

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th July, 1903.

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

PRAYERS.

PETITION—RAILWAY TRAFFIC BILL.

ADVANCE COPY OF BILL, HOW OBTAINED.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley) presented a Petition from Mr. Charles de Bels Brounlie, receiver and manager of the undertakings, assets, etc., of the Midland Railway Company, and the representative of the debenture holders, against the Railway Traffic Bill, praying that the petitioner be permitted to be represented by counsel at the Bar of the House in opposition to the second reading.

Petition received and read.

MR. HARPER farther moved that the petition be printed.

MR. S. C. PIGOTT (West Kimberley): I would like to ask if it has been the ordinary custom in Western Australia for Bills to be distributed amongst the public before they are placed before this House. This is the first case of the kind that has ever cropped up to my knowledge, and I think it is a practice that should not be indulged in. I hope we shall have a few words from the Premier on the subject.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): I meant to ask the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) if he would be good enough, between now and the date that he proposes for the consideration of this prayer, to make inquiries from those gentlemen and see where they got a copy of the Bill from. No copies have been issued by authority of the Government; and if this company has some back-door influence by which it is able to obtain copies of Bills not known outside the Treasury bench, it would be very useful to know what influence

they have in this connection. I should like to say at once that there has been no authority for the company to have any draft Bill or proposed Bill; and if they have obtained it at all, it has been by irregular means.

MR. HARPER: So far as I am concerned, I have not a notion as to how the petitioner got a copy. I think, however, that the responsibility rests on the Government Printer. I do not think it quite the thing for the Premier to ask me to take the blame.

THE PREMIER: Ascertain from your petitioner how he got a copy of the Bill.

MR. HARPER: I do not think that concerns the prayer. If the prayer be granted, we can ask the petitioner or his representative at the Bar of the House.

THE PREMIER: The petition is premature, until the Bill has been introduced.

MR. PIGOTT: Will the Premier now give a promise to make inquiry into the matter?

THE PREMIER: Undoubtedly I shall make inquiry.

THE SPEAKER: I cannot think how the Bill could have been procured by these persons, unless it was done privy to the Government Printer.

THE PREMIER: The petition really is irrelevant, because there is no Bill before the House. The Bill has not been seen.

MR. HARPER: Notice has been given of it.

THE PREMIER: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: I think it is rather premature, if the Bill has not been presented to the House.

THE CLERK: It has been read a first time.

THE SPEAKER: Then it is before the House.

MR. HARPER: The petition alleges that the Bill has been read a first time.

THE PREMIER: Copies of the Bill have not been circulated.

THE SPEAKER: Technically, the Bill is in the possession of the House.

MR. HARPER: May I move that the prayer of the petition be taken into consideration on Tuesday next?

THE SPEAKER: It appears to me that unless the Bill is in the hands of members by Tuesday next, the House cannot possibly consider the petition.

MR. HARPER: The matter could be postponed, then.

THE SPEAKER: It could be postponed; yes. The question now before the House is that the petition be printed.

Question put and passed.

MR. HARPER: I give notice of motion, "That the prayer of the petition be taken into consideration on the second reading of the Bill."

QUESTION—LIQUOR LICENSE, BOULDER.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Attorney General: 1, Whether it is a fact that a license has been granted for a building at Boulder City, which contains four bedrooms, two parlours and one bar, with only 18 feet frontage to Burt street. 2, If so, whether the Minister considers that a license should be granted for a building of this description in a populous centre.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, The building contains the accommodation mentioned, and has a frontage of 18 feet, though the land frontage is 66 feet. 2, It is very much to be regretted that a license was granted for such a totally inadequate building.

QUESTION—RAILWAY WORKSHOPS, MIDLAND JUNCTION.

MR. JACOBY, for Mr. Atkins, asked the Minister for Works: 1, How long the Midland Workshops have been in construction. 2, What have been the reasons for the delay in their completion, in view of the apparently urgent need for this work.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Active operations were commenced in connection with the Midland Junction Workshops in January, 1901, any work carried out prior to that date being of a very preliminary and intermittent nature. 2, The delays in completion are attributed to the following causes:—(a.) The appointment by Parliament of a Select Committee, which sat from September to December, 1901, to inquire into and report as to the scheme and designs to be adopted. (b.) Contingent on (a) the delay in the preparation of designs and the forwarding of indents for ironwork to England. (c.) Delay in receiving structural and other ironwork from England. The work is now being pushed forward.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by **MR. HIGHAM**, leave of absence for one fortnight granted to the member for Geraldton (**Mr. Hutchinson**), on the ground of illness; on motion by **MR. QUINLAN**, leave for one fortnight granted to the member for Moore (**Dr. M. O'Connor**), on the ground of urgent private business; on motion by **MR. THOMAS**, leave for one fortnight granted to the member for Coolgardie (**Mr. Morgans**), on the ground of urgent private business; and on motions by **MR. JACOBY**, leave of absence for one fortnight granted to the member for North Fremantle (**Mr. Doherty**), and the member for West Perth (**Mr. Moran**), on the ground of urgent private business.

PROVIDENT SOCIETIES BILL.

Introduced by the **PREMIER**, and read a first time.

INQUIRY—AUDIT MATTERS.

THE PREMIER (**Hon. Walter James**) moved—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the matter which is referred to in paragraph 4 of the Report of the Auditor General, dated the 20th instant, and formed the subject of a personal explanation in this House by the Honourable the Colonial Treasurer on the 22nd instant.

He said: Members will no doubt recollect that the Auditor General, in his report made to the House on the 20th July last, referred to a personal interview which he alleged had taken place between himself and the Treasurer with two public servants. The report sets forth certain language which the Auditor General alleged had been used by the Treasurer, and which, in the Auditor General's opinion, amounted to contempt of his office. Personally, I consider it open to serious question whether the Auditor General has any right whatever to address the House, save within the limits defined by the Audit Act of 1891. Directly he travels outside the limits of that Act, he occupies no stronger position than does any other public servant. However, when the report was laid on the table of the House, the Treasurer made a personal explanation in relation to the paragraph I particularly refer to, and he controverted the statements made by the Auditor General. I communicated with the

Auditor General, and pointed out that as there was a conflict between what he had reported to the House and what had been said by the Treasurer, I should be glad, if he so desired, to have a select committee appointed, so that an inquiry might be instituted to ascertain the actual facts of this matter. He fell in with the suggestion, and I accordingly gave notice of this motion. I think it desirable that this matter should be inquired into. Any officer who has a right to present reports to Parliament has a very valuable privilege; but it is a privilege which should be exercised with due sense of responsibility, because the reports are placed on the table of the House, circulated throughout the State and in other States also, and get into the Press; and unless very great care is taken, injury may be done to people who have no right to reply, or who, even if they have a right to reply, are not able to circulate their reply as widely as the report itself circulates. Personally I hope that in the new Audit Act provision will be made that, whenever a complaint is lodged against any Minister for a violation of the Audit Act, the Minister will have an opportunity of placing his explanation before the House at the same time and as part of the report, so that instead of only one side of the case being first represented, both sides may come before the House simultaneously, and not only before the House but before every person who reads the report. I propose to ask this committee, if the House agrees to its appointment, to inquire into and report on the matters referred to in paragraph 4, that being the paragraph in which the Auditor General complains of certain language. I do not propose to discuss the question whether, even assuming that language was used, this House desires or expects a report from the Auditor General in relation to such a matter. However desirable it may be to place him in a position where he has strong powers, I very much question whether any of us desires to see these powers used for the purpose of exercising, through Parliament, a sort of correcting or supervising influence over the language of any particular Minister, or even over the whole Ministry. However, I am moving for this select committee because I think it only just to the Auditor General, in view

of his statement and its contradiction by the Treasurer, that an inquiry should be held so that the House may ascertain the exact facts.

MR. JACOBY (Swan): When I first read this motion on the Notice Paper, I thought it would give the House an opportunity of adding certain instructions to the committee which would enable an inquiry to be made into the Auditor General's Department—an inquiry which, in view of past events, and particularly of the work of the Royal Commission on the Public Service, is evidently much needed. But I notice this is a matter which concerns only the Auditor General's report so far as it refers to a particular interview between him and the Treasurer; and therefore I wish distinctly to draw attention to the need for removing the grave doubts now existing in our minds as to the conduct of this department. I believe the Government have asked the auditor of the Federal Government, who is now in the State, to make some inquiries into this department; but I understand that these inquiries are to be made only with regard to matters of business between the Auditor General's Department and the Treasurer. The Government are, of course, unable to go any farther in that particular direction; and in my opinion it becomes the duty of Parliament to take some other course, and try to seize the opportunity which presents itself of having a thorough inquiry made into this department, now that we have in the State an officer so capable of making that inquiry. I therefore do not consider that we should ask the Government to take any active steps in promoting such inquiry. The responsibility is not upon the shoulders of the Government, but upon Parliament; and I therefore hope that some steps will be taken, before many more sittings of this House are held, to pass a resolution in favour of such inquiry, and to send on that resolution to the Upper House, asking for their concurrence. I hope that as a result we shall have a thoroughly impartial and efficient inquiry into the conduct of this department, and shall see whether we are being well or badly served. I mention the matter now because I should like some expression of opinion from members of the House, and from the Premier himself, as to what is the best course to pursue.

MR. HOLMES: For what are we paying the Royal Commission?

MR. JACOBY: I do not know whether the Commission are in a position to give us an adequate report on this subject.

MR. HOLMES: They should be.

MR. JACOBY: But in any case I should like to submit that we now have a gentleman in this State who is, I think, far more competent to report upon a special department of the character of the Auditor General's than are the Royal Commission. And I think the opportunity should therefore be taken to avail ourselves of that officer's services while he is here.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): I am at a loss to understand this motion, which has been placed before the House by the Premier. Apparently the select committee are to consider the question of certain remarks which have passed, or are alleged to have passed, between an officer of this State—an officer of Parliament, I admit—and the State Treasurer. I have no memory of such a committee being appointed in history. I cannot understand how the Premier can propose that the House should be asked to appoint a committee to sit in judgment upon a Minister of this State. That seems to me a proceeding which is altogether out of place and entirely uncalled for; and considerable difficulty and friction will arise if this course is to be pursued in such cases. Officers of this State have their proper means of redress, and the House has heard the Treasurer's explanation as to the interview. I venture to suggest that an outrage—I can call it nothing but an outrage—has been committed in this House, by which a private interview has been published in the Press by the Auditor General; and language has been put in print that ought never to have passed out of the original room in which it was uttered, if it were uttered at all. And now to ask this House to appoint a select committee to inquire into an altercation, or an alleged altercation, between the Auditor General and the Treasurer of this State, is carrying things to a pitch that I cannot understand. I hope the House will utterly reject this motion. We have seen the report of the Auditor General, and heard the explanation of the Treasurer. If this House is not satisfied with a Minister of the

Crown, its duty is plain and simple: let it move a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry. But to appoint a select committee to consider any act of any Minister is to me something entirely novel and entirely out of place. I hope the House will reject the motion. Of course, in cases of this kind we are apt to follow Ministers almost blindly; but I hope members will think carefully of what they are doing when they appoint such a select committee, else in future days any official may point to this case and call for any difficulty between himself and his Minister to be investigated by a select committee of the House. It is a very grave mistake that the motion should be proposed, and a still more grave mistake if the committee is appointed; therefore I strongly urge members to reject the motion proposed by the Premier.

MR. S. C. PIGOTT (West Kimberley): I think members will agree that the Auditor General acted in a very ungentlemanly way, and that he took advantage of the privileges of his office. There is much to be said in favour of the view put forward by the member for Cue; but I think, and I hope I am speaking for all members at any rate on the Opposition side, that we should be glad if the Premier withdrew the motion. Still, I on my part am content to leave the matter entirely in the hands of the Premier, and I give him my assurance that members on this (Opposition) side of the House are entirely satisfied with the explanation that has been offered, and I may also state that members on the Opposition side of the House really consider that the matter ought not to be gone into any farther.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kalgoorlie): I do not think the view expressed by the member for Cue is really the controlling view. In this case the hon. member seems to fear that if a select committee be appointed now, it will act as a precedent and will be taken advantage of by other officers; but I would remind the hon. member that the Auditor General is a direct officer of Parliament and not subject to Ministerial control, while all other officers are under particular Ministers who are responsible for their conduct. The Auditor General is directly appointed by Parliament, and we may say he is also

a check on Ministers: that being so, Parliament is now called on to decide whether it will answer his report or not, and if so, in what particular terms. The leader of the Opposition has apparently made up his mind what the answer should be; but many of us are not exactly in the same position; besides if we wish to have this incident settled, it is better to go to some trouble and give the Auditor General every opportunity to prove he was in the correct position. That can be done by a select committee, and a select committee only. We are not going outside our functions by appointing this committee, and until the committee is appointed, there are many people in the State who may have some doubt as to whether this report has been treated correctly. I strongly urge the House to appoint a committee, and if it is appointed and the case is as represented by the member for Cue and the member for West Kimberley, there is no doubt the incident will be finished in a manner satisfactory to themselves or what they may think best.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): There are one or two phases of this question I would like members to consider. It appears there is a dispute between a Minister of the Crown and a servant of Parliament who is independent of a Minister. If the course suggested by the member for Cue be followed, the position will remain strained between the Minister and this officer of Parliament; and to get over that difficulty it appears to be forcing on the Minister the only other course open, to remove by a vote of Parliament the Auditor General. The Government have either to let the matter remain an open sore or take that course. The Premier proposes a middle course, to ask the House to appoint a select committee to go into the circumstances of the case and settle the matter in that way. I do not know if I am correct in saying that, but it appears to me the course suggested by the member for Cue will not get over the difficulty. Surely this is a case that should be settled by a decision of the House.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): I certainly object to the personal application of the Premier's motion. I for one am perfectly satisfied, and was perfectly satisfied at the time of the explanation

given by the Treasurer. I do not want to see a select committee appointed only to inquire into paragraph 4 of the special report which deals with a personal question; therefore in order to test the feeling of the House, I move—

That in the second line of the motion the words "matter which is referred to in paragraph of" be excised.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): I would like to point out to members—of course paragraph 5 follows upon paragraph 4—that in paragraph 3 there is no controversy: the Minister himself admits there was a breach of the Audit Act. I may be allowed to explain how the position strikes me. The Auditor General being a servant of Parliament has a right to make reports to Parliament, and he makes a report on questions of fact.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: On audit.

THE PREMIER: On facts relating to audit. I agree with the interjection entirely. I think this paragraph itself ought not to be in the report; it is outside the subject of the report at all; but if an officer of Parliament makes a charge in relation to a member which that member flatly contradicts, there is evidently a misapprehension on one side or the other. Here we have that dispute and that contradiction on the records of the House. Certain statements have been made. There is a report of the Auditor General that certain facts exist. Where there is controversy on that point, are we to allow that report or a portion of the report to remain as a record?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Strike it out when we consider the Auditor General's report.

THE PREMIER: All we can do is to have it put right. Of course we can strike it out if it is found to be incorrect; but certainly we should not be doing justice to the Auditor General in accepting the statement of any one Minister or private member who contradicts the Auditor General. For that reason we should have an inquiry, for we may not have heard from the Auditor General all the facts of the case. We have heard the personal explanation of the Treasurer, and we should, in fairness to the Auditor General, give him an opportunity of going into the whole matter. If the select committee reports that the statement is inaccurate, I am certain in that

case it would be found there was a misapprehension. I am quite confident that the Auditor General is the last man in the State to deliberately make a false statement. He, I am certain, would be the first to join with us in saying that the paragraph should be expunged and he will loyally accept the finding of the select committee, as the Treasurer will. That will entirely remove the difficulty. I hope the House will agree to the appointment of the select committee. I have seen the Auditor General and have consulted him as to the *personnel* of the committee, so that it shall not be said it was a party committee. I want to be fair to him because it is an important matter, important to Parliament that we should insist that whenever a public servant or an individual has the right to make a report, that he should keep within the four corners of that report and be careful in what he says.

MR. A. E. THOMAS: After the explanation of the Premier, I would like to withdraw my amendment. I agree with the leader of the Opposition that we can, with safety, leave the matter in the Premier's hands. I thought to simplify matters and bring us together, and that the amendment would remove the personal portion of the motion.

THE SPEAKER: The amendment is not before the House, not having been seconded.

