done nothing. Again, in the Yilgarn electorate, represented by Mr. Horan, a good water supply has been provided ; and in addition a sum of £10,000 has been spent in shallow boring in various mining districts, and 200ft. of wells ; yet we are told that the Government have done nothing. I am only mentioning a few of these works. On the other hand I submit that the Minister for Mines has too much power, that it is a mistake the Minister should have the right to forfeit a man's claim, as he can do, if the man happens to be away from work for a day. At the same time, care should be taken to prevent shepherding. We should insist on all mining areas being utilised ; but the conditions should be more secure. It is wrong that the Minister or the Government should have power to alter covenants : the conditions should be more clear in the Act itself. The Ministry and the Government may be congratulated on the part they have taken in initiating and opening up that great stock route which is going to mean such a lot to the goldfields. It will be the means of bringing cheap meat to the goldfields, also opening up the pastoral fields there where fortunately water can be obtained at a shallow depth. This will mean cheaper meat for the people, and will give great impetus and encouragement to the mining industry and be of great assistance to the prospector. I strongly urge a big reduction in the carriage of mining timber and other commodities that are supplied to the people on the goldfields. Every facility should be given, notwithstanding what we have heard here, for the encouragement of capital. It is to the interests of our State and the goldfields to give capital all the encouragement we can ; and I venture to state that in Western Australia we have enough low-grade propositions to give employment to all those now out of work. I am just going to quote one little instance, which is a record for Western Australia—I refer to the output last month at Lyndsay's in Coolgardie ; and this is a startler

as showing what can be done. Fifteen men put out 1,480 tons for a yield of 111 ounces odd, averaging just a fraction over $1\frac{1}{2}$ dwt. to the ton. They paid £25 for hire of battery ; £19 Ss. royalty ; £20 for water and £97 for firewood and haulage ; and these men made wages on a fraction over $1\frac{1}{2}$ dwt. to the ton. These were the tributers at Lyndsay's. With economy and carefulness in the introduction of capital we do not know what may happen in Western Australia in the future. Just before I drop the remarks about the mining industry, I wish to say we should give every facility we can to the prospector and at all hazards keep up the standard of the workers and their wages. Now a word or two as to our railways. In addition to the praise and commendation that are due to the Ministry in connection with this matter, had our Premier been a lazy stay-at-home kind of Premier, would we have had the Norseman Railway ? I think not. The Premier was determined to see for himself, and he went ; and now the railway is in course of construction. Ditto the Ravensthorpe line, which will mean a great thing for the southern part of the State. Now we are to have the Mt. Magnet Railway, and the Port Hedland line is to come. All these railways are in the electorates of my friends in Opposition, and yet we find them getting up, one by one, and telling the House and the people of the State that the Government have done nothing. In reference to the railway tariff I submit we should have cheaper carriage for mining machinery, mining timber and mining firewood, also for firewood for household purposes. We find on the fields the wood is getting cut out for miles around, and it is very necessary for household purposes to allow the railway rates and charges for the carriage of firewood, as well as for other things I have mentioned, to be considerably lowered. There is one other matter as to railway charges—and this was mentioned by the member for Greenough (Mr. Stone)—as to sandalwood. It is a crying shame that the charge for sandalwood, which is carried on the back train journey, should stand at such an exorbitant price. I have an

illustration here. Produce, flour, and stuff of that description are taken from Fremantle to Laverton for a charge of £1 12s. per ton—very cheap, too cheap almost in comparison with other things, whereas sandalwood, which the poor fellows in the bush have to cut, pays £3 and £4 per ton for carriage to Fremantle. The whole railway tariff requires revising. The present railway book needs burning or burying. I say without hesitation, and as a commercial man, that I protest against the rates charged, and that our tariff book is an abortion. No one understands it, not even the men on the railways, and not even the Commissioner himself. I just want to give two or three figures showing the charges people on the goldfields are paying for their commodities. Flour, wheat, produce etc., are taken up to Laverton at a cost of £1 12s. Third-class goods—there are so many classes in the book—tea and other household requisites have to pay £11 1s. 7d. per ton—a matter of 700 per cent. on the previous charge I have mentioned. This is preposterous. Then again, kerosene, is another item I would like to mention. The people's light has to pay £7 5s. 6d. as against £1 12s.—an extra charge of between four hundred and five hundred per cent. An 8-ton truck of one class of goods costs £12 16s., while an 8-ton truck of another class costs £58 4s., while there is the same work, the same handling, the same haulage. It is monstrous. Of course the cheap rate is done to assist the farmers. We want to assist the farmers, we wish them all luck and prosperity; but such contrasts as these are unfair to the people on the goldfields, who do not want to be robbed to this extent. I hope some great change in the tariff is made, and that quickly. The tariff charges should be made clear and understandable. As to the railways, a word or two about the Commissioner-ship. I think this work can be done with our own men in the State. I say give them a chance. If out of a staff of 6,000 men in the State we cannot find amongst them a number—one, two or three as the case may be—to run our railways, then it would be a wise thing to sack the lot of them. Mr. George has gone.

I do not think he should ever have been appointed; that is my candid opinion, because I submit we want a man with railway experience. At the same time, I say Mr. George was a hard-working, conscientious man; and I believe now that a lot of the excellent work he has done will be appreciated. There are just two or three other matters here—and I am going to mention one that is not in the Governor's Speech at all. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) in his remarks spoke of the sweating that existed in our State, and said it was on the increase. The committee of inquiry last year, the Sweating Committee, showed that the condition of the workers in the factories of our State compared favourably indeed, if not better than, those of the other States and in other parts of the world. [Mr. Angwin: That is not saying much.] Probably so; but we are pleased after all to find out that the alarming statements were not altogether as true as they were exaggerated from some quarters. But this is not the point I want to touch on. Some of the evidence which was elicited during that inquiry was not published. And perhaps a hint here may be accepted as not out of place from our seats in Parliament. We were told—and the evidence we were receiving was given with the very best of intention and is supposed to be true—we were told that a great percentage of the dresses worn by many earning small wages were more expensive than most wages indicated. I am mentioning this in the hope that it is not true and perhaps as a warning to our girls, and more particularly to the parents of those girls, because I think myself that the parents are after all most to blame. We found during that inquiry that our girls were not receiving that domestic training which would befit them later for the conduct of future homes as mothers and wives. We find in the evidence that it is true that in the city of Perth people were sending away to distant parts of the world for domestic servants. This is no credit to us at all. Some mention has been made in the Governor's Speech of securing more protection for infant life. But a note of warning may help and as-

sist those men and women who are working hard to keep up the moral standard, which may stave off the necessity for the protection mentioned. In reference to Federation, this was touched on; in fact the Premier himself classed it as an incubus, because at present we are not getting too fair an income from the Commonwealth. I believe the time is not far distant when this State will be the Eden of the Commonwealth. The revenue of Western Australia in 1900 was £2,875,000, and it had risen to £3,972,000 in 1906—that in spite of the cessation of all inter-State customs duties. The population increased from 176,000 to 259,000; the savings bank deposits from £1,112,000 to £1,734,000; bank deposits from £4,300,000 odd to £5,550,000; bank assets from £5,742,000 to £7,519,000, and so on. Then again in 1900, 300,000 acres were alienated; in 1901, 351,000 acres were alienated; and so on. I mention these figures to show that Federation has after all only shaken us to our senses; it has stirred us to action and now we are going right ahead. We have produced in gold and minerals values to the amount of £73,000,000, and over £70,000,000 represents gold alone. Last year the value of our gold output was £7,633,749, nearly half the gold production of Australasia and double that of Victoria, while our mining industries alone in Western Australia have employed 19,420 men. I have been at all times and always will be—notwithstanding that the member for Swan is looking so hard at me—an advocate of Federation, and will never regret the step we have taken. We can be kept back but a little longer. The prosperous times elsewhere from good seasons have kept them booming; we have had a lean time in Western Australia; but I submit that we are just now feeling our feet and establishing a foundation. Those who are leading will soon be back to their field while this State I think will romp home the easiest of winners. Those are the few questions I intended to touch upon; but in reference to the gentlemen who have spoken from the opposite side of the House, it is only fair I suppose after all to deal out a little criticism. We