Question put and passed.

Ballot taken, and a committee appointed comprising Mr. Harper, Mr. Purkiss, Mr. Quinlan, Mr. Taylor, also Mr. James as mover; with power to call for persons and papers, and to sit on days on which the House stands adjourned; to report this day fortnight.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SIXTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous day.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (North Murchison): In making a few remarks on the Address-in-Reply, I intend to deal mainly with the Speech of his Excellency. In the first place, one of the most striking paragraphs we see is this: "The recent movement in the mother country towards securing closer trade relations between the various parts of the Empire has been welcomed in this State with feelings of

warm sympathy and sincere hopes for its ultimate success." Had that read that there had been a movement brought about or an attempt to give preference of employment to the people of the English-speaking race, it would, I think, have been received with far greater satisfaction than this statement, which was made by a few representing the Government. I have travelled over a great part of the country, and have never heard one expression of pleasure at those remarks, or at the thought that we were going to have closer trade relations with the old country. My own opinion is that the idea of closer trade relations with the old country is merely a sentiment expressed by a few of those who have the reins of government in their hands at the present time. I do not think such a feeling as that referred to exists throughout this State, because if we have closer trade relations in a short time there will be closer connection with alien races. If we only look to the contracts on the mail steamers, we find the crews composed almost solely of black labour. In South Africa we find the same sort of thing. The British people, or descendants of British people, have been going there fighting to take away the country from those who owned it before, but we find that the desire of those who have everything to gain at the present moment is to flood that country with Chinese. The question before the whole world is whether or not 200,000 Chinese will be transported to South Africa to work in the mines.

MR. PRIGOTT: That is not many.

MR. HOLMAN: No. If there were the same opportunity we should have a good few of them here. Very likely the hon. member would engage a few of them to look after the pearling industry. We need not go so far away as that to see what has taken place in connection with the employment of alien labour. We can see it in our own country. Whenever any of those English companies managed from London who talk about this fellow-feeling—the sympathy is expressed on our side and the other side gets all the cash—have an opportunity to engage labour on their mines, they fill their mines with Italians and engage Afghans to cut wood. If those are the closer relations we are going to have with

the old country, I hope and trust that the people of Australasia will rise up and have no relations with them at all. If there be a danger of our having a mongrel race for the sake of a little section, I say the sooner we stop it the better. If some people had closer relations with regard to the employment of those aliens they seem so desirous to employ, I think they would have a greater sickener of them than we have now. There are rich dividend-paying mines in regard to which on every possible occasion the companies, instead of employing men of their own race and showing a little patriotism, allow us to have the whole of the sentiment whilst they, simply because they may be able to put a few paltry pounds into their pockets on the transaction, engage Italians. An Italian is not like a man of the English-speaking race, but is a kind of man who will do any crawling towards the boss. The English-speaking race are not afraid to stand up for their rights, and will not crawl or pander to anyone simply because that person is in a better position and able to engage men to work. I have always found that a man of an English-speaking race, whether he is a Britisher or an American, can do a far better day's work than any Italian.

MR. THOMAS: Who put the Italians on the Norseman mine?

MR. HOLMAN: I do not know; but if the hon. member had kept his mine at work down there he might have employed them himself. We find that immediately an opportunity arises—I have seen it myself during the last few weeks—to give employment, preference is shown to the alien. That is what I protest against at the present time. Instead of trying to get closer trade relations in the matter of pounds shillings and pence, let us try to build up the British race throughout the whole of the colonies, and give employment to those who speak the same language as we do; so that in future we shall not have to depend on aliens of all colours to intermingle with us in order to make a nation; so that we may be able to make the nation by ourselves. Although we heard a little here last night about the bravery and generosity of the Australians who went to South Africa to fight for the Empire, and how by their generosity and

bravery the silken bonds of relationship were drawn closer, and all that sort of thing, I am of the opinion—and this has been expressed by more than 20 or 30 returned men to my knowledge—that if the returned soldiers were faced with the same question again they would indeed go to South Africa to fight, but their fighting would be on the other side; and in my opinion the men would not be to blame. I am convinced that if the mother country should be in the same trouble again, especially with a mining community, and if the Empire should call on us to send Australian Contingents, the call would not meet with the same response. On the last occasion we offered our services freely, but I do not think we should do so again. I do hope and trust that those who hold the reins of government here will not, simply because the King's birthday with the possibilities of honours coming along in November next, fail to do their duty; I hope they will do their duty by their fellow men, so that our race may be built up, not in mongrel fashion, but as a pure-bred English-speaking race.

MR. WALLACE: You ought to give that advice to the Labour unions.

MR. HOLMAN: As for the unions, I can say that in view of the cheap labour and other disadvantages which the workers have to contend against, they must go to those storekeepers from whom they can get assistance. The time is quite ripe for the worker to patronise the Asiatic or coloured storekeeper; for that is the only way in which he can induce the European storekeeper to show any consideration.

MR. WALLACE: Do you want a white Australia?

MR. HOLMAN: Yes; I want a white Australia; and I think if we allow the members of the present Government to send forth such statements as are expressed in the Speech, our white Australia will be pretty streaky.

MR. WALLACE: You ought not to have touched on the question: it is dangerous to the workers.

MR. HOLMAN: As for the danger of touching on the question, my knowledge of the Murchison district enables me to say that there are very few coloured aliens engaged in storekeeping on the Murchison. I absolutely do not know of one.

At all events, I am sure that it is not as a rule the workers who patronise the alien traders: the coloured storekeeper gets the custom of those who think they can make a little bit out of him. The hon. member (Mr. Wallace) who said the subject was dangerous will, if he looks back on the past a little, recognise how dangerous it is. Very likely he will know how certain steps came to be taken with a view to bringing Afghans to this country.

MR. WALLACE: I am speaking from experience, and speaking truthfully.

MR. HOLMAN: I also am speaking from experience, because I have travelled over the whole of the Murchison country; and I am speaking quite as truthfully as is the hon. member, if not more so. Now, I trust members generally will think for themselves whether it is more desirable to have trade relations with the mother country, or to have a pure-bred race. The next matter dealt with by the Governor's Speech refers to the Transcontinental Railway. In my opinion there exists no necessity for proceeding at once with the building of a broad-gauge line to Kalgoorlie. I consider that if the money were spent in opening up other parts of the country where railways are badly required, and have been badly required for a long time, we should be doing more to benefit Western Australia. I do not consider that it is the duty of the State to construct the proposed broad-gauge line to Kalgoorlie, because I do not see how, under such circumstances, the Transcontinental Railway can be called a federal line. If the Transcontinental Railway is to be built at all, let Australasia build it; not Western Australia. Kalgoorlie is very well supplied with the railway from Perth and Fremantle. I should be glad to see a line constructed from the Eastern Goldfields to Esperance Bay. That railway would facilitate the carriage of goods and passengers, and would save almost as much time as would the Transcontinental. As for the Coolgardie Water Scheme, I believe that its advantages have not been felt so much up to the present as they will be felt in the future. By reason of the heavy rainfall experienced during the last few months, Eastern Goldfields residents do not just at present feel the need of the scheme as much as they did in the past.

I am sure, however, that when those people bear in mind the generosity of Western Australia as a State in endeavouring to make the Coolgardie Water Scheme a success—and it has been a fair success, so far, as regards supply of water—I think they will be only too pleased to rally up and assist to make the scheme a financial success. I regret to observe that the Speech contemplates no provision for a water supply on the Murchison Goldfields, which at the present—as they have been during the whole of last summer—suffering greatly from the lack of an adequate supply. The water on the Murchison has been bad, and a great deal of sickness has resulted. The Government ought to have done something for the Murchison people in this respect. In the past the view has been taken that because water is obtainable on the Murchison by sinking, those fields would always have a permanent supply. Last summer, however, proved that the Murchison has not a permanent supply. I trust that the Government will step into the breach and do something before the advent of next summer. When application was made by the Murchison residents for a better water supply they were told by the Government to borrow the money for the purpose. I maintain that if the Government can spend £3,000,000 in supplying almost the whole of the Eastern Goldfields with water, they might well be prepared to spend a little on the Murchison field as well. At present, the Murchison is the second goldfield in the State; and some inducement, I consider, should be offered the people there to settle permanently. Opportunity should be given them to make the field a greater success than it is now. One of the best means towards that end is to furnish a good supply of water. When one considers that about £10,000 was spent in Coolgardie on condensers which were never used—I do not think a gallon of water was got from those condensers—one must hold that the Government ought to be willing to spend a few thousand pounds for the benefit of the Murchison. On that field there are good natural facilities for securing a permanent supply of water; for example, at a place called "the Gap," which is nine or ten miles beyond Nanine, the expenditure of a few thousand pounds would secure a good supply. If

this has not been done already, I should recommend the Government at all events to reserve a large area in the district for water supply purposes. With other members, I must express my appreciation of the Government's action in endeavouring to protect the timber industry. I for my part should be glad if the scope of the Royal Commission's inquiry were not limited to the South-West, but were extended so as to include the devising of the best means of providing a supply of timber in districts which are not favoured in this respect. On the Murchison, absolutely no mining timber of any description is obtainable. All timber required has to be railed from Mullewa, which is at a considerable distance from the mining centres; indeed some companies have to bring their timber even from Three Springs, on the Midland line. The Royal Commission on Forestry might inquire what are the most suitable timbers for mining purposes, and then experiments in planting timber might be made on the Murchison, so that eventually the fields could be supplied with locally-grown timber. As it is, great difficulty is experienced in securing supplies. Hon. members must bear in mind that in the back country, where there are no railways, mining companies are often compelled to convey timber for as much as 30 miles by horse teams. I am strongly of the opinion that some of the Commission's time ought to be devoted to the question of timber supplies for mining operations in sparsely-timbered districts. The Agricultural Department also might do something to help the holders of garden areas on the Murchison Goldfield. Such areas are dotted all over that field. Provision ought to be made by the department for supplying the holders with fruit trees, plants, and vegetables for experimental purposes, so that the most profitable cultivation may be ascertained. The trees, plants, and vegetables might be supplied on the understanding that those experimenting with them should furnish the department with a report of results. Such reports might be published, and then the people concerned would be afforded an opportunity of learning what cultivation is best suited to their soil. As the representative of a mining district, I cannot but express satisfaction at the progress of the mining industry, but

undoubtedly it is a matter of regret that so few of our great mines should be in West Australian hands. When we find that the prosperity of the mining industry is doing the country as a whole practically no good, it is high time that we looked about for a remedy. Almost the whole of the dividends earned by the mines are being sent out of the State. A new and growing country like Western Australia, which stands in need of development, may fairly look for some return from its prosperous mining industry. No doubt, when the consolidating measure comes before the House an opportunity will be given of discussing the question. I trust that the Bill I refer to will make provision for the working of leases, and also that it will provide for fortnightly pays. The present system of monthly pays is disadvantageous to the workers. I trust, also, that the Minister will introduce into the measure a provision for dealing with the employment of aliens. The establishment of Government batteries in Western Australia has unquestionably been productive of much good. I believe that in the near future we may safely reduce the cost of crushing even below the prices now charged. As regards the cost of cyaniding, I maintain that the leaseholders are called on to pay far too much. Companies and private individuals can cyanide in some cases for less than 5s. per ton.

MR. THOMAS : For less than 4s. per ton.

MR. HOLMAN : Possibly; but in no case does the cost of cyaniding exceed 6s. 6d. Therefore I consider it hardly fair that the Government should charge 10s. to leaseholders crushing in State batteries; and I hope those leaseholders will be given every consideration. As has often been said, even if the Government sustained a little loss on State batteries and cyanide plants, the revenue would derive greater benefits from other sources; for if we can encourage men to work, knowing that they will receive the whole of the gold that is in their stone, the mining industry will have a better chance of development than it has had in the past. While speaking on mining, I cannot let the opportunity pass without a word as to the wardens on the different goldfields. It is absolutely necessary that

something should be done to shift the wardens about periodically; and I can but refer to some remarks I made last session, and I believe in previous sessions, when I said something to the effect that after a warden had been a certain time in a particular district he settled down into one groove, and it was hard work to get him out of that groove. I see by later developments that I have no reason to change my opinion. I hope the Minister will in future arrange for the periodical shifting of wardens. I should not allow them to stay in one district for more than two years. I do not think, after the Press reports of the Princess Royal forfeiture case in Cue, that it would be fair to let the opportunity go by without making a few remarks. Some months ago a person called Miller applied for the forfeiture of the Princess Royal leases. The forfeiture was recommended by the Warden but refused by the Minister for Mines, and in my opinion quite rightly refused; because we find that behind this application for forfeiture there must have been a very glaring case of collusion between the manager of the company and this Miller. We find that the manager at that time gave instructions to his under-manager to place certain men on the leases on certain days. This was done by instruction of the under-manager, and we find that these men having worked the leases for two days, Miller made application for the forfeiture of those leases in respect of those two days. The only conclusion we can come to is that the men employed on those days were employed by the manager. It appears in evidence since taken by the court that those men were paid with Miller's money for the two days' work they did there. At almost the same time an application for forfeiture was made by a man named Maxwell. Maxwell watched the leases for two days, during which no men were employed on them; and he then made an application for forfeiture. However, before the case came into court, the solicitor whom Maxwell had engaged withdrew his plaint without either the permission or the knowledge of Maxwell, and therefore when the case came before the court Maxwell had no standing whatever. After the application for forfeiture had been heard, the under-manager of the mine—a man named Ramshaw—came

to me and got the men to make a statutory declaration, and made one himself, that he had engaged them to work on the leases on those days, and that the leases were worked. I brought down those declarations to the Minister, because I was pretty well satisfied that the case was not clear and fair. If a mine manager is allowed to give instructions to employ men on any lease for two days, and then to forfeit the lease because men were not working on those two days, I do not think any lease in the country is safe; because, by making certain arrangements with the men, and by the manager himself paying the wages for certain days, leases could be forfeited without the knowledge of the owners. Although I am of opinion that those leases should have been forfeited years ago, I am perfectly satisfied that the Minister for Mines' action in refusing forfeiture on that occasion was perfectly justified. Speaking of mining, we find the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) says there has recently been a decrease of men employed, that mines are closing down, and that the industry is declining. [MR. THOMAS: No.] The hon. member said there was a decrease of men employed; and I understood him to say, speaking of the present time, that the industry was going down, and that the only mining centre which was going ahead was, in fact, Dundas. He said also that there would be a great withdrawal of capital from this State. Now, considering the output of gold during this year, I do not think there will be any great withdrawal of capital at all; and I think, had there been proper management in the past, there would not be so many mines closed down. We frequently find that when the returns of a mine begin to fall off, or it ceases to pay dividends, the very first action of some mine managers who have no idea of economy in management, or whose only idea of economy is a reduction of wages, is to do everything possible to bring about that reduction. That has been the method of several managers in the past, who should never have been managing mines at all. The hon. member said also that he was opposed to members of this Assembly conducting arbitration cases. Now when a member says that the whole of the workers, the storekeepers, and the

publicans on the goldfields are robbing the mining companies between them, I do not think that member represents those people at all. When we consider that on the latest electoral rolls of Western Australia a total number of 46,000 electors is set down for the goldfields, and that most of them have families, I think any mining member of this House is perfectly justified in representing those people in the Arbitration Court, or anywhere else in the State; and when we find that members of this House go outside to represent certain classes, what are we to think? We Labour members have been accused of coming here to represent a class, whereas we represent the majority. I maintain that is the class we ought to represent, and we represent it both inside and outside the House. The hon. member accuses us of representing a class; but in my opinion he is representing a class both in and out of the House, to the utmost of his ability; and that class consists of a few dividend-collectors. Last session he did everything possible to prevent the passing of the Dividend Duty Bill, and he then represented the very worst class which could possibly be represented in any country—the absentee dividend-collectors. When we consider the statement of the member for Dundas that capital is leaving the country, can we wonder at that fact when men in his position get up to decry the mining industry when it was never on a better basis in the history, not of Western Australia only, but of the world? When mining members come here trying to shove themselves into a little prominence by decrying other members who do their best to represent the majority of the people of Western Australia, I consider it is the duty of those who make the aspersions to look to themselves first, and to see that they do not come here to represent absentees. The next matter which demands attention in the Speech is that of railways. As to some of the railways mooted, I must say I do not know much about the country through which it is proposed to build them; but I have been through the Morgans district, and the proposed extension of the line there is in my opinion justified, and will receive my support. But I am sorry to see that no mention has been made of a railway to Norseman. Even if that line were not ex-

tended to Esperance, I think the people in the Norseman district are not receiving a fair share of assistance from the State, seeing that they have not been given a branch railway from the Eastern fields. I think one of the very first matters which should have received the attention of the Government was a railway to Norseman. I have been through that country, and speaking with 10 years' experience of the goldfields of Western Australia I can say that the timber alone between Coolgardie and Norseman should almost repay the cost of working the line. That country is in my opinion very promising; the mines at Dundas—I must in this respect bear out the hon. member (Mr. Thomas)—are in a flourishing state; and the only cause which retards an increase in the prosperity of that district is the want of railway facilities. I trust the House will not adopt any short-sighted policy, but will do everything possible, if not to carry the railway through to Esperance, to take it to the Dundas district. The project for a railway in the Nor'-West I believe to be justifiable, for I have been making inquiries. Every possible assistance should be given in the matter of railway communication with the coast to people in such districts. I do not favour the handing over of the line to private enterprise, because we see the difficulties which have arisen when a private company builds a railway in this State. If a line is warranted in that district, the State itself and not a private company should build it. A railway was laid down to Nannine during the past year, and on inquiry I find that although the line was looked on as a "white elephant," the traffic returns have been fairly satisfactory. And if in future we consider it advisable to extend that line to Peak Hill, I do not think we shall be doing this State any injustice in giving mines in that out-back district an opportunity of being properly opened up. I am not in a position to say whether the Jandakot line is necessary, because I have never been to the district and do not know anything about it; but if it is as necessary as the lines to some of the places I have mentioned, the people ought to get it. But before we construct fresh agricultural lines, I think something should be done to purchase the