on the Government side get it, and I hope members opposite will give me the same privilege of criticising them. The Leader of the Opposition throughout his speech put the worst possible construction that he could on the affairs of the whole State to our detriment. [*Mr. Bolton: The Premier complimented him.*] I do not care what the Premier said; I am giving my opinion. Instead of helping and keeping up our reputation the hon. member's speech, so far as the interests of this State are concerned, was most damning. Every wrong, every occurrence in the State he puts down to and blames on the Government—the poor Government. His remarks about the Treasurer waiting and hoping for rich men to die were altogether sacrilegious and absolutely rude. The hon. member made mention of that £60,000 odd that we might have gained had a land tax been carried through. We were told that this loss was occasioned because we did not meet in the February session. We all know that this question was unanimously agreed to in this House. It was not the fault of this Chamber that we lost the £60,000.

Mr. Bolton: Yes it was. We were offered the passage of the Bill without exemptions, but we would not accept that.

Mr. EDDY: That may have been a gag. The chances are that had we carried the Bill without exemptions it would have met with the same fate. A general election over the matter would have cost thousands of pounds, and members would probably have lost their little hits, while the members of the Legislative Council would gladly have sat back on a box-seat and smiled, while we were fighting and receiving all the kicks and cuffs. I submit that the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in regard to mining questions were altogether wild and irrelevant. He started to tell a tale about some people floating a company with two or three thousand pounds, and after a few drinks, tossing up whether they would go east or west. Those are the tales one hears in the Corridors or in the bar parlours. All the failings were laid by the hon. member

at the door of the Government with reference to mining. But the hon. member was a member of a Ministry that lasted for 16 months. I ask him where were the noble efforts he put forward? With reference to his remarks about the meat industry and freezing works I am going to have very little to say, because it is a question that members should consider when we are confronted with some more facts. The scheme is a proposal I presume to place into prominence the northern part of the State, and not allow it to be dormant as it has been for years past. We find that our Opposition friends blame this Government from one end to the other, but after all we have never heard one remedy suggested. The matter of electoral reform is also one which will need a great deal of grave consideration when it comes before the House. We speak and know of the bad state of affairs in elections here, but it is not as bad as affairs in the East. Over there, during the last election affairs were something deplorable. I believe that when all the evidence and all the facts are brought before the Chamber we can frame an Electoral Act that will be beneficial and of good to us. I hope if the Attorney General does not bring it forward, one matter will be brought before the House—in fact if it be by no one else I will myself bring it forward. I refer to the matter of compulsory voting ; I believe it would be a step in the right direction. The Leader of the Opposition accused the Premier in reference to the trip to the East, and stated that it was a wrong action for the Premier and Attorney General to take the trip. When I heard the hon. member speaking I thought he was perhaps a little jealous because of all the treatment he himself received last year. I maintain that it is quite right that our Premier should go to these conferences and take up the cudgels on behalf of the State. I can hardly understand why the member for Pilbarra should stand up and abuse the Government in the way he did, considering the great interest his electorate has received. The Government should have received his very best thanks and congratulations. [*Mr. Un-*

derwood : I gave them.] If the hon. member did not feel that way, he should certainly have had that courtesy on behalf of his constituents. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) spoke very harshly about the members on the Treasury bench going into recess to attend to their administration work, and I consider that he also, with the member for Pilbarra, should have thanked the Ministry. [*Mr. Underwood* : You cannot buy us with a railway.] The hon. member has not got his railway yet. The member for Mt. Magnet spoke of the Premier and his Ministers jaunting through the country. I do not know that the proposition of the railway would have been as far forward as it is if the Premier had not gone into that district. [Several interjections.] Certainly the hon. member approved of the railway, but very mildly indeed. He qualified his thanks very much. I venture to say anyhow that the courtesy of acknowledgment will be extended to the Premier and the present Government by the majority of the hon. member's constituents. The Government have been blamed all over again in regard to the timber trouble. They have had abuse, they have been accused, but as in other instances there have been no suggestions of remedy. Probably had the Premier and Ministers been as officious as other gentlemen they might have been doing time to-day; probably they might have been in gaol. On the other hand, it was just a matter of feeding up the devil's brigade *a la* the legal profession, who have made such a good thing out of the late strike. I do not wish to say much about this strike. Perhaps the less said—[*Mr. Taylor* : You are treading on dangerous ground.] The member for Mt. Magnet spoke also about members on this side of the House not coming back again if there was a general election. I am quite satisfied that an immediate election would not be very welcome to any members. It is hardly possible that the whole of the continual abuse showered by the hon. members opposite meets with the favour of the majority of the hon. members' constituents. Some day members opposite will find that the

simplicity of their constituents is not to be played on for ever. I do not wish to take up any cudgels on behalf of the Press, but the remarks hurled about regarding the Press by the Opposition were altogether unfair and undeserved. [*Mr. Taylor* : Why did you not deal with that question when it was before the House ?] I only desire to make this point : it would be dangerous, the Press would be a power no longer, if it adopted the lines suggested by hon. members opposite. [*Mr. Underwood* : To tell the truth ?] There is just another little matter I have noted here. When we were in recess I found out—I am going to mention names so that members will not say I am unfair—that the members for Mt. Magnet and Murchison, and Mr. Pearce, a member of the Federal Senate, probably well-meaning men to whom I give credit for a lot, during the last six months in many of the out parts of the State where there was no Press, dealt out their unfair stuff to members.

Mr. Holman : Where was this ?

Mr. EDDY : At Meekatharra and Black Range. I can tell you all about it when I get into the Corridors.

Mr. Angicin : Were you there ?

Mr. EDDY : No. I will tell you how I know. The member for Mt. Magnet attacked me in a most unfair and unmanly manner, and I have the satisfaction of knowing that he had to apologise to a friend of mine before the meeting was over. That is how I know. In reference to the Arbitration Court, about which so much has been said, Mr. Justice Burnside, who presides over the court, was strongly advocated for by hon. members on the other side. Then again Mr. Roe, who has been so much abused in the course of this debate, was also wanted for the position when the Chief Justice left it. Both these gentlemen are now most abused men. *Mr. Holman* said in his speech that he never made a statement he could not qualify. [*Member* : He did not say that.] Well, that he never made a statement he could not substantiate. It is well known there is no member of this Assembly who has

been compelled to make more apologies and withdrawals than he has.

Mr. Holman : On a point of order, I ask the member to withdraw. I have never apologised to any member, because the statements I have made are absolutely true. The statement just made by the hon. member is incorrect.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. member must withdraw, under the regulations of this House.

Mr. Eddy : I withdraw the word "apology" if I am wrong, but I will substitute "withdrawal" for it. The hon. member has made several withdrawals.

Mr. Holman : Again I ask for that to be withdrawn. The only withdrawals I have made are those in order to conform with the Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. member takes exception to the word "withdrawal;" so the hon. member for Coolgardie must withdraw that word.

Mr. Eddy : I withdraw it if he takes exception to it, but at the same time truth will stand.