Midland Railway; for that purchase as I have often said in the House, would throw open a large area of agricultural country. Let us purchase that line in the first place, and I believe it will then give much more satisfaction to the people of this State. I am entirely in favour of a policy of throwing out lines in the back country, though I do not see why it is necessary to construct lines to places which are now only seven miles distant from a railway. But places out back, to which firewood and mining timber have to be carted as far as 30 miles, deserve some consideration. The Speech contains a reference to Bunbury harbour. On that I am not prepared to say much, as I have not been to Bunbury; but I think it much wiser to open up our inland industries instead of looking for so much to the Bunbury harbour. I remember reading in the Premier's policy speech that he intended to make a reduction of £25,000 on the carriage of foodstuffs to the Eastern Goldfields. I do not see why the whole of the goldfields railways should not benefit by this reduction. It should not be confined to the Eastern Goldfields Railway, because the people on the Murchison are as justly entitled to a reduction of freights as are those on the Eastern Goldfields. Some may think that a very large amount; but last year, as I mentioned when I spoke then, the increase in the freights gave the Midland Company about £15,000. So we see that this matter of £25,000 reduction is not going to be of very material benefit to people on the goldfields. The people on the Murchison were called upon to pay pretty well the whole of the £15,000. I think the time has come when ample reductions should be made on the carriage of foodstuffs and timber to the goldfields; and the reduction should not be confined only to the Eastern goldfields. Especially is a reduction needed in districts where firewood has to be carried a great number of miles before being landed on the mines. The next matter that takes my attention in the Governor's Speech is the following paragraph :—

The Estimates and expenditure will be submitted to you in due course, framed with careful regard to economy, but at the same time with a due appreciation of the requirements of the State.

I hope that this economy will be given due regard to, and that the whole of the State will receive, on the forthcoming Estimates, a little bit of the generosity that has always been extended to Perth and the districts round about here. I have heard the Premier say, when a member of a back-country municipality has applied to him for a grant to construct a road, "Why don't you tax yourselves a little bit higher; then you would be able to construct your own roads?" If that is the policy that should be applied to the back-country, it should also apply to Perth. Instead of the Government giving away a block of land worth £35,000 to the municipality here, the Premier should have told the people of Perth to tax themselves higher and pay for the land. I am pleased indeed to see that provision is to be made for a better water supply for towns and mining districts, because I regret to say that in the past a great many mining and small places have not received the water supply that they should have received, and they have not been assisted in that direction as much as they ought to have been. Another matter to which I should like to see attention given is that of the construction of roads in out-of-the-way places. We find men working in mining districts where the tracks have been made simply by travelling along them. We know that pioneers going through the country travel along the clear places, and these tracks are, therefore, considerably longer than they should be. I think one of the first matters that should be given due attention to is the construction—if the Government cannot push railways out to these districts—of good and permanent roads to the various centres, so that people can have better means of travelling than they have at the present time. In regard to education for this State, I may say that anything introduced while I am here which will give better educational facilities than we have at the present time will receive support from me, because in the past the people have not received enough assistance in regard to education. I think everything possible should be done to educate the young people and to assist them to get a better education than we received, especially in the country districts. I do not think it fair to spend so much money

in centralising education. People in the city have better advantages than those in the back country have, and I think that, before we spend a considerable sum of money on a grand educational system in Perth, something should be done to allow those people in the back country, where there are thousands of children growing up, every facility to obtain a good education, both primary and technical. One of the measures introduced is a Constitution Bill. That matter was discussed last year, and I am of the same opinion now as then, that the Government should make an amendment in that Bill providing for payment to members of the Legislative Assembly of not less than £300 a year, because if members come here to put in their time in the interests of the country, they should at least receive remuneration to keep them from want. Members who live in the back country may have to travel hundreds of miles to come here, therefore they should receive more consideration than those who live in and near the city. Some time last session a Fourth Judge Bill was passed, and we were given to understand that, immediately the measure became law, we would have Circuit Courts established throughout the whole of the State. At the present time only one Court has been established, and I think the Attorney General should do everything possible to see that Circuit Courts are established so that the people of the Murchison can have the opportunity of going before a Circuit Court if necessary. We heard a great deal about that idea, and if I remember rightly that was the means of getting the Bill passed—the absolute promise that Circuit Courts should be established throughout the State, yet that has not been done up to the present time. There was a motion passed by this House early last session agreeing that a system of old age pensions was necessary. I would like to see that system carried out, and I would like to see the Government carry out the wishes of this Assembly and do what they were practically instructed to do but which they have not done up to the present time. If the amount of money cannot be raised in any other way, I think it would be a very wise plan on the part of the Government, and a great benefit to this State, if a Bill were intro-

duced to levy a tax on unimproved land values. One thing I have very good reason to complain of is that the registration of unions throughout the State has not been fair. We heard the hon. member for Mount Burges (Mr. Reid) last night on this subject, and I do not intend to say much about it; but when we find that unions belonging to the Amalgamated Workers' Association were refused registration and others registered, I think we have good ground for complaint. The facts briefly are these. Workers situated eight or nine miles from a centre have applied for registration, and have been refused by the Registrar, acting under instructions from the Attorney General. Now if a person is appointed to act as Registrar, the Attorney General should not give him instructions in a case like that. Since that registration has been refused we find that the excuse for the non-registration of the unions was that they were situated too close to one another; but since the refusal over a matter of eight miles, we find other unions situated only three and a half miles from other centres have been registered. When such things as that crop up, it shows, to my mind, that an amount of bias is held by the Attorney General against certain unions. I do not think that it is fair we should allow these things to go on. The Premier's remarks to the unemployed in reference to the high rate of wages were, I believe, uncalled for, and when he made the remark that the high rate of wages was the cause of the number of the unemployed in this State he was very wrong indeed. The Premier said:—

The present tendency in Western Australia was to increase wages and decrease employment. That could not continue unless the future progress of the State was to be seriously checked. It was impossible to have wages throughout the State based on the wealth of the few exceptional gold mines in and around Kalgoorlie. They knew even better than he that apart from a select few of the mines at Kalgoorlie the remainder were low-grade propositions. They were too apt to think that because the wealthy mines could pay high wages the others also could do it. No great progress would be made by the State until they had appreciated the fact that ultimate success rested, not upon the big mines, but upon the low-grade proposition.

The Premier also said that too much

attention was being paid to the high wages for a comparative few, without regard to the great majority. I may mention that the present rate of wages on the goldfields has not been the means of reducing employment or of raising the cost of production. As regards the cost of production, at the present time the production costs less than before the awards were given.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Do you indorse the Peak Hill award?

MR. HOLMAN: I will explain that directly. The Attorney General went out of his way, while cases were before the Court and decisions pending, to make statements that he could not substantiate, and, in my opinion statements, coming from what is supposed to be the highest legal authority in the State, would influence the members of any Court, especially when some of these members are lay members, and do not thoroughly understand, probably, what they have to do. Before the Attorney General made any comment with regard to the wages paid, he should have thought the matter out and have been in a position to prove what he said was correct. Now, taking the previous awards of the Arbitration Court, they did not increase the rate of wages, only in a very few districts. Instead of being an increase of wages it was merely a classification of rates and wages paid, and in a great many cases there has been a reduction in the rate of wages paid. When we find a Judge of the Supreme Court and the other members of the Arbitration Court travelling through the State taking evidence and going down mines to see for themselves, I think the Attorney General was very wrong indeed to make any remark criticising the actions of the Court in settling the rate of wages for a district. This has not only had an effect in Western Australia, but it has had a more far-reaching effect than that. When the Premier was making his policy speech, which was some little time after he had made the remarks with regard to the rate of wages, he made a statement that showed clearly to my mind and to the satisfaction of those who heard him that the mining industry was in a more prosperous condition than ever it had been before the arbitration awards were thought of. I do not think the Premier's remarks regard-

ing the rate of wages could have any other effect than a tendency to reduce the rate of wages, and also a tendency to induce employers of labour to do everything possible to bring about a reduction. The Premier has said that the rate of wages will not allow the working of low-grade propositions. I am in a position to quote rates and figures, as published, to show that the very best mines in this State, those paying the highest dividends, are the very first ones every time to come forward and make an attempt to reduce wages. I can also assure the House that at the present time mines that are not paying, or never did pay, mines working locally in Western Australia in many cases are paying a higher rate of wages than that awarded by the Arbitration Court. Now what was it that made those mines attempt to bring about a reduction of wages? It was the receipt of a notice from the Chamber of Mines for a reduction to be made; and the mine managers on the Murchison admitted in the Arbitration Court that their first instructions were received from the Chamber of Mines at Kalgoorlie. We find, therefore, that the very first mine which attempted to bring about a reduction of wages was the Great Fingall. Then we find another good mine, the Sons of Gwalia, attempted to bring about a reduction; also the Peak Hill mine. Then we go to Norseman, and find a mine that has paid, or will have paid this month, the total amount of £96,000 in dividends, and at the present time the market value of that mine is £200,000. We find that this company was paying the very lowest wages in the district. The other mines that had not paid a penny of profit or dividend during the whole time worked were paying an average wage of about 5s. a week more than that mine. Where do the Premier's remarks come in, that if the low-grade propositions are to be worked, there must be a reduction of wages? The total paid-up capital of this company is a little over £14,000, and as I have said it has paid £96,000 in dividends, and the market value of the property is £200,000. I repeat that this company paid a lower rate of wage than mines which did not make a penny profit; it paid on an average 5s. less than poor mines. I again ask, how can the Premier say that low-grade propositions

cannot be worked without a reduction of wages?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: They are not low-grade propositions.

MR. HOLMAN: The Premier said low-grade propositions could not be worked without a reduction of wages. I wish to show that it is never the low-grade propositions that wish to reduce the wages, but they pay the highest rate of wages. If we look over the awards in the Arbitration Court, if we take Peak Hill, about which the Minister for Mines interjected a few minutes ago asking if I thought that was a fair award, we find, I think, the cost of production has been reduced since the award was made at Peak Hill.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the only mine working there, and it is a high-grade proposition.

MR. HOLMAN: I thought the Minister for Mines knew more about his work than he does, when he says it is a high-grade proposition. It is not a 10dwt. proposition. I will show, farther, that the result of the arbitration award did not have a detrimental effect, because in 1902 the cost of production in that mine panned out at £1 12s. 7d. per ton. A report of a meeting of the Peak Hill Company says:—

From accounts that we have just received from the manager this year, I find that the cost to-day of mining, milling, and all general and surface charges, including management, is working at 21s. per ton.

So that award had no detrimental effect on the Peak Hill district, where the highest award ever given by the Arbitration Court was made. We come to the Great Fingall mine, which has in the past always had a tendency to employ Italians, and always will as long as it is held by people in the old country. The cost of their production previous to the award amounted to about 30s. per ton; that was the evidence in the Arbitration Court, 29s. or 30s. This is the report from the Great Fingall mine:—

The substantial reduction effected in working costs is also a point which should not be overlooked, the total working costs for the past three months having been only 25s. per ton, and even this figure will doubtless be improved on in the near future.

So the arbitration award has had no detrimental effect on the working of mines in the Murchison district, but has

had a tendency to reduce the cost of production. Then there is the Sons of Gwalia mine. We find that the costs in January, 1902, amounted to 35s. 8d. per ton milled, and at the end, that is December of that year, they amounted to 26s. 5d., but in May this year only 21s. per ton. So it is shown that after the award was given in that district it had a tendency to reduce the cost of production there as well. Then we look at the results the awards have had on employment since last year. In the Peak Hill district there was a total of 126 men employed underground in the first six months of last year, and during the first six months of this year the average has been 168. Is there any reduction there? The total number of men employed in that district in the first six months of last year was 354, and the total number in the first six months of this year 355. This year they have increased their tonnage and their production, and although last year they did not pay any dividends, this year they paid a total amount of £15,000; that is since these awards have been given. When we come to look at that and at all the goldfields in this State where awards have been given, we find that those districts are more prosperous than are those in which no award has been given. It is always better to pay a high rate of wages, because people then give a better class of work than they do if paid low wages. If the awards had a tendency to increase wages—which I do not admit, because in several cases they decreased them—there would be a tendency to reduce the cost of production. We find that is the case everywhere. I think that when the Premier said the rates of wages paid on the various goldfields had had a tendency to reduce employment, he made a mistake, and I hope and trust that he will, before this debate is finished, admit that he has done so. What I would recommend the Premier to do, instead of saying that the rate of wages has a tendency to decrease labour, is to set about reducing the cost of mining by building railways to the various mining centres, reducing freights on railways, and taking off the food duties, so that people in those places may be able to have a little bit cheaper living than they get at the present time.

THE PREMIER: Do wages come down?

MR. HOLMAN: It is not necessary; certainly not. I will tell you why not. If we build railways to a certain place we cheapen the cost of freight and of production. We do not build railways to mining districts to give foreign companies the benefit of them. When we build railways to mining districts, the people living there should get a little benefit from them so that they can save a little money out of their wages and then go and settle upon the land, about which the Premier and the whole of the Ministry are so fond of boasting. At present the rate of wages of men working in mining districts is such that it would take quite seven or eight years for a man to save enough to settle himself on the land for 12 months, even if he saved the whole time. We want to give a fair rate of wages so as to afford people in mining districts an opportunity of saving in order that they may, as I say, settle on the land. When we build a railway, let it not be with the object of reducing wages. Let it be not only for the benefit of the mining companies, but of the people settled in the district as well. I maintain that the prosperity of this State does not depend on the amount of dividends sent out, but upon the industries built up; and the people here should be able to earn sufficient to make themselves a little prosperous, so that in time of need, when perhaps they are out of employment or foodstuff gets a little dearer than at present, they will have a little money and be independent, although not working for wages. It is far better for a man who earns wages in this State to be able to save money, than for a few who have no interest in Western Australia except obtaining profit from the mines to get the whole of the benefit. When speaking of the prosperity of this State I would like the Premier to bear in mind that the people who reside in cottages and who live out back are the people who will make the State, and not those who try to grind workers down to the lowest condition of civilisation, and make them almost slaves in some cases. If a man cannot make a little provision for his old age, he is working in some degree in a manner of slavery; and I hope and trust the Premier will endeavour to undo some of the harm he has done in the past by making those

remarks about the rate of wages. Those remarks have done harm not only in Western Australia but elsewhere, and the matter was commented on in London long before we ever thought the news would have got home. One of the replies from London, dated June 26, which was only a little while after the Premier made those remarks, is as follows:—

The reply of Mr. James to the Kalgoorlie unemployed, of which we have so far only the cabled news, has given great satisfaction here. It has for some time past been regretted here that wages should have increased to such an extent as to decrease employment, for it is undoubtedly the fact that many mines are now undermanned, the companies reserving their capital until it can be more advantageously employed than it could be at the present time. There is, however, no feeling here that fair wages should not be paid, for it is recognised that on the Westralian Goldfields the worker's lot is not all "beer and skittles." On the other hand, the claims of investors have to be considered, and if only the two classes can come to some reasonable understanding on the wages question it must undoubtedly prove mutually advantageous. There is plenty of money here, and some of it will come to W.A. if the Government and the workers will so alter the conditions as to render its employment remunerative, for the ordinary Englishman is not a philanthropist. The chairman of the Mount Yagahong Exploration Company, Mr. A. T. Macer, has made a suggestion which merits the consideration of the State Government. He says: "Now that Mr. James, the Premier, has shown the courage and honesty to recognise the position, he could, I think, go a step farther and go far towards placing the mining industry upon a sound footing, if he could persuade Parliament to suspend the working of the Arbitration Act, abrogate its unjust and impolitic awards, and arrange for the workers and mine owners to appoint a conciliation board of, say, 10 or 20 delegates, with a standing chairman selected by, say, the Colonial Secretary."

As to this question of trade relations with the mother country drawing us closer together, the object is to introduce a rate of wages into Western Australia which will not enable people to live in a proper manner. My reason for coming over to this side of the House and speaking is because I am, I maintain, more independent here than I was on that (Government) side of the House. The Premier himself said in my hearing that he looked upon the members sitting on that side of the House as his supporters. When I heard that, I considered it my duty to the people I represent, and my own feelings, not to sit behind him, if he

should wish me to give him any measure of support as regards the remarks he made and had scattered broadcast throughout this country.

At 6-30, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. HOLMAN (continuing) : As regards my taking a seat on the Opposition side of the House, I have done so because I always did favour the Opposition cross-benches for the Labour party. Members of that party are allowed the privilege of sitting on either side, and I have elected to sit here. I maintain that at present there is practically no opposition to the Government, whose centralisation policy is certainly not to the advantage of the country. In my opinion, the interests of the State as a whole are sacrificed for the benefit of the more settled portions. I trust that all members desirous of having Western Australia progress as it ought to do will take a determined stand and once for all demand that the centralisation policy be done away with. The remarks of the Premier to which I have referred were, to my mind, detrimental to the best interests of the majority of our people. We do not wish to see the people of this State brought any lower than they are at present. Above all things we desire industrial peace and a prosperous community, so that Western Australia may help to make a nation in the southern hemisphere.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue) : A few words will suffice for the ideas I have to offer at this stage of the Session. First, however, I must join heartily in the congratulations which have been extended to yourself, Mr. Speaker, and in the expression of good feeling towards you on the part of members of the House. I desire, also, to express my thankfulness that you are with us again, enjoying a measure of health and strength which I trust will prove an increasing one for some years to come. I hope that those of us who get back to this Parliament next Session will have the advantage of sitting under your benign rule. I can hardly conceive what this Legislative Assembly would be without Sir James Lee Steere presiding over it, and I hope I shall not have the misfortune to

see that time; I trust it is yet many years distant. I desire, likewise, to express my satisfaction that we have received from the Home Office a gentleman like Sir Frederick Bedford to rule over the destinies of Western Australia in the King's name. We have been in this respect most happy in times past, but I think we are specially fortunate in having a genial sailor to direct the destinies of the State from the governmental chair. In dealing with the Governor's Speech many matters call for notice. In point of fact, it is difficult, at all events for myself, to discuss the Governor's Speech. For many years I have been accustomed to hear my friend the Premier urge the necessity for a non-party Administration. I used to regard the aspiration as one which would never be realised; but we have now attained very near indeed to its realisation. We have a Government of all one party. I would, however, suggest to the Premier and his Ministers that they must not build too much on this, because there are occasions when even an Administration so unanimously supported as is this one, and equally wise in its proposals, may err in such a direction as to create an Opposition, thus destroying the ideal which the Premier has long laboured to attain. I may say that I am not at all favourable to a non-party Government. Various remarks have been offered with regard to that passage in the Speech which relates to the movement in the mother country towards establishing closer trade relations between the various parts of the Empire. This is a great subject; indeed, one perhaps beyond the reach of this Parliament for adequate discussion. I have no intention of entering into the matter at all fully. I can but say that if I read history aright, and correctly interpret the signs of the times as they now present themselves, the ascendancy of the British race will in future years depend largely on its power to retain its position as a trading community. We gained our position in times past by arms—especially by sea power, by our dominion over the water; but all round the world there are signs that national eminence will in future depend largely on the condition of trade. That far-seeing statesman, Mr. Chamberlain, has sounded

a note of warning not merely in connection with this particular trade question. Many years ago he uttered a note of warning on the one hand, and of sound advice on the other. Mr. Chamberlain has on many occasions declared to the manufacturers of Great Britain that they must be prepared to compete in the world's markets if the prestige of Great Britain is to be maintained. He has also urged, what I trust we shall always observe and take note of, that alongside manufacturing development there must be educational development—that we must look for our advantage in the contest for the world's commerce in a large measure to the skilled labour which we have, to the intelligence of our workmen, and to the conditions by which our workmen are surrounded. Now in this suggested step of bringing the various parts of the British Empire into closer commercial relations, he has advanced a proposition which is worthy of the careful attention of every British subject, worthy of the attention of every member of the British dominions. Whatever difficulties there may be in the way—and there will be difficulties—I hope everyone in this State and in this Parliament, and in all the Parliaments of the Commonwealth, will endeavour to face the question in a broad national spirit, with a view to upholding the prestige of the British race, and of maintaining and continuing to maintain the proud position we have held for centuries as the leading nation of the world. In making such a remark I never separate, in my mind, our American cousins from the British race. I always recognise the Americans as in a large measure part of ourselves. They never ought to have been separated from us, and I trust the day is not far distant when they will again become united with us. But any contest which we have with the nations around us must have full consideration. It will be of little use to us to hold the dominion of the sea if Germany holds the dominion of the market, if our artisans are crushed out by competitive conditions, crushed out of the markets of the world in consequence of competing nations rising superior either through longer hours or greater skill or other advantages. I repeat, the dominion of the sea will advantage us little if our workers are

driven out of the world's commerce. In my opinion, the contest of the future will turn on commerce and trade and manufactures—very largely on manufactures. One thing we need to build up and maintain in the national life is an intelligent artisan class, educated, cultured, free—men with some germs of that freedom which exists in the United States, that freedom which urges men to put their best foot foremost, to use their utmost efforts and their greatest inventive capacity. So we shall create and increase and extend commercial advantages. If this can be done, it seems evident that there will be, first of all, a great increase in the demand for skilled labour. There must be a great increase if we can continue to hold our position and to extend our commerce amongst the nations of the world. Any proposal which tends to this end, which tends to build up the dominion, tends to build up the Empire, and tends to build up the individual State, must have our support; and if we can reciprocate in any way, if we can assist the mother country in maintaining her prestige and increasing the extent of that prestige in a commercial sense, if by anything we can do, even by sacrifices which we may be called upon to make, we can succeed in bringing about such a union as shall induce British people to trade with British people and give advantages for the advantages they receive from the motherland whence they sprung, we ought to take steps to do it. Therefore I am pleased indeed to join with the optimistic view put forward by the Governor in this Speech, that the grand, statesmanlike idea which has been propounded is worthy of consideration, worthy of our closest attention; and we must not allow small questions relating to our own individuality or to our limited area to estrange our sympathies from the great movement which is being promulgated by Mr. Chamberlain. Passing from this, we come to the Transcontinental Railway. But for a speech made last evening by the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss), probably I should not have troubled the House with any speech at all on this occasion; but it does seem to me that Western Australia, or its statesmen at any rate, ought to be united, and that its people ought to be united, in the demand for the Transcontinental

Railway. I cannot understand why there should be a difference of opinion as to the advisableness of this railway. I can and do understand why there should be differences in regard to the construction of that great work. Personally I have held from the first a conviction that the desirable thing—not the practical thing perhaps—is for this State and the State of South Australia to build the remaining portion of the railway; because I do not wish to see a federation of the railways of Australasia, and I look on the construction of the portion of the railway which is now advocated as a Federal undertaking, and as being a distinct step towards the federation of the railways. Now I do not think it profitable to any State that the railways should be federated; but I think the State which would suffer the most in a federation of the railways would be this State. I believe we should suffer more than any other State of the Commonwealth; consequently the ideal solution is that we should make some arrangement with the South Australian Government to come to meet us at the border, and that we should make our way there as fast as we possibly can. I believe the railway, when completed, will be not only an advantage to this State, but a much greater advantage to our sister State, South Australia. I cannot understand why anyone in South Australia is opposed to this railway. During the Federal campaign I looked on this railway as one of the very first works that would be accomplished after we federated. I expected that South Australia would welcome it with both hands. And after we had the promise of Mr. Holder and other members of the South Australian Parliament, I looked on this question as practically settled, as far as South Australia could possibly assist to settle it. I should like to congratulate the Premier on the manly, statesmanlike stand he has taken on this question, and I think he deserves great credit for the manner in which he handled the discussion between himself and Mr. Jenkins. I expected that the South Australian Government would gladly welcome this scheme; and I believe, had there not been a number of persons interested in the other Transcontinental Railway, that through the Northern Territory, we should not have had a single voice

raised in South Australia against our project. But we have now to suffer from the fact that certain persons in Adelaide are endeavouring to work off this concession through the Northern Territory. They have a good deal of influence, and display much energy in promoting their particular work. Now whether that railway to the North be wise or unwise does not affect the question of the railway between South Australia and this State. It is impossible for us to conceive of a successful federation unless we have railway communication. I should be prepared to support a proposal that we build our own portion of this line, and retain it as our own possession. I know that would involve some loss; but it would eventually become a valuable property. I believe the construction of the railway would double our population in ten years; and if it did that I think we could stand not only the interest and sinking fund on our portion of the line, but any loss which its construction would involve. Last night the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) said the line would cost a great deal more than five millions. Unhappily for him, the report of the experts is in to-day's papers, showing that it would cost a good deal less. This carefully-prepared report shows that in all probability the railway would be a paying concern in ten years. But apart from that—apart from the advantage it would be to this State, and the greater advantage it would be to South Australia—it would be an advantage to the whole Commonwealth. Coming to the question whether the scheme is practicable, I have to admit that it is not at present within the range of practical politics: it is not for this State and South Australia to undertake the work jointly. However desirable that may be, it is not practicable. The question then arises, shall we ask the Federal Government to construct this piece of line? A member says "no." Well, I can to some extent understand that feeling. If there be a danger of the construction of this piece of line leading to federation of the railways, then I too say "no." But I think an arrangement ought to be made with the Federal Government by which the money should be found for the construction of this railway, and that we should have the right to take over our portion of it at a future date, South Australia

having a right to take over her portion. I cannot understand some of the remarks in the speech of the member for Perth. It seems to me he had the idea that this was what another member called last night a "sentimental railway." There may be a little sentiment in the idea; but there is much that is beyond sentiment—real practical business. A member says "loss;" but a good many undertakings have involved losses before they became profitable. We have heard of a railway across the Dominion of Canada. That railway cost over 20 millions of money, and was worked for a long time before it paid; but it did pay, and paid so well that another company is now prepared to spend 50 millions to put another line alongside of it. This is because, as an hon. member says, it traverses good country. That is not all. That country may be the best wheat land in the world; but I question if the wheat land of Canada produces more bushels to the acre than much of the land we have in Western Australia. I do not think the returns show that it does. True, it may be that the area is larger; but alongside that advantage, please put the Kalgoorlie goldfields and the Golden Mile, please put the mineral resources that lie beyond, and the great advantage which the construction of this line will prove to the whole Commonwealth. A member says, "What has Tasmania to do with it?" Well, Tasmania can put its apples, concerning which the hon. member is so much concerned, into Kalgoorlie within 50 hours. Now she cannot get them there in less than seven days. Queensland can pass its mails from here in about 78 hours. The Queensland mail takes 7 days to get to Fremantle. Then there is the constant intercourse among people of one State and another, which we cannot possibly estimate or reduce to figures, nor can we put it into the Treasury. Advantages which we cannot count, advantages which will build up our national life in such a way that prosperity will come from directions we little dream of, will follow the opening of the Transcontinental Railway. I hope the optimistic views of the Government will be realised. Something has been said during this debate about the Royal Commission on the Public Service. A good many people criticise it. I was much amused

to hear the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) criticising it severely. He forgets the fact that when he was a Minister he sat in this House and heard members call from all directions for the appointment of a Royal Commission. He forgets that in the Leake Government, who appointed it, there was not one man personally favourable to the commission; that they appointed it at the direct request of the House, and under a pledge which was wrung from them during the debates. So that, if there be any responsibility for the appointment of the Royal Commission, the House must take the responsibility. The Leake Government appointed the commission at the distinct and reiterated request of the members of the House. Notwithstanding that, although I was not favourable to the appointment of the commission, thinking that Ministers might possibly do the work themselves, yet I believe the commission has done good work, and that the Government will receive much assistance through the information the commission has been able to gather. Of course, they will not adopt the whole of the commission's report. No report of a commission was ever adopted in its fulness. The report will be a guide to Ministers, to this House, and to the country, as to how we can best deal with the great question of the civil service. I have never shifted from one position. I say that the civil servants of this State are too many in number, and too poorly paid. I say the cure is, better pay and fewer men. I have said it during all the years I have sat in this House; and after my few months of office, I am more deeply convinced than ever. If we can get good men, give them good, honest pay, and see that they do their work, we can do with far fewer men than we have. We shall reduce the actual cost of government; and the work of the country will be done much more efficiently. The practice has been to crowd people into the service at low salaries, and as a result we have a lot of men for whom we have no particular use. They are rather in the road than otherwise, and the men are not so paid as to make them feel that their positions are worth striving to hold; consequently the work is not done as well as it ought to be. There is only one remedy for the civil service of Western Australia.

We must be prepared to pay higher salaries; and then, when we have secured good men by paying higher salaries, we shall be able to reduce the number of our staff, and the work will be more cheaply and better done. One question that has come up during the debate and is referred to in the Governor's Speech, is the question of hospitals. The Bill is not before the House; but from the little I have gleaned about it, there is some sort of proposal to tax the different districts for the support of hospitals. I am not in favour of a poor tax, I never was; and I think if there is a just charge on the revenue of any State it is a charge for the support of the sick and indigent of that State. I say hospitals should be supported out of the general revenue. If you make an appeal to the public, it simply falls on the few people who give to everything, whose hands are always in their pockets, and you simply make it a burden, oftentimes a species of blackmail. If you place the duty on the municipalities, the work will not be efficiently done, and it will be a burden on the struggling municipalities. Where is the sense of first helping municipalities and then calling on the municipalities to support their hospitals? They only have to use your money after all. Let the Government take the responsibility. I will give an instance which took place during the time I was in office. We had a hospital to which the public subscribed £1,500. It was run by a committee of management and got into debt. The public subscribed £1,500 and the Government £1,000. I sent a medical officer to examine into the state of affairs, and then decided that the Government should take the hospital over. The hospital was better run for £800 than for £2,500 under local management; so that we actually saved money—the Government money as well as the contributions of the people.