Mr. EDDY (continuing) : The hon. member also spoke on the question of the payment of increased salaries to members, and said it was impossible for them to meet all the demands for travelling, postages, and telegrams. I quite agree that the salaries do not compensate for the work done, but we must be very careful in dealing with any question as to the State paying members' expenses. An example of that is provided by Senator Pearce, who, during his first term as a member of the Federal Legislature, spent the sum of £70 expenses, postages, and telegrams. [*Mr. Scaddan* : £16.] Senator Pearce was the cause of costing the Commonwealth £70. [*Mr. Hayward* : Did the Commonwealth pay that ?] Yes. The member for Boulder made several accusations in the course of his remarks, and stated that different justice was dealt out to different sections of the community. That is all bunkum, and such statements will, I am sure, not find favour with the general public of this State. [*Mr. Collier* : I do not care ; they are true.] Perhaps

in speaking of the agriculturists I have been somewhat severe in the comments I have made, but I congratulate the agricultural industry upon the progress which is being made, and give credit to the Honorary Minister who has done such excellent work. I am glad to refer to the progress made in Coolgardie, and to inform the House that the Hampton Plains Company are bringing over 300 or 400 cattle to their land in the Coolgardie district. The climatic conditions are getting very much better in this State. [*Mr. Taylor*: How much country have the Hampton Plains Company got?] I do not know what is the area. It is pleasing to know that we have grass country on the goldfields, thanks to the splendid seasons we have had during the past year or two. In conclusion, I would congratulate other Ministers for the hard work they have done, and the efficient manner in which their duties have been carried out. The Honorary Minister has done splendid organisation work; and the agricultural industry in this State has had an awakening. Victoria's prosperity is due to the dairying industry there, and I hope and believe that the enormous imports which we now receive in this State will be minimised year by year, and that large exports will take their place. The hon. member for Kataning spoke of the buoyancy which exists now, and I hope that his prophecy of success and prosperity in the future will come true. The Attorney General and the Minister for Mines have carried out their duties excellently, their offices have been well conducted, and new men to the position of Ministers as they were, I submit that they have done well. The Minister for Education has been criticised extensively, but I am quite sure that he is well able to look after himself. I am very pleased to have had this opportunity of making a few remarks; I thank hon. members all round for their indulgence, and I again hope that we may have a good, prosperous, and successful session.

[*The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*]

Mr. C. A. HUDSON (Dundas): I congratulate the member for Coolgardie on

the multiplicity of his congratulations. He seems to have showered them quite indiscriminately, as far as his own side of the House is concerned. [*The Minister for Works*: He did not give you a benediction.] Ah, but he looked towards me every now and then, and he conveyed by his appearance his intention to pass me compliments as well. I fully appreciate that intention without their accomplishment. The last speaker showered his congratulations especially upon the Minister for Mines. He gave us some information regarding the management and administration of that department that was quite startling. He seemed to know all the details of the working of that department, what this cost and what that cost, and I have come to the conclusion that the hon. member has been sleeping on the doormat of the Minister's office. [*Mr. Eddy*: They are all in the books.] The only alternative is that he had his brief prepared for him by another hon. member. He praised the Minister for Mines so well and so capably that the latter must feel a good deal larger in his position than he ever did before. However, he was only following in the footsteps of the Minister for Works, who spoke the other night in a particularly conciliatory spirit of himself and the members of the Ministry and of the great work they had done for the State while Parliament was in recess. He also spoke in high praise of the works which the Government were going to do. The attitude of the members of the Government during this debate clearly shows to the country, and certainly it has done so to this side of the House, that the Government were in a dilemma. They knew their position in the country, and realised that some attitude would have to be adopted by them in the course of this debate in order to conciliate the Opposition if they possibly could. I hope the Minister for Works will not see any necessity during the course of my remarks to say anything nasty, or he will spoil that ingenious spirit of harmony the Government have adopted during the course of this debate. [*The Minister for Works*: There is no intention on the part of anyone to conciliate you.] I think the Minister is now de-