MR. PIGOTT: Where was that?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not wish to mention the place. There were a number of instances of the same kind that convinced me that we can get more efficient service under the State control, cheaper and more efficient than we can by any local arrangement. To throw the responsibility on the struggling municipalities and road boards is asking too much. Let us attend to our sick; what

better use can we make of our money? Attend to them properly, and make an economic management which the State with its oversight and general staff can give, that local bodies cannot possibly give. I am opposed altogether to throwing the burden of hospitals on municipalities. I presume that will be one of the 36 Bills which have been spoken about. If the principle of the Bill is that, I must give that principle my opposition. There is only one other item I want to make a remark or two about. I notice it is proposed to do something more with the Bunbury Harbour. I would like to see an efficient harbour at Bunbury. I well remember the time, when sitting in Opposition, I criticised the scheme that was to give Bunbury an efficient harbour for £60,000, and it was to be built out of revenue. I remember, too, when the £60,000 was spent from revenue and £40,000 more came from loan, making £100,000 spent, there was not a suitable harbour there. When I criticised that scheme at first, I referred to a report of the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor and called attention to the fact that Mr. O'Connor advised the Government to construct a harbour at Leschenault Estuary at a cost of £260,000, which would be an efficient harbour. Notwithstanding that he was called on again and again to give his opinion regarding the proposed jetty or breakwater, he simply answered "You can put so many thousand feet or yards of stone into the water for a certain sum of money," but he never once supported the breakwater. I pointed out at the time the proper thing for the Government to do was to construct a harbour at Leschenault Estuary, under the supervision of Mr. O'Connor. We have spent £150,000, and now it is proposed to spend more money. I have no objection to spending more money, but I want the Government to be sure when they spend the money they will have a harbour. They have not one at present. We have spent £150,000 and there is no harbour. When the rest of the money is spent, will there be a harbour? If there will be an efficient harbour, well and good. We started at the wrong place. What we want to be sure about when spending more money is that we shall have a harbour. I can see clearly if the work had been started

under Mr. C. Y. O'Connor's advice, we should have had an efficient harbour in Leschenault Estuary for the money which was then estimated. I hope the Government will not throw more good money after bad and then have to build the Leschenault harbour after all. One word on a question which is very dear to me, and I believe is equally dear to every member of the House, the subject of education. I am very pleased the Government propose to make an advance. I will deal first of all with the University. There is time enough yet for a University, but I think we should do well to take steps by way of preparation. We had the Perth Common for many years which was supposed to be an endowment for the city of Perth. I do not know that the city of Perth got much out of it. Now the Government have got it back, and portion is to be used for building a prison; portion has been given to the Subiaco Municipality; another portion is to be an agricultural show yard, and part of it is to be an endowment for a University. If this is to be an endowment it must be of some practical use. I hope the Government will give powers to the proper persons, as trustees, to make money out of the land; not to lock it up and do nothing with it, but let the endowment be in such terms that the trustees can make money which will go to the fund for the creation of this University, at any rate for its future endowment. I do not think we can look for a person like Sir Samuel Wilson to build a hall for £200,000 and give it to the State, for some time to come yet. I do not expect a University will be built out of donations by people who have gone to another place, leaving behind that which they cannot take away. But I foresee in a careful endowment of these lands a big income for a University if the Government will place it on a sound commercial footing, so that the land can be leased for terms of years with improvements, which improvements will fall in as an endowment to the University at a later date. Some scheme of this kind requires to be thought out, which will yield an immediate income and a continuously increasing income for a University. In handing over the land, I hope the Government will make such arrangements. With regard to the

secondary class of education, that will do good service, always provided that it is not at the sacrifice of the primary and technical schools. It is all very well, but we have to face the avenues of life, and we cannot all be masters of arts or bachelors of arts, we cannot all be trained as lawyers and doctors. The vast number of the people will have to face the reality of work in this State as everywhere else, and we want to see that every child in the country has a fair chance. Now we give that child every chance if we bring the primary schools to every door. There are a large number of children scattered about in small numbers, but in the aggregate there is a large number of children not within the reach of primary schools. Until we reach them with primary schools, we do not act too wisely in spending money on secondary schools, nor do we act too wisely in spending money in secondary schools at the sacrifice of technical schools. We want in this State that model farm with its instructors which has been talked about for years. We want schools of mines scattered about in this country. We have talked about schools of mines for a good many years; I suppose we will get them. We have got the promise anyhow. I only mention that as an incident. We want to bring to the great mass of our children improved conditions of skilled labour, of art as well as of science. It is no use our trying to build up a nation in this great State of ours, with all its unexplored territory, unless we seize every opportunity open to us. We will have to work in this State, and our children must be trained to make the best use of the powers they have. Give them technical education to the full, and increase their skill and capacity to work in the easiest conditions and to the best advantage. That is what Mr. Chamberlain spoke for in England years ago, and is working for still. That is what is needed in a great part of the Empire. America has gone ahead because that country has constantly encouraged the brain of the people by scholastic education. We want to bring the brain power of the people to bear on the hard facts of daily life, the hard facts that have to be dealt with under the difficulties that surround us. If the Government see their way clear to fill the bill of

primary education and to fill the bill of technical education, I have no objection to going on with secondary education. There always will be a certain number who it is most desirable should go in for higher education. I am not quite in sympathy with the idea that this number, be it large or small, should be left to the class of people who can afford to send children to school. I think the State should provide it, and if there is a brilliant boy who is of poor family, he ought to have the same advantages as the boy belonging to the rich family. We have to face the fact that if the whole place was full of universities and grammar schools, we could not make a high culture out of our people. By a long way the great mass of the people have to fight and struggle under natural conditions. Let us give them all the help we can. Give them primary education and technical education which will enable them to rise higher in their particular lines and skill, whichever be best for them, and thus produce the best conditions under which the country can grow. I hope, without detaining the House longer, my remarks have not been altogether astray, and I hope the Government will see their way clear to give some consideration to the points raised in this debate.

MR. H. J. YELVERTON (Sussex) : In touching on the first topic referred to in the Speech of His Excellency, that of preferential trade, I think we may well leave this subject first to the statesmen of Great Britain who are now discussing it, before we need worry ourselves very much on the subject. While I fully recognise that the matter of friendly business relations might be improved between the Empire and the colonies, yet I think that sentiment largely prevails in our national life, and that, should the time of stress and strain again come upon the Empire in the future as it has recently done in the past, we shall find that Australia will again be to the front in providing money, and if need be the blood of her sons, to defend the privileges and rights of that Empire of which we are all proud to consider ourselves a part. Referring to the question of the Trans-Australian Railway, I would like to say that I do not approve of the idea enunciated by the Premier, that of building

a broad-gauge railway to Kalgoorlie in anticipation of the construction of this Trans-Australian Railway. Personally, while I am strongly in favour of having that railway built, I think that the promise made to us in the past should be carried out, and that this railway should be built by the Federal Government. I hold that as far as our State funds are concerned, as far as we are able to provide money for the construction of public works, we have any amount of these works within the State itself upon which we can spend all the money we are able to obtain. Touching upon the question of railway management I would like to refer to the remarks made by my friend the member for Wellington (Mr. Teesdale Smith) the other evening. When we found a man of that hon. member's business capacity and experience enunciating the views he did, and knowing as we do that when the present Commissioner of Railways was placed in office Mr. Smith was one of those who strongly supported his appointment and held the most kindly and friendly feelings towards Mr. George, when we heard that member get up in this House and attack the methods of the Commissioner, it would I think have been better if the Premier, instead of treating the remarks of Mr. Smith—as he appeared to me to do—in a spirit of levity, had considered that probably there were many grounds for the charges made by the hon. member, and had thought the matter out and endeavoured to rectify the sore feeling that evidently exists in the mind of Mr. Smith in regard to the manner in which the Commissioner conducted his business, and reflected whether it would not be better for the Commissioner to endeavour to treat business people in a business way. Surely if our railways are managed in such a way as to injure the people who are the customers of the railway, who provide the traffic for the railway, and if the business is conducted in such a way as to injure the public, it should be a matter for consideration on the part of the Government whether these things cannot be rectified. For my own part, I was one of those who, while not acquiescing in the appointment of Mr. George, was yet willing to give him a fair trial. I feel that he has been upon his trial, and I cannot say that I find that the management of the railways is

much better to-day than when Mr. George was appointed. I know that the manner in which the public are treated by the Commissioner and his officers is not one which should exist. I know that the public are treated as though they were a set of robbers, always willing to take advantage of the department, and that, from the Commissioner downwards, his officers are always endeavouring to take advantage of the public. Now as a business man I say that this state of affairs should not exist. The railway staff should endeavour to treat people in such a manner as to make them believe they will be always receiving fair treatment, and not such treatment as appears to them entirely wrong. Referring to the question of constitutional and electoral reform, I am rather inclined to think that, instead of these Bills being introduced during the present session, it would be well at the next general election to allow the people themselves to have a say in the matter. So far as I have been able to gather, I have heard of no agitation or demand on the part of the people for either constitutional or electoral reform. When those Bills were introduced at the fag-end of last session I felt bound to oppose the Constitution Act Amendment Bill, and I did so for this reason, because I felt that the measure was being introduced in a very insincere way. I felt that it was not introduced with a view of passing that measure, but that the Premier, if I may say so, was playing to the gallery, well knowing that when the Bill came before another place it would be thrown out. I hope that if these Bills are introduced, as I believe they will be, during this session of Parliament, there will be no spirit of insincerity about them, and I trust they will be introduced in such a way as will show the Upper House we are not attempting to take advantage of them, but are prepared to deal fairly by them, and that when we seek for a reduction in the number of members of this Assembly we will also only ask for a proportionate reduction in the number of members of the Council. With regard to the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme, I congratulate the Government on the completion of that important work, and I congratulate the Minister for Works upon the amount of energy which he

threw into it. Undoubtedly, the completion of that very important work—the early completion of it—was due in a very great measure to his energy and ability. Farther, with reference to this scheme I would like to say in regard to certain meetings which have recently taken place on the goldfields, at which a protest was made against the amount which it was intended to charge for the water, that I feel this was somewhat ungenerous on the part of the people living in that vicinity. No doubt it was Sir John Forrest's idea and that of the late Mr. O'Connor, that the scheme would pay provided we were able to sell five million gallons of water daily at a price of 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons; but now we find that, so far from being able to sell that quantity, we shall probably, even when we get the scheme fully at work, only be able to sell about half of it. Therefore the idea of the Government of charging an increased rate and thereby providing for working expenses and sinking fund is, I think, a justifiable one. And when we come to consider that the proposed charge—I believe it is about 7s. 6d. per thousand gallons—is only about a tenth part of what the people on the goldfields have hitherto been paying for their water I cannot, and I do not think any reasonable man can, see any justification for cavilling at that charge. Touching upon the Public Service Commission, I would say, with regard to their labours, doubtless they have been somewhat protracted; but, no doubt, they are doing fairly good work. While I cannot hold that the recommendations of the Commission are altogether what they should be—for I feel that some of them are very drastic indeed—I do think that the Government and this House and the country generally may derive very much information from the work of the Commission. I think some of the proposals are altogether too drastic, and I hope the Government will be moderate in dealing with them. The Timber Commission will undoubtedly do good work, and while I cannot entirely approve of the *personnel* of that Commission, I admit that there are a good many able and practical men upon it, and I feel sure that the results of their labours will be beneficial not only to the country generally but to the industry

itself. The Government purpose, from what I glean from the Governor's Speech, encouraging the development of the mining and agricultural resources of the country. I am glad to learn they intend doing this, and I do hope that, with regard to agriculture, they will at any rate assist it in every possible way. In the past I have not found that either the Leake Government or the James Government have assisted agriculture as I had hoped to see it helped. In the first speech I made in this House I advocated the clearing of land before selling it to settlers. I hold that the State could very well clear the land, going into it in a large way; and by the employment of a practical man and up-to-date machinery they could clear it cheaper than the individual could. I should advocate the clearing of lands by the State at any rate to some extent as an experiment, and the selling of that land in the same way as we do now under long terms for payment. The Collieries Goldfields Railway is, I feel, fully justified, and I congratulate the Government on having decided to build that line. I trust that, while they will carry the line in as direct a route as they possibly can to reach connection with the goldfields line, they will have in their minds the large area of good agricultural land through which it will pass, because there is no question that along the proposed railway route land can be found of first-class quality upon which hundreds, possibly thousands of settlers may be placed. As to the Bunbury harbour works, I listened very attentively to the remarks made upon that subject by the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), and I well remember that the report of the late Mr. O'Connor was strongly in favour of an inner harbour at Bunbury. Unquestionably we now know that was the proper course to pursue—to open the inner harbour—but having spent about £140,000, I think, on the breakwater, any reasonable man will now say that the proper course is to extend the breakwater so as to protect the shipping in the harbour. The trouble with regard to the breakwater admittedly is that there always will be a large amount of siltage inside the harbour, which siltage will have to be removed by dredges. It is always so in harbours built outside by the construc-

tion of breakwaters. Undoubtedly the extension which the Government propose to make in connection with the breakwater is fully justified.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Will it be effective?

MR. YELVERTON: It will be effective if the breakwater is carried sufficiently far; it will be effective if the breakwater is carried far enough to protect the shipping. The work will be entirely effective if the breakwater is extended another 3,000 feet. I make that statement as a practical man of considerable shipping experience. As to justifying the expenditure, I wish to point out that the fact of the present receipts from the harbour being sufficient to cover interest on the outlay affords justification. Indeed, the receipts are not only sufficient to cover interest, but something more. I am glad to learn that the Government recognise their ability to reduce railway rates, and I trust the reduction will be effected in a fair and equitable manner. I hope especially that the agriculturists of the State will benefit by the intended reductions. The proposal to provide a water supply for the towns of the State must have the concurrence of every reasonable man. We all know that many of our towns, even those on the coast, suffer greatly from the want of a sufficient supply of pure water. As for the hospitals, I entirely disapprove of the course hitherto pursued by the Government. The closing of hospitals in country towns I consider uncalled for and unjustifiable. A great wrong has been done to the people affected. I agree with the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) that the upkeep of such hospitals should come out of the general revenue, but rather than have the hospitals closed I should consent even to the levying of a rate on the people in the various districts. I am glad to observe that a more cordial spirit now exists in the Assembly than that which characterised its proceedings during last session. The spirit of compromise which has evidently pervaded members generally is very welcome. The manner in which we fought during the last two sessions was scarcely creditable to the House.

MR. JACOBY: Blame the Government side.

MR. YELVERTON : I blame both sides ; but more especially, of course, the opposite side. While on this point I wish to say that I hope the attitude of Opposition members will not be one of factious opposition. I can promise the Premier and his colleagues that the attitude of the Opposition will be vigilant—[MR. F. CONNOR : And effective]—and one in which we shall hold ourselves open to criticise fully all Ministerial actions. With the member for East Kimberley, I hope the Opposition will be effective ; and personally I have no doubt it will be. The present position of parties is not conducive to good party government. It would be to the public advantage if the party line were more definitely drawn, if the division were more clearly cut. I trust, however, that during this session we shall be able to do good work, not only for our constituencies, but for the country generally.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie) : At the outset I desire to express my concurrence in the views advanced by the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) as to the necessity for various parties in this Chamber. Unlike the Premier, I do not believe in the desirability of having one united party endeavouring to advance the State. I believe that the best interests of the country will be served by the existence of two parties, one of them in direct Opposition. Every one must realise that so far as this debate has gone it has not disclosed the existence of an Opposition. It is true that the party with which I am associated claims to be the real Opposition party. [MR. F. CONNOR : How about the voting last session ?] We have had a few divisions, and it has been found that when the Labour party is on the verge of success the so-called Opposition comes over to help the Government. My view of the party which claims to constitute the Opposition is that it is a Government reserve party. [MR. F. CONNOR : Like you were last session.] Opposition members watch closely how things are going in a division, and should the Government be at all in danger, Opposition members rush over to save the situation. Besides the Labour party, no Opposition party now exists in the House. The member for North Murchison (Mr. Holman) referred to an alleged utterance of the Premier, to

the effect that the hon. gentleman looked on all those sitting on this (Government) side of the House as supporters of his Ministry. I and others sitting on the Labour bench did not hear that remark made. [THE PREMIER : I never made it.] But if it was made, members generally must realise how ridiculous the statement is. [THE PREMIER : Hear, hear.] Let hon. members consider the attitude taken by the Labour party during last session, and they must realise that Labour members were really more in Opposition to the Government than were the so-called Opposition members. [MR. CONNOR : Why do you sit on the Government side ?] Because we are an independent party, and can sit where we like on the back benches. We can oppose the Government if it suits us to do so. The fact remains, however, that in the divisions of last session the Labour party voted more frequently against the Government than did the so-called Opposition. In the face of that circumstance, how ridiculous would it be for the Premier to make the statement attributed to him by the member for North Murchison ! If the hon. gentleman made it, he must be asked to bear in mind that the Labour party does not form portion of the Ministerial party. Labour members constitute an independent party, and they vote according to their lights. If Government proposals are good, they receive the support of Labour members ; on the other hand, if Opposition proposals are good we support those. We are neither part of the Government nor part of the Opposition.