parting from his conciliatory attitude by making these personal observations. With regard to his making conciliatory statements as to myself, I will inform the Minister that he is the last man in this House I would ask to be conciliated by. I do not appreciate a compliment from him, and I do not expect one. Of the Government members who have addressed the House, only Mr. Eddy spoke in a pleasing and complimentary way with regard to the administration of the Government. Other members spoke in a very different strain. For instance, the member for Greenough brought the Ministry severely to task for what they had done, and for what they had left undone. He did not desire so much to criticise what they had done but rather what they proposed to do, because he saw the folly of the actions that they suggested to take. He did not show himself to be a staunch supporter of the Government, but was rather a candid critic of them. He also showed very clearly that he had devoted a good deal of his time during recess to the consideration and preparation of his speech. It was evident that he had thought the matter carefully out and has illustrated by his remarks to this House the fact that he has really adopted the platform of the Labour Party. It seems to me that he and some others on the Government side of the House, who have spoken during this debate, should cease their support of the "Mother Goose" Government with a "pantomime" policy. I am not referring to them as such, without there being some justification for the expression, as is evidenced by their attitude with regard to the finances and the proposed session in February. We were told by the Colonial Treasurer that the finances of the State were drifting. [*The Treasurer* : When did I say that the finances were drifting ?] You said that owing to Federation we were going to have less revenue in the future than we had had in the past, and the general tone of the financial debates last session was that we were going to receive less from the Commonwealth sources. [*The Treasurer* : Surely that is not drifting.] If you consult the

dictionary you will find what the word drifting means. In the course of the Address which His Excellency presented to Parliament on the day of prorogation he said :—

"My Advisers regret exceedingly that your honourable House did not see fit to pass the Land Tax Assessment Bill, as they are convinced that it is absolutely necessary that additional revenue should be obtained through this medium of taxation. . . .

As my Advisers are of opinion that farther consideration should be given to the question of taxation at as early a date as possible, it has been deemed advisable to hold another session in the early part of next year, and I therefore now prorogue this Parliament to Friday, the first day of February, 1907."

Mr. Johnson : There was a caucus meeting after that.

Mr. HUDSON : An hon. member, speaking with regard to the Treasurer, said that that Minister had not too much work to do, and that the arrangement of portfolios should have placed the Premier in the position of Treasurer. He did not say that it was only owing to the decision of caucus that the present Treasurer did not hold the position of Premier of this State. The Treasurer was responsible for the statement which had been made with regard to the shrinking of the revenue owing to Federation; and even if the Government were sincere at that time in the statements they put into the mouth of the Governor when delivering his address at prorogation, they showed their insincerity immediately afterwards. What excuse did they allege for not holding that session in February ? They told us it was necessary to raise a sum of £60,000 or £70,000 to meet the interest on loan account, and for other purposes. Why did they not call us together to provide for that ? I think they were absolutely insincere; and I say, as Sir John Forrest said with tears in his eyes when fighting his federal campaign, "The past should be an index of the future." Well, if we are to apply that to the present Government, we may safely

say that as regards the finances, the index of the past, if taken as an index of the future, shows that the country will not have a very good time. [*The Treasurer*: Tell us what you would do.] The Treasurer asks what I should do. I say I should have him put under medical observation, and see if we could find a serum which would cure the sleeping sickness. The Treasurer interrupted me when I was speaking of the drift in the finances. In February, when it was decided that the special session should not be held, the Treasurer told the country that the State finances were looking better; but he did not say that the rents were coming in from the public lands and from the mines, and that the licensing fees were being paid for the year; he did not disclose the fact that there was an inflation of revenue over expenditure for those particular months, which inflation would not recur; and I say that in withholding these facts he misled the country into believing in a state of affairs which was non-existent. [*The Treasurer*: What months?] January and February of this year. When it was decided in the mind of the Government that they would not hold the special session, they then put this idea before the people of the State. There are several other matters which I wish to mention to-night, but I do not intend to discuss them exhaustively. The first is the Premier's visit to Queensland to attend the Premiers' Conference. I am one of those who believe firmly in Federation. I agree with the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Eddy) that there is no need for all this talk about secession; that we have found out our true position, and that we should put our shoulders to the wheel in the endeavour to place the finances of the State in a sound position and to develop its resources. If the internal affairs of the State had been in order, there would have been nothing wrong with the visit of our Premier to Queensland; but it strikes me as significant that during the absence of the Treasurer, the Premier and the Attorney General should go to Queensland. Why did the Attorney General go to Queensland? Is not that a conundrum which