MR. JACOBY : You must have had a row lately. Why did you fall out ?

MR. JOHNSON : As for the Speech, I with members on this (Labour) bench am distinctly dissatisfied. I was disappointed when I heard the Speech ; and I was at a loss to understand how one who, like the Premier, claims to be a patriotic West Australian, could put forward such a policy. For some time I could not understand it ; but after hearing the Premier's congratulatory references to the member for West Kimberley on his accession to the Opposition leadership, I understood. The Opposition leader was described by the Premier as leader of the stagnation party.

THE PREMIER : No ; I did not say that.

MR. JOHNSON: That is what I understood the Premier's utterances to convey, and I think the member for West Kimberley took a similar view. Immediately on the Premier making that utterance, I began to understand how he came to recommend His Excellency the Governor to deliver such a Speech. The hon. gentleman throws in a few railways to satisfy his immediate supporters, and to satisfy the members whom he describes as a party of stagnation he practically leaves the country standing still. So he secures the support of the stagnation party. The first paragraph of the Speech which I shall touch on is one that has caused a good deal of discussion. It refers to the endeavour to secure closer trade relations between the various parts of the Empire. With other members, I consider this rather a Federal matter, a question more for the Commonwealth Parliament than for us. If it is a question in respect of which the State should support the Commonwealth, I maintain that it is advisable for us to wait until we hear more about the proposal. At present, we have merely the bald statement without details, and we do not know exactly what the proposal means; indeed, I claim that no one can say exactly what Mr. Chamberlain's proposal involves. An interesting feature of the matter to me is that the hard, old, crusted conservative element we have in this House should be unanimous in support of the proposal. We have heard the conservative members, one after another, support the proposal. All of them have claimed that closer trade relations are desirable because—and on this they laid stress—such relations would protect them, the producers, against the competition of foreign countries. When, however, Labour representatives in this House ask the conservative members to assist in protecting the workers against foreign labour, the question is a different one altogether. The fact is not a little remarkable that the closer-trade-relations scheme is so glorious because it is to protect the producers against foreign competition, while a similar scheme is absolutely wrong when the Labour party asks for protection of the working man against the competition of foreign labour. I claim that if

protection is good for the producer, it is equally good for the worker.

THE PREMIER: How do you apply this argument? We have no power to deal with the relations at all.

MR. JOHNSON: True, we have no power; but hon. members will bear in mind that the Labour party during last session brought down a motion requesting the House to call on the Federal Government to administer the Alien Restriction Act a little more stringently; and we find the hard, old, crusted conservatives who opposed that motion supporting the system of protection against foreign competition when the question comes close home to them. We desired the House to support us on that occasion, to ask the Federal Parliament to enforce to the fullest extent the Act they had passed; but the House denied us that, and we find to-day that foreign labour is coming into the State almost as freely as it did before that Act was heard of.

THE PREMIER: Do you seriously contend that we ought to keep out every man who is not a Britisher?

MR. JOHNSON: No, I do not; but I contend that hundreds of those coming in at present are undesirable, and that the workers should be protected against this foreign competition. The next question which faces us in the Speech is that of the Transcontinental Railway. I think with the member from Cue (Mr. Illingworth) that this is not a question which we can discuss this session at any great length. True, it is a great question, and one in which every West Australian should take a deep interest; but we must realise that it is at present far removed from us, and that the time has not arrived when we should take steps towards building any portion of that line. I believe that more agitation, or as the Premier puts it more hustling, is necessary in this State before the Federal Parliament will seriously consider its construction. However, I desire to say I am an ardent supporter of the Transcontinental Railway, and to contradict the impression that has got abroad that the goldfields people are opposed to it. I claim to have a little knowledge of their opinions, and am convinced that the large majority, almost the whole of them, are ardent supporters of the railway. Coming to the State rail-

ways, I wish to support the proposal for the extension of the northern line to Laverton. I believe that centre has justified the proposition. As to the other lines, I desire more information before expressing an opinion; but evidently we shall get more information as to these lines from the advocates of the rival routes. There being many differences of opinion as to both railways, no doubt when the Bills are brought in we shall have the facts placed before us. Meanwhile I desire to say that any line which will open up agricultural lands and improve the agricultural industry shall have my hearty support; but at the same time I agree with the contention of the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), in saying that when any Government line opens up and improves a private estate, the country should get some share of the enhanced value thus created. I think it wrong that we should build a line through any private estate, though I am not in a position to say whether this is being done to any great extent. If it is, the public should get some compensation for enhancing the value of the private property.

THE PREMIER: The betterment principle was discussed last year in the Upper House.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, it will be discussed again when those Railway Bills are brought before us. Before leaving the railways, I may say that if half of what I have read is true, the Government should build the Port Hedland Railway. I believe the far North is worthy of their attention, and that the Government should at least have brought down a Bill for the construction of the line for which the people of that district have so long been agitating.

THE PREMIER: On what do you base your opinion?

MR. JOHNSON: On what I have read in the newspapers; and I say if half of it is true, the building of that line is justified. I understand it will open up valuable auriferous country; and if it does, the railway is one which it is the duty of the Government to build. However, I admit I have never been there, and I do not know the country; but after reading of it, and listening to the utterances of members who have visited the territory, I believe the Government are not paying sufficient attention to that

portion of Western Australia. Anyway, the Government are taking a considerable time to make up their minds on the subject. However, I am pleased to hear that they intend to get a report, and seriously to consider the question of building the line. And if the report bears out the contention of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), and many other members who have spoken on this question, the line certainly should be built. I was inclined to support the improvements to the Bunbury harbour, until I heard the utterances of the member for Sussex (Mr. Yelverton). He frightened me when he told us just now the distance over which the breakwater should be extended. However, there is one phase of this project to which I wish to draw the attention of the members for Fremantle. We know that the policy of those members and the people of Fremantle is centralisation; they believe that all imports and exports should go through Fremantle; and I cannot understand how it is that the Fremantle representatives, whose one and only policy is centralisation, allow such proposals as this to be passed. I desire to warn the people of Fremantle against this thin end of the wedge which the Government are introducing to smash up the Fremantle policy of centralisation; and I trust those representatives will awake before it is too late. However, to be serious, I congratulate the Government on the proposal to open up the natural ports. I believe that Bunbury should be opened up, and at the same time there is one other port of far greater importance than Bunbury, and of importance to a greater number of people—I refer to the port of Esperance. That should be opened up; and when I advocate that all natural ports should be opened up to give each section of the people its natural port, I cannot consistently oppose the extension of this Bunbury breakwater. I believe it is desirable that the harbour should be extended, and at the same time that the Government should persevere in breaking up the centralisation policy by starting to open up the Esperance harbour also.

THE TREASURER: Would you decentralise Kalgoorlie?

MR. JOHNSON: Certainly, if that is to the best interests of the State.

THE TREASURER: Some places cannot help being centres.

MR. JOHNSON: I am sorry the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) is not present; but I must take exception to some of his utterances. His speech would lead members to believe that the mining industry is not flourishing. Now those of us who take an active interest in that industry know that it is flourishing; and those who will read the report of the Under Secretary for Mines will find that mining is in a healthy condition, and that the hon. member's statements are entirely unfounded. One of his misrepresentations was that for the last 12 months there had been an increase of only 725 men on the mines. The report of the Under Secretary, page 25, clearly shows that there was an increase of 1,070 men. The member for Dundas neglected to point out that last year the gold-mining dividends also had considerably increased, that the cost of mining operations had greatly and generally decreased, that mining developments had increased, that more mines were opened up, and that wages generally had not increased. The hon. member, in his desire to cast reflections on the working of the Arbitration Court and on the actions of the Labour party, tried to show that the mining industry was not flourishing because of the policy pursued by this party and the decisions of the Arbitration Court. If the hon. member would only look up the report of the Mines Department—and he will excuse me if I take that report as more reliable than his statements—he would find that all save five of the least important centres out of 19 are flourishing, and have increased all round. One little remark he dropped looked to me slightly inconsistent. He said that the Norseman field never looked better. No doubt he made that remark to aid the cause of the Esperance line. But it is remarkable that before the Arbitration Court, when the workers appealed for a retention of the ruling rate of wages, the whole of the evidence, given on oath, tended to prove that the Norseman field was not flourishing; and the miners' wages there were based on that evidence. The President of the court, in delivering the award, pointed out that were the wages asked for by the miners granted, there would be no mining

industry in Norseman; yet the member for that centre desires us to believe that Norseman is in a flourishing condition. In that particular I hope he is right. I take exception to the hon. member making out that the mining industry is flourishing in Norseman, while the mine managers who appeared before the Arbitration Court say on oath that it is not flourishing, and that should the workers obtain the wage for which they ask, there will be no mining in Norseman. But we recollect that the hon. member used the same arguments last session when we were discussing the Dividend Duty Bill. He then said that if the Bill was carried it would practically ruin the mining industry.

MR. THOMAS: I never said anything of the sort.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, if he did not use those exact words, he inferred that the mining industry could not carry this tax if it was imposed. [MR. THOMAS: Never.] Yet we find that the Bill was passed; and the Treasurer, be it said to his credit, has shown no mercy in collecting the tax. Yet in spite of the tax the industry is flourishing. The hon. member is trying to use the same argument to cast a reflection on the working of the Arbitration Court.

MR. THOMAS: I never reflected for one moment on the Arbitration Court. Either you are very dull of comprehension, or you are wilfully misrepresenting me.

MR. JOHNSON: It is difficult at times to follow the hon. member; but I believe the other members on this Labour bench understood him to cast a reflection on the legislation advocated by this party, and on the working of the Court of Arbitration. The hon. member repudiated the right of the Labour party to a monopoly of the democratic element, yet we find that last session the hon. member was not as democratic as he claims. I desire to say, if the hon. member will only practise what he preached the other night—and he will have an opportunity given him shortly in the session to prove his democracy—I will be the first to contradict anyone I may meet in the street who may refer to the hon. member as the member for the Esperance line: I will tell them that he is the hon. member for democracy.

MR. TAYLOR: I thought it was the Dividend Duty Bill.

MR. JOHNSON: I desire also to refer to the remarks of the member for the Williams who spoke of the increase which is proposed by the Government in the railway rates. I agree with that member that the last decrease in the railway rates to the goldfields was practically of no use to the consumers. The position is this: the Government in decreasing the rates took off a pound or two a ton from flour; but that did not decrease the price of a loaf of bread. The consumer gets no advantage from the decrease. I commend the utterances of the member for the Williams to the Minister for Railways when considering the rates not to decrease the rates so as to improve the position of the producer or middleman, but to reduce the rates so that the condition of the consumer on the fields will be improved. This can be done, as the member for the Williams pointed out, by transferring certain goods from one class to another. I desire also to refer the Premier to the remarks of the member for the Williams in connection with differential rates. For years on the fields the people have been crying out about the differential rates, yet we find the member for the Williams telling us they are practically useless, no good to the Government and no good to the producers on the coast. The hon. member pointed out that had he remained in office longer—or rather he regretted the fact that he had not while in office struck out the differential rates. I hope the Premier will do something during the session in connection with those rates. We find the Chamber of Commerce, in a report which has been circulated amongst members, and I hope members will read it, take strong exception to the differential rates. The people generally are supporting the Chamber of Commerce in their contention, and I hope the Government will see their way clear to strike these rates from the rate book at the earliest possible moment. I desire to congratulate the Minister for Works on the completion of the Goldfields Water Scheme, and on the energy he displayed in the completion of that scheme. I would like to see the Minister for Works display the same energy in clearing up the archi-

tectural division of his department. I am strongly of opinion that the people of the country are not getting justice from this department. The public purse is not being safeguarded under the present administration of this department, and I hope to see the Minister for Works do something in the way of inquiring into the working of this branch, with a view of giving us something better than we are getting now. Anyone with a practical eye, or anyone who desires to see how the affairs of the department are carried on, need only walk through the new Law Courts, or go and see the work being carried on at the new Parliament Houses. I say it is a disgrace to the public that we have such work put into our buildings. The specifications are good enough, and when a contractor tenders to do that work, he tenders to do good work. I contend it is due to faulty supervision that we get a bad class of work in our public buildings. It is a matter that the Minister for Works should look into. I understand he is inquiring into the matter, and I hope he will do something, and give us more for our money in connection with this branch of his department. I desire to congratulate the Minister for Mines on pushing forward with the School of Mines in the main centre of the goldfields: I refer to Kalgoorlie. I hope when a portion of that building is ready, the Minister will start a school, and not wait for the whole of the building to be finished.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Classes will start at the end of August.

MR. JOHNSON: I am extremely pleased to hear that, because in the past we have found that the Government have waited until buildings of this nature are completed, and then it has taken some months to get the furniture necessary. In this matter we can congratulate ourselves that the Minister has decided to open the school before the whole building is finished, and give the young men of Kalgoorlie an opportunity of improving their education in connection with mining. There is one little matter I desire to draw the attention of members to. A paragraph appeared in the *Morning Herald* of to-day quoting an extract from the Emigrants' Information Office in London. That office claims that there are

a number of unemployed in Western Australia, but it goes on to say that there is a good demand for female domestic servants. I claim there is not a good demand for female domestic servants in this State. It is true that a number of people in Western Australia claim they cannot get female domestic servants.

MR. HASTIE : Because they won't pay them.

MR. JOHNSON : Simply because, as the member for Kanowna says, they will not pay them. During the last week or so I have been making inquiries in this direction, because for some considerable time I have heard numerous complaints about the system of employment and the rate of wages paid to the poor unfortunate domestic servants. I have found by my inquiries that 15s. a week is considered a high rate of wage for domestic servants in Perth. That is absolutely true. I know this, and I will give hon. members names if they wish them. Some of those persons who are looked upon as the aristocracy of Perth, who fly about in their carriages, hold "at homes" every week, and whose names figure in the newspapers as being guests at Government House, and so forth, are the people who pay 15s. a week and consider it is a high wage for domestic servants. What is the ruling rate of wage? What is the customary wage paid or offered to the poor unfortunate girls in Perth? The customary wage offered at present is 8s. a week. That is absolutely true. I claim that no girl can possibly live on such a wage. Even 15s. a week is not sufficient to keep a girl; she can hardly exist on it. Yet we find even 15s. a week considered too high by some of the gentry of Perth, and they offer girls 8s. a week. In the face of that we find the Information Office in London stating that there is a good demand for female domestic servants in this State at the present time. I contradict this, and say that there is no demand for girls who expect to get a living wage. Girls must live on their parents, or be assisted by their parents, to subsidise this paltry 8s. a week that is paid by the aristocracy in Perth. There is no demand for domestic servants who expect to get a good wage in this State. In conclusion, I desire to say, while I am disappointed with the Speech generally, at the same time I realise there are

several measures that we can all congratulate ourselves are to be re-introduced this session. I refer to constitutional reform, electoral reform, and the Shops and Factories Bill; but, at the same time, we must realise these were portions of the policy of last session. These Bills should have been passed last session, and I desire to say this session I will be no party to a compromise in connection with these Bills. The Labour party compromised last session in order to meet the Legislative Council, and we gave way on certain points in order to get the Bills passed; but this session I shall not agree to any compromise. I shall go for the measure that I think is desired by the people of this State, and not a measure that is desired by those who sit in another place. I am disappointed in the Bills that have been placed before us, especially the Bill in connection with constitutional reform. I expected to see something better now that the member for Boulder is included in the Ministry. I did think—and members will recollect that the member for Boulder fought very hard against the measure of last session—that the Minister for Lands would have some influence with his colleagues, and that we should have a measure based more on a population basis. But the fact remains, although the member for Boulder is included in the Ministry, we have a measure almost identical with that introduced last session.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : Have you read it?