needs an answer? Was it that the Premier could not be trusted by himself?

The Treasurer: Why did the Leader of the Opposition go with me last year?

Mr. HUDSON: Because it was practically arranged by both sides of the House that the parliamentary session should be continued during your absence, and that no advantage of it should be taken.

Mr. Scaddan: And the Leader of the Opposition was specially invited.

Mr. HUDSON: He was. Were the Attorneys General of the other States asked to go?

The Treasurer: Yes. Three of them were there.

Mr. HUDSON: There was one Attorney General of another State. That shows what reliance can be placed on the statement of the Treasurer. One Attorney General who went was acting as Premier of one of the States.

The Treasurer: And was not the Attorney General of Victoria there, and the Attorney General of South Australia?

Mr. HUDSON: I do not say he was not. I was not there. He may have acted in a double capacity, but he did not go with the Premier.

Mr. Scaddan: The Premier and Treasurer of South Australia was there.

Mr. HUDSON: I do not wish to disturb the harmony of this debate. It would be very unkind of me to frustrate the delightful policy of the Government, so I shall not farther discuss these matters. The railway construction policy has frequently been mentioned during the debate, and I congratulate the Government on building railways for the development not only of the agricultural but of the mineral resources of the State. I wish to make a few observations regarding the method of construction, and as to whether the construction should be done by contract or done departmentally. The question presents itself to me in this light. The Minister for Works (Hon. J. Price) is, I take it, somewhat prejudiced against the principle of departmental construction. The other night in this debate he congratulated himself in the usual manner of the Government on having successfully carried out de-

partmentally the work of constructing agricultural railways. [*The Minister for Works*: I congratulated the officers of the department.] As representative of the officers he congratulated them. But let us take, for instance, the construction of the railway from Hoptoun to Ravensthorpe, a work that may well be undertaken immediately by the department, so that its construction may be hastened. It should be hastened for the business reason that the sooner it is commenced the sooner will there be a return. If the Government will at once undertake the work, they will, as soon as the line has been laid for a few miles, be earning revenue. They must have engines there and trucks for the construction of the line, whoever constructs it; but why should not the Government have the benefit of the carriage of goods and of passengers? They could do that quite easily; and to the construction of the Coolgardie-Widgemooltha section of the Norseman railway the same remark applies, and more particularly because the timber in that district might be the more easily and readily conserved. The Government should have the benefit of the return from the carriage of timber along that line. Certainly the Premier states that he has reserved several miles on either side of the route; but an army of inspectors would be needed to prevent the contractors from cutting the timber along the line for their own use.

The Minister for Works: Do you not think the contractor considers that in fixing his price?

Mr. HUDSON: I do not think he does, to the extent that the Government could allow for. I do not think that the principle applies to the same degree. The Government should proceed to make their charges as soon as a few miles of railway have been constructed. They would have the carriage of the timber, and other advantages which the contractor would not enjoy. The contractor, for instance, would not be able to take the timber quite so far as the Government might take it on their own line. That is a suggestion which I strongly commend to the consideration of the Minister for

Works: the construction departmentally of the Hoptoun-Ravensthorpe railway and the remainder of the Coolgardie-Norseman railway. The importance of land settlement in this State seems to me to overtop all other questions; for if the settlement of the land be successfully effected now, it will mean more to this State in the future than anything else. Much more time might be devoted to the consideration of this question; and the statement in the Governor's Speech that so many conditional-purchase leases have been taken up is somewhat misleading. I think it is misleading when it is taken to mean that the holders of these leases have settled upon the land. I am stating this as a warning only, not in criticism of the efforts of the Government to settle people on the land, but to obviate any dummaging, to obviate the accumulation of such large estates as have been built up in the past. I have reason for giving that warning, I hope it will be taken seriously, and that the evil likely to arise will be at least mitigated. I do not propose to enter to-night into the question of the Mines Department, but I would make an appeal to the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) that when his Estimates come before us this session he will not bring them in at midnight and so deprive us of the opportunity of criticising his administration or of giving him from this side of the House such assistance as we are capable of affording. I hope the same advice will be taken by the Minister for Education (Hon. F. Wilson), but I refer particularly to the Minister for Mines. During last session his Estimates were introduced at midnight, and there was no opportunity given for their proper discussion, or for dealing with the industry as it should be dealt with, and as I hope it will be dealt with during the present session. The same remark applies to the various Bills promised in the Speech. There seems to be plenty of them, and I hope we shall have time to give them proper consideration before they are forced through the House. Certainly we spent much time last session in discussing the Police Offences Bill, which is of some interest to us now, inasmuch as the Attorney

General, who fought so hard for it last year, who seemed to regard it as his pet measure, has now consigned it to the tender mercies of the Legislative Council. I hope the Government will soon bring in their land tax proposals, for it is up to them to do so at the earliest possible date. If they are sincere in their intention to impose a land tax in order to put our finances straight, it is their duty to bring in the Bill as quickly as possible, and thus to carry out what they profess to desire.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. Troy as to Mr. Eddy.

Mr. M. H. TROY (Mt. Magnet): On a question of privilege, I wish to make a personal explanation, and I hope the House will remain until the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Eddy) resumes his seat. I told him that I intended to raise this question, and asked him to remain, and another member has gone out to ask him to be present. While I was absent from the House the hon. member spoke, and in the course of his speech said that he had heard that whilst at Black Range last year I made a cowardly and unmanly attack on him, and that to the close of my speech I apologised at a friend of his there, who had since informed him of the occurrence. I wish to say here that I do not remember to have ever mentioned Mr. Eddy's name at Black Range. Certainly in this House I have never deemed the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Eddy) sufficiently important to bother about, and if I have ever criticised any member of the Government in my constituency, I have criticised the Ministry, and that honestly and courteously. I give the statement of the member for Coolgardie an emphatic denial. I emphatically deny that I ever made such a statement, and if the hon. member comes into the House again and makes a statement about me I hope he will bring forward the letter which his friend wrote to him and give some other proof than his mere statement. If I had been

in the House when the statement was made I should have denied it, and I take this first opportunity of denying it emphatically. I ask for a withdrawal of the statement.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can only ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. EDDY: I wish to say that probably the hon. member does not remember what he did say, but he did mention my name and the information I have I quite believe, and he attacked me cowardly when I was not in a position to defend myself; still I had a friend there who stood up for me.

Mr. Scaddan: Did he apologise to your friend?

Mr. EDDY: Yes.

Mr. TROY: I ask for a withdrawal of the statement, and I insist on it. I ask for an absolute withdrawal.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member has declared that the statement made by the member for Coolgardie is incorrect. I think the member will accept his statement and not repeat the remark.

Mr. EDDY: Even if I withdraw, I still may be correct in my statement. If you advise me to withdraw, I shall do so.

Mr. Troy: I insist on it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must accept the denial of the member for Mount Magnet.

Mr. EDDY: If I must accept his denial and withdraw, I do so; but at an early date I shall prove my case to the member's satisfaction.

Mr. Troy: I accept that.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at four minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next day.