MR. JOHNSON : The influence of the member for Boulder is evidently not felt in this direction in the Ministry. I desire to thank the House for the patient hearing it has given me, and I hope the Opposition will take an active interest and will assist the Labour party in criticising the Government, so as to keep the Government on the proper track.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) : I have no desire to speak at length on the Address-in-Reply, but I must congratulate the member for Kalgoorlie on the way he has described the position of parties in this Chamber, also for the way he has described the position of the Labour party. It is only the position which I sought to place that party in in December, 1901. At that time I held

the position which the hon. member pointed out. I hope that whatever I may say will not be taken as being hostile to the party of which I am a member, the Labour party. I said then that the Labour party in this Chamber should hold an independent position, and on every occasion they should assert the strength of the party; but unfortunately I was alone in that belief. I am sorry to say I think our party has stuck too long to the Government. There was a time in this Chamber when the Labour party almost held the balance of power. The present Government can thank the Labour party for the seats they now occupy. I feel confident that when the late Mr. George Leake first became the Premier of this State, had the Labour party not stuck to him as solidly as they did during the first five months of his office, the present Government would not have been where they are. I supported that hon. gentleman to give this country a change of Premier. I found that during the campaign of Mr. Morgans's Ministry we did not receive what we were fighting for, and hence I remained on this side of the House, and I am sorry that the rest of the party did not occupy this bench. Had they done so they would have occupied a better position in this Chamber than they do to-night. What the hon. member for Kalgoorlie says is practically true. He says there is a conspiracy between the Opposition and the Government on questions which affect the Labour party, and we saw them on the simple divisions which took place counting noses and seeing exactly how things were going, and when there was a possible chance of the Government being defeated they hopped across the floor like grasshoppers.

MR. PIGOTT: What did you do?

MR. TAYLOR: What did I do? I hope the hon. member is not going to accuse me of putting him into that chair. The hon. member will never accuse me of being one of a party following the Opposition. I have made my position clear in this Chamber times out of number. [MR. CONNOR: A party of one.] It is likely to grow larger. With reference to the leader of the Opposition, of course from a party point of view I must congratulate him on being appointed to that position, because when he came down

here from the North-West at the same time as I entered the Chamber or shortly afterwards, he came here as the leader of the black-labour party from the North-West. Now he is the leader of the Opposition—[MR. DAGLISH: Coalition now]—which will always insure the support of the Labour party! Any person who is the leader of a black-labour party in Australia can always look for the support of the Labour party! Of course the hon. member is perfectly satisfied that when the Commonwealth was considering the Alien Restriction Bill he almost gained the objects he desired. I will not deal any longer with the member for West Kimberley. I would like to make a few remarks about the portion of the Governor's Speech dealing with railway extension. There has been a lot of discussion in this Chamber and in the papers with reference to day-labour *versus* the contract system. We know that the portion of the railway from Kalgoorlie to Menzies was constructed by contract and the portion from Menzies to Leonora by day labour. The contract price for 80 miles from Kalgoorlie to Menzies was £137,103 some odd. The stipulated price of the contract for carrying goods was 6d. a ton, and I have it on very good authority that the contractors derived something like £40,000 of profit from the traffic during the course of construction. The next section of a similar distance, from Menzies to Leonora, was constructed by Government day-labour, which cost I think—the Minister for Works will put me right if I am wrong—something over £204,000, and during the course of construction the department earned on that railway £184,871 some odd. So members will see that the line earned, within something over £19,000, what the cost of construction was. But of course we have to deduct the working expenses of running the line. I only quote those figures with the object of showing to the House that the people on the goldfields practically paid for the construction of their line before it was handed over to the existing railway lines. I think that has obtained all the way from Southern Cross. The Government started to carry traffic from Menzies to Leonora at 6d. a ton, but after a short while they reduced the amount to 4d., so that they earned

£184,871, as I said before, at 4d. Practically most of it was carried at 4d., quite half of it, anyhow. They would have earned considerably more had they carried it at 6d., the price stipulated for with the contractors. The first section was by piecework. I am pleased to say the line is going on to Morgans and from Morgans to Laverton. I desire to say a few words with reference to the educational system of this State. The paragraph in the Governor's Speech sets forth that it is the desire of the Government to go in for a higher form of education. I should like to say that there are many places, especially in the outlying portions of the goldfields, where the present system of education is not sufficiently extended. The Colonial Secretary, who is in charge of this department, is not in this Chamber, but during the number of trips referred to by the member for East Kimberley round the North in the *Penguin*, the Minister for Mines was administering that gentleman's department. During that time I presented a petition to him from one or two of the outlying portions of the goldfields, making requisitions for school facilities. I am pleased to say the Minister for Mines was very sympathetic, and he told me he would do all he could to farther school facilities for the children. The people in one of those places, Mount Sir Samuel—I only wish to make this remark so that the House will know that the people on the goldfields have a desire to assist themselves and educate their children—where the population is very small, and where the number of children of school age was just under the number or about the number for which they could claim a school according to the regulations, presented a petition to the Colonial Secretary setting forth the number of children and what they were prepared to do. They were prepared to pay £1 a week towards the upkeep of a teacher; and they also got permission from the committee of the miners' institute or mechanics' institute to let the children be taught in that institute free of cost to the Government. I think that when people are prepared to go that far, the Government should perhaps be prepared to frame regulations with reference to their school system to assist those people.

The people at Laverton are some 70 or 80 miles from the end of the railway, but I am glad to say such will not long be the case, and a railway to that place is now in course of construction. They are in a similar position in reference to school facilities. I think I should say in justice to the Government a school has been there for some time—I am not sure of it, but I think so; but through some of the married people with large families leaving, the school had to be closed. In Craiggiemore, two miles from Laverton, there are a lot of families requiring a school. The difficulty in regard to the fields, where two or three hundred men are working or a couple of hundred, and where the workers who are married have no school facilities for their children, is that those men are compelled to leave their wives and families in the Eastern States or down on the coast, or leave them where there are school facilities. A miner up in that country where it costs him at least 30s. to live has to keep two homes out of the wages he receives. He has a very small margin left to keep himself on the fields, also his wife and family in the Eastern States or on the coast, where they have to live because the children cannot get school facilities where he himself dwells.

MEMBER: They are building that school, are they not?

MR. TAYLOR: I think the contract is let. I was given to understand that such was the case, but I also heard that the contract was withdrawn or cancelled and that the Government were not going to build it. I spoke to the Colonial Secretary, who told me he was not sure; it had not come before him; but he thought the erection of a school was going on at Laverton. I did not speak to the Minister for Works on the subject, or he might have been able to inform me. [THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is going on.] I only desire to say it is necessary the Government should assist outlying places with school facilities. I know numbers of men up in my district, which is one of the most outlying electorates in the State, who are compelled to keep their wives and families in the Eastern States or on the coast, not being able to have them on the fields, where they would have them if school facilities existed there. I shall not speak at length, but I desire to make

a few remarks with reference to what a certain hon. member said during this debate, which it is my duty as a representative of Labour in this Chamber to contradict, because to my mind the position has not been represented truly. The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) in his speech a few nights ago referred to the Arbitration Act as being almost a failure. He was perfectly justified in telling this Chamber that, if he thought it; but he went farther and pointed out that the measure only opened the way for agitators to go among the workers and cite cases for the Arbitration Court. Now, that comes very badly from the member for East Fremantle, taking into consideration that he is a partner of Holmes Brothers and Co., butchers, who were recently cited before the Arbitration Court. While the member for East Fremantle thought his firm perfectly justified in being represented at the Court, he tried to withhold that privilege from the workers. As a matter of fact, the hon. gentleman was not speaking quite truthfully about the position. One need only refer to the newspapers to learn that when the butchers formed their union with a view to making better terms and arriving at an understanding with their employers in Perth and Fremantle, their secretary wrote to the various butchering firms and asked them to join in a conference to decide on fixed rates of wages and fixed hours, and generally to determine the conditions of work. I am pleased to say that every, or nearly every, butcher of Perth and Fremantle turned up at that conference, Holmes Bros. being the only firm which refused to attend. Holmes Bros. being a large firm, and apparently possessing a certain controlling influence over the butchering trade of Perth and Fremantle, the other butchers would not, in their absence, make any agreement with the employees. Accordingly, nothing remained for the union but to cite a case before the Conciliation Board. That course being adopted, the employers, led by Holmes Bros., employed a man who is not a legal practitioner of Western Australia, but who I believe has practised in another State, to conduct their case. They would not have the matter tried by the Conciliation Board. The representative of all the butchering firms of Perth

and Fremantle, of which Mr. Holmes is practically the head—I refer not to the member himself, but to one of his brothers—forced the employees to the Arbitration Court. Now, such being the position, plainly if there is any agitator in the matter, the agitator is Holmes Bros.' firm, and not the secretary of the working butchers' union. I have the following information from the president of the association and its secretary. It shows how generous employers are. Every hon. member knows my opinion of the average employers. I have not worked all my life for employers in various kinds of labour without learning to know the gentlemen well. Generally speaking, they are Shylocks, wanting their pound of flesh. The president of the association worked for three or four years with Holmes Bros. as manager of their William-street shop, receiving a wage of £2 15s. per week. He now holds letters from the firm setting forth his good conduct, his satisfactory management, and his splendid workmanship. Being a good workman, an energetic man, and well liked among his fellow unionists, and taking an interest in the welfare of his fellows, he became president of their union. What was the result? After a meeting, at which he as president stepped from the chair to move a motion dealing with the question of bettering the condition of the butchers, Holmes Bros. dismissed him. A member of the firm walked into the shop and told him to consider himself dismissed and his wages cancelled. Fortunately for himself, the man had only two days' work in. However, he has not received the money for that work; at any rate, not up to the time when the member for East Fremantle spoke in this Chamber two nights ago. If that is a fair way to treat a man who is competent to manage a business, to have charge of the shop and the meat, upon whom the question of profit or loss depends, what treatment can be expected by the man who runs the cart? I suppose an employer who would act so towards his manager would, if he had the power, hang by the neck the man in the more humble position if he attempted to speak for his rights. The secretary of the union was also working for Holmes Bros., the firm of which the member for East Fremantle is partner and brother.

The other night he said to me, when I interjected, that he had done more for labour than I had done. I did not know at that time that the firm had sacked a man and had not paid him wages due. I have never done that for labour; so the hon. member must have been speaking from his own point of view. Had I known of the case, I should certainly have told the hon. member: "Quite true. I have never done such a thing for labour as to dismiss a man arbitrarily, and without reason to refuse him his wages." I do not know any other firm of butchers which has done the same thing. If the president and secretary of that society had known of any other men dismissed for taking a prominent part in the union, I suppose they would have told me. The member for East Fremantle belongs to a firm known in this city and at the port as the most exacting firm of butchers on the whole of the coast.

MR. HIGHAM: Business men.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes; business men. Now, I desire to contradict a statement which has been made by the Dean of Perth, a gentleman in rather a high position. What the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) said in his speech with regard to the State hotel at Gwalia was the outcome of what he had read in the *West Australian* concerning a meeting held in St. George's Hall. I shall read the report, so that I may not misrepresent the gentleman who made the remarks.

MR. DAGLISH: I did not get my information from that quarter.

MR. TAYLOR: I thought you might have got it from the newspapers. The *West Australian* says:—

Speaking on Thursday night at St. George's Hall on the subject of State control of the liquor traffic, the Dean of Perth made reference to the State hotel recently opened at Gwalia.

It is needless for me to say that Gwalia is in the electorate I represent. The report continues:—

He said that the Government, when starting the establishment, had actually intended to pay the manager placed in charge a commission on sales.

I may claim to have had a good deal to do with the establishment of the State hotel, and that assertion I can flatly contradict, because I know that it was

never contemplated, when the Government decided upon building the hotel, to allow the management a commission on the sale of liquor. The Government never contemplated any such thing as to hold out any inducement to the person in charge to encourage the consumption of liquor. The desire on the part of the Premier was that the people of Gwalia should be supplied with an hotel. There had been repeated applications during three years for the grant of a license at Gwalia. As the license was very valuable I was of opinion that the State should derive the benefit; the people of Gwalia having created the value, I considered that no private person should be permitted to appropriate the unearned increment. The Premier pointed out that the man first placed in charge of this hotel ought to be paid a salary, so that the hotel might be managed on the best lines and the best liquors might be supplied to customers. Now I will read farther:—

Those who advocated State management desired the limitations on the liquor trade to be strictly enforced, and those responsible to discourage rather than encourage the output and have no personal interest in the amount of business done. The deputation which waited upon the Minister for Mines were fortunately able to dissuade the Government from giving the manager this inducement to make the turnover as large as possible. That hotel at Gwalia, whether a success or failure, was not a specimen of what those who advocated State control desired.

This is all that bears on the matter. I wish to add that those who informed the member for Subiaco that special inducements were held out to the people to drink liquor at the Gwalia hotel spoke absolutely without knowledge. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] It is well within the memory of the present Premier that a deputation from Gwalia came to Perth some considerable time ago, during Dr. Jameson's tenure of the portfolio of Minister for Lands—a deputation which I introduced. There was a deputation from the Gwalia people to urge the Government to grant a suitable block of land, so that a license might be successfully applied for; and there was another deputation from the Municipality of Leonora, distant two miles, headed by the mayor, to oppose the grant of a license or the throwing open of blocks for building

purposes. I introduced the deputations simultaneously to the Minister for Lands; and it is on record that I pointed out the position at the time and said I hoped that if a license were required, the Government would reserve the necessary land and build an hotel themselves, and not leave the matter to private enterprise. I am pleased that my advice was acted on. The very man who came down here on that occasion to apply for a license, the man who headed the deputation which urged the Government to throw open blocks at Gwalia so that opportunity might be afforded of obtaining a license there, I met in Perth a week ago. I may say that I have not seen the State hotel at Gwalia since it has been opened, though I did see it when it was being built. I asked the man how the hotel was doing, and he said, "It is doing splendidly. I never thought it would be such a success. It is the only place in Western Australia that I know of where a person can get a good drink, and such treatment as he should receive in an hotel." The conversation, I should explain, took place in Hay-street. "The only thing I am sorry for," the man added, "is that the State has not an hotel in this street, so that the people of Perth, like the people of Gwalia, might enjoy the privilege of getting good liquor." I have spoken to hotelkeepers in Leonora, a distance of two miles away, who contended that the State hotel would ruin their business, and have had from them the same reply that I had from the others. I have asked miners who have come to Perth from Gwalia, and they have the same thing to say. I am not one who would stand here to bolster up any undertaking of the Government or of anyone else, if I were not doing so on the strength of the soundest information I could get. I have information from those who were opposed to the project on the one hand, and from those whom it was intended to serve; and I find the same opinion prevailing in both parties. I know full well that the State hotel will not only have to combat the Licensed Victuallers' Association, but that the brewers and kindred traders will do everything possible to decry the establishment of State hotels. But it is beyond doubt, in my mind, that the day is fast coming when the liquor traffic will be nationalised,

and the sooner it comes the better. No one in this State or elsewhere can say he ever saw me on a platform or off it advocating temperance, though personally I drink but little. If people desire to drink, I think it useless my trying to persuade them not to. If they get as much pleasure from drinking as I in keeping away from it, then I can quite understand their drinking; so I hope when I make these remarks with reference to the Gwalia State hotel, people will not say that I am a drunkard, or a blue-ribbon man, or a temperance lecturer. I say, if a man desires to drink, it is no use my getting on the stump to prevent him. The average man knows his own palate better than I know it. At the same time, I should like to see happen in this State what happened in Queensland some 17 or 18 years ago. When trade-unionism started in the back country, drinking was very rife; but I noticed that as unionism progressed in that country, and the workers commenced to take an interest in their country's politics, a wave of temperance followed; and I hope it will follow a similar awakening in this country. Before I resume my seat I should like to uphold the member for North Murchison (Mr. Holman) and the member for Mt. Burges (Mr. Reid), who spoke so forcibly about the bitterness of the Premier and Attorney General's attitude towards the registration of trade unions. While I have no desire to say anything against the Registrar of Friendly Societies, I do say that in my dealings with that gentleman I recognised a weakness. I say the Arbitration Act requires a strong man to administer it; and in every action of the Registrar I could trace the finger-marks of the Attorney General in reference to differences of opinion as to what unions should be registered. I shall not mince matters one iota. I am confident that the Premier was deeply sensible of the attitude which he took up. He noticed the society of which I have been for a long time a member, the Workers' Association; he noticed in that union a formidable political foe; he also saw a young growing union which was protecting the same class of labour, and which proclaimed that it did not take any interest in politics; so of the two evils the Premier chose the lesser and assisted one

union against the other. He assisted the young rising union in its swaddling clothes to swamp a society which had been in existence for seven or eight years, successfully protecting the best interests of the worker on the goldfields, and which was practically the only union in this country which returned Labour members to Parliament at the last election—the union which found the sinews of war to fight opponents, and not only that, but found money to enable men to stump the country in the interests of the workers and to assist the Labour candidate who was standing. In that union the Premier saw a formidable foe; and he said to himself: “I have here administering this Act a weak official, and I will instruct him how he shall register.” Consequently, the Premier caused a very bad feeling between those two societies; but I am pleased to say that they have detected their natural enemy, the Premier, and they are now coming together. This feeling is more marked in the speeches delivered from the Labour bench last night and to-night than it has ever been before. The Labour party have trusted the Government too long; and I am afraid, as I said before, that the Government have left them in the lurch.

THE PREMIER: Yet the Government grow stronger.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes; since they have conspired with the Opposition to keep themselves in power. I should like to tell the Premier that he would never have graced that chair as he does to-night had it not been for the support of the Labour party. Not only do I know the truth of that, but it is known throughout this country. The man in the street will tell us that the Labour party made the present Government; the Labour party are responsible for the administration of this country, and they know they are. They have said so last night and to-night, through two of their members. As I said, I am not hostile to the Labour party, of which I am a member; but I do feel keenly the position of that party. I say we should be an independent party sitting in this quarter of the House (back Opposition cross-bench), and then we should be in a position to utilise our strength, and make it felt in this Parliament. But now, since the conspiracy, since the angling speech of the

Premier in the Town Hall—railways here, public works there, and a harbour somewhere else—he has captured them. And by taking the member for Boulder (Mr. J. M. Hopkins) into the Ministry, he considers he has captured the goldfields; he has captured the southern farming districts by railways, the Fremantle element by the harbour and dock, and the inhabitants of the South-West by the breakwater he is about to extend at Bunbury, reaching from that port to Esperance, which I believe is the only plan for making Bunbury a safe harbour. I have heard some people say that the present leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pigott) is determined before all these docks and breakwaters are built, if he cannot block their construction in this Parliament, to bring down from the North-West his black pearl-divers to dive under the Fremantle Harbour Works and pull them under the sea. He feels very sore on the point.

THE PREMIER: He is very thorough.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes; in that he differs from the Premier. I think it is now useless for parties to rally in this Chamber. For existing conditions the only remedy I see is an appeal to the country; and I feel satisfied it is the desire of hon. members to allow this Parliament to run its three years. Members know my opinion on that matter, and I should like to see the Parliament of any country dissolved when I do not think it truly represents the wishes of the electors.

THE PREMIER: The Opposition always thinks that.

MR. TAYLOR: But I am not in Opposition. I heard the Premier accuse the member for Dundas of ingratitude. After what we Labour members have done for the Premier, he is showing ingratitude in making such remarks as that. With reference to the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), he was of the same opinion as the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes), that the members of the Labour party had no right to appear before the Arbitration Court to champion the cause of the worker against the employer. Now I hold that a Labour member of Parliament is the proper man to represent the workers in that Court. If he has been a working man he knows the technical terms employed,

and he is perfectly justified in defending the cause of the workers before the Arbitration Court, in this Parliament or in any other part of the State. I recognise that I am not perhaps so able as some members of unions, but I have always done my best to represent them, and shall continue to do so. But what of the member for Dundas, who came into this Chamber last session when the Dividend Duties Bill was before us in Committee, and the Premier would not allow a certain clause to be inserted? The hon. member walked in and stonewalled the Bill for practically 20 hours, as a direct representative of the Chamber of Mines and the Chamber of Commerce. I can almost hear his wails yet about the enormous amount of capital which the measure would drive out of the country. I have since seen the Treasurer smile at the enormous sum which the passing of that Bill has brought into the Treasury. The member for Dundas talks of Labour members representing classes in this Chamber, when there is no member who so definitely represents a class as the member for Dundas. He is perfectly justified in doing so; and all I am sorry for is that he has a monopoly of it. I should like to see the Labour members here representing the class to which they belong, and which sent them here, just as vigorously as the member for Dundas represents his class. While I am here I will endeavour to represent the workers as well as I can, though I may not be so well able to do that as is the member for Dundas to represent those who sent him to this Chamber. And I think when that hon. member represents such a class, his accusations against others of representing classes come from him with a very bad grace. I thank the House for a patient hearing.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): An apology is almost necessary, sir, for rising to address members at the fag-end of so long and exhaustive a debate. I shall, however, at once relieve the minds of members by telling them that it is not my intention to deal with the Governor's Speech clause by clause and item by item. I should like, however, in passing to express my gratification that the Labour party have at length seen the error of their ways, and are now, at the eleventh hour, on the eve of a general election,

making a tardy repentance. I sympathise with the members on the Labour benches at the manner in which in previous sessions they have lost and misused their opportunities. Again and again when a direct attack has been made upon the gentlemen occupying the Treasury bench, again and again the Labour members have had an opportunity, not of talking, not of attacking the Government by word of mouth, but of attacking the Government by their votes in divisions when it would have been possible to have driven the Government out of office. When the critical instant came and the opportunity was before them, an opportunity of which they might have availed themselves, they hesitated to use it; and now, on the eve of a political dissolution, at a time when they have to go to "face their maker," at a time when they have to give a record of their actions, they begin to discover that they have made a mistake with this Government they have helped to keep in office; they find that the Government is the strongest foe they possess in the House, and is their sworn and devoted antagonist. Repentance, even if it comes late—a death-bed repentance is better than no repentance at all.

MR. BATH: That is why you repented.

MR. NANSON: I have yet to learn that I have repented. I have yet to learn, for any utterance I have made in the House, I need any repentance. The attack of the members of the Labour party to-night reminds me of the Chinese methods of warfare. Members will no doubt understand what I mean. When a Chinese army goes into action, there is great waving of banners, there is a great beating of drums, the tom-toms sound loudly, there is a medley and a wonderful assortment of noise and cries; but when you look for blows, when you look for some hard hitting, when you look for something to follow all this noise, you find nothing at all. There is no blood shed; there is no result; there are no wounded men: the engagement ends as it began, with words, words, words, and the beating of the political tom-tom, and nothing else. We in this House know the official exponents of Labour practically for what they are worth. I am not attacking the Labour men as a whole outside the House, but I

am attacking the men who are false to their trust as exponents of labour principles and for their attitude and the manner in which they have acted during the last two sessions of this Parliament. Some members in the course of this debate have expressed gratification at the amiable feeling that now animates this House. I must say, speaking for myself, I am not altogether convinced that this amiable feeling to which reference has been made is the best sort of feeling to have here, having regard to the interests of the country as a whole. We have members on the Labour bench, or on the seceding Labour bench—I refer to the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) and the member for North Murchison (Mr. Holman)—declaring that a sort of unholy compact exists between the Government and the members of the direct Opposition. I trust nothing of that kind has happened. It was not very long since I severed the more prominent connection I had with the Opposition, and I should indeed be sorry if in that short time my late colleagues on the direct Opposition benches have so far fallen from grace as to make terms with the Government; but I confess that the Opposition would be failing in their duty altogether if during this session they deal out too many of the sweet nothings of political compliment. If I were to compare the two sessions we have had in this Parliament with the session which is predicted as a session of amiability and good feeling, I must confess the session to which I look back as the one in which the most sterling and honest work was done for the country was the first session, of which some hon. members profess to be ashamed. It was the best session we have had undoubtedly. Perhaps it may be that I love a fight; I love a combat more than some members of more amiable instincts do; but I think there is something in the stern joy of conflict, that there is something when we feel the lust of battle beating in our veins, and when we indulge in the sharp cut and thrust of debate. I hope the time will never come in the Parliament of Western Australia when for fear of hurting the individual feelings of members we shall choose our words too nicely, we shall wrap up abuses and hide them in polite vocabulary so that our

niceties have to be preserved. Better have hard speaking, better have hot speaking, better have speaking which occasionally transgresses the rules of debate, than have that politeness which often prevents the due exposure of abuses and the due advancement of public interests. I had not intended to take part in this debate on the Address-in-Reply, but on looking at one portion of the Governor's Speech, it seemed to me that an attempt was being made to interfere in Imperial politics and express an opinion in regard to a matter of Imperial concern, namely that of preferential trade. The Speech tells us that "The recent movement in the mother country for securing closer trade relations between the various parts of the Empire has been welcomed in this State with warm feelings of sympathy and sincere hopes for its ultimate success." That may or may not be so. I am not aware from what sources the Government draw their information, but it is an interesting example of the way in which public opinion is manufactured in the country in order to be retailed at home while Mr. Chamberlain is conducting his election campaign. I look forward with a considerable degree of amusement to how this will be retailed when that election campaign is going on, how Western Australia is included as strongly in favour of this preferential treatment, although I venture to say in this State most of us have not given very serious consideration to it. Most of us have not yet formed a decided opinion on the matter, and it cannot be said with any authority that we have any basis upon which the statement rests that the proposal has been warmly welcomed.

MR. DAGLISH: We do not know what it is yet.

MR. NANSON: The member for Subiaco says we do not know yet what the proposal is, and I think there is a great deal of truth in what he says. However, I have not myself given sufficient consideration to the matter as to whether I shall support the Government in their view of this preferential proposal or not. My object in rising is to give the House an opportunity of expressing an opinion, in the most definite way possible, on a more important question to Western Australia, and to Aus-

tralia as a whole, than this question of preferential trade. I refer to the movement that is going on in South Africa with a view to introducing into that country an immense horde of Chinese labourers; and in order that there may be an expression of opinion from the House on the subject, I have drafted an amendment to the Address-in-Reply. That amendment, I may say, has not been brought forward with any idea of embarrassing the Government; it has not been brought forward after consultation with the leader of the Opposition; but solely on my own initiative, without consulting any member of the House previously. I mention this fact because I feel confident, from what I know of the opinions of the Premier, that he will take this amendment to the Address in the sense in which it is intended. He will not regard it as implying any want of confidence in his Administration; but he will regard it as simply supplying a great omission in the Speech which is likely to go forth to the mother country, and which is an expression of opinion in regard to the question of coloured labour in the Transvaal—an opinion which we in this State, as the greatest gold-producing State in the Empire, are justified in giving. The amendment I desire to move is to the following effect:—

That we desire to add that this House views with grave concern the proposed introduction of Chinese or other alien coloured labour into the Transvaal, believing that the interests of the Empire in South Africa—to maintain which this State, in common with the rest of the Commonwealth, has expended blood and treasure—demand that imported coloured labour should not be employed in the mining industry of South Africa.

In submitting this proposal to the House, it is necessary I should deal as briefly as possible with the conditions of the labour problem of the Transvaal. Several years back, before the late war had broken out in that country, the labour question had become an acute one. We find, in a book which excited a good deal of attention when it was published, "The Transvaal from Within," by Mr. J. Percy Fitzpatrick, published before the war began, that one of the greatest causes of complaint against the Boer Government was that they did not assist the mine managers in Johannesburg in obtaining cheap labour

and obtaining coloured labour at the cheap rates to which the mine owners considered they were entitled. Mr. Fitzpatrick, in his book, states:—

In January, 1891, the average wage for native labourers was £2 2s. per head per month. In 1893 it had risen to £2 18s. 10d., in 1895 to £3 3s. 6d. In other South African States, wages run from 15s. to 30s. per month; and the failure to facilitate the introduction of natives from outside and to protect them is largely responsible for the high figures paid on the Rand. Unquestionably the ill-wind of the Boer Government is to blame for the consistent neglect of this growing need of the mines. If decent protection and facilities were given, the wage could be reduced to £1 15s. per month. The Government has in its power to give the mines labour at this price; but, as a matter of fact, there is no desire to see the lower-grade mines working.

It was said by that small minority, who at the time of the war were characterised as pro-Boers, that the war was advocated, if not undertaken at any rate advocated, by the mine owners of the Transvaal largely with the idea of getting cheaper labour. That view was indignantly scouted at the time by all of us, who regarded the war, as far as great Britain was concerned, as being carried on with the idea of preserving the integrity of the Empire in South Africa. We must admit it is disappointing to find, as soon as the war is closed, that energetic efforts are being made by these men to carry out the very policy of which they complained when the Boer Government was in power. Before the war, the natives in the Transvaal who were being employed in the mines were paid at the rate of 1s. 9d. per day. Since the war that rate has been reduced to 1s. 2d. This reduction is estimated to have secured a saving to the industry of a million sterling per annum; but at the present time, owing to this reduction, there are only 50,000 natives employed in the mines, as against 90,000 or 97,000 employed before the war began, and as against 150,000 which it is declared could be employed if they were available. It may strike members as strange that, in a country teeming with natives as that country is, it should be difficult to obtain sufficient men to work in the mines. In the neighbouring colony of Natal there is a population of half a million coloured people, as against only 50,000 white people, and yet in that country, so averse are the natives to

working with Europeans that even there it is found necessary, if not for working the mines, for cultivation purposes, to import coolies instead of employing this half million or a portion of the half million in this work.

MR. PIGOTT: What authority have you for that?

MR. NANSON: The authority is a writer in the *National Review* for May, 1903, Mr. F. Drummond Chaplin, joint manager at Johannesburg of the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa, Ltd.

MR. PIGOTT: They wish them to be used in agriculture.

MR. NANSON: My point is that there is any quantity of native labour in South Africa, but that those natives are not willing to work in the mines at the wage offered by the mine owners, and it is a very natural thing that they should not be willing. Wherever there is a great demand for labour we find that wages rise in sympathy with that demand; and I do not blame the black man there at all if, when he finds his services in great demand, he requires somewhat higher wages than those mine owners are prepared to give him. Another point I wish to impress upon members is that I should not have dreamt of bringing forward an amendment of this kind if my sole idea were to interfere with the employment of the native coloured labour in the Transvaal. I fully recognise that it would be impertinence on the part of Western Australia, or of Australia, to attempt to dictate to the people of South Africa how the natives within their own borders should be employed; but when we find those natives unwilling to work in the mines because they are evidently content with their conditions otherwise, we are perfectly justified, I think, in asserting that, as it is an Imperial question, we should have some voice in saying whether a large influx of labour into South Africa should be allowed. The reason why these natives will not work in the mines, or why a sufficient number cannot be obtained, is that their wants being presumably very easily supplied, they do not see the necessity of engaging in what is a somewhat unpleasant form of labour. The average South African native, if he has a sufficiency of cattle and a sufficiency of wives, needs nothing else. The cattle provide him with the means of sustenance,

the wives work for him, and as long as those two conditions are present, as long as they are prosperous, native men will not work. One proposal made by the mine owners is that the natives should be heavily taxed, so that they would be compelled to come into the mines and work for whatever sum the mine owners might like to pay them. But the difficulty in carrying out a policy of this kind is that the native races in South Africa are so warlike and have advanced so far in the ruder forms of civilisation that if they were heavily taxed, danger would arise in Basutoland, and neither the South African Government nor the British Government is prepared to tackle a South African war. They cannot say what form it would develop into, and they do not want a war of that kind immediately following on the long struggle which has occurred. That being the position, the Imperial Government being unwilling to drive these natives into the mines, being unwilling to drive them into what, under the circumstances, would be little better than a form of slavery, the mine owners are casting around to see how the difficulty can be met. Instead of going to the mother country, where there is an abundance of men available, and which has spent its treasure and the blood of its people like water in order to maintain the integrity of the Empire in South Africa, they have the impudence to ask the Empire to help them to carry on that industry with the assistance of something like 200,000 Chinese labourers. I ask members to consider what it would mean to South Africa, and what it would mean to Australia, if a proposal of this sort were carried into effect. Unless some strong and effective protest comes from Australia—and it has been invited almost by Mr. Chamberlain—unless some strong and effective protest comes from these States, there is every probability of a horde of Chinese labour being introduced into South Africa. Mr. Chamberlain, in speaking on the subject some time ago, pointed out that if the proposal were acceded to, or if there were any disposition to accede to it, it would naturally arouse a considerable amount of opposition in the great colonies and in the mother country. The exact words which he used were these: "The great colonies and the mother country would regard a step of this kind

as retrograde and dangerous." When Mr. Chamberlain uses language of that kind, I think we may regard it as being as nearly as possible a direct invitation to the people of this State and to the people of the other States of Australia to express officially and in the strongest definite manner possible their opinion of this proposal. Surely we have a right to express ourselves on the subject. Surely we have a right to give forth our opinions in no halting fashion. We in Western Australia in proportion to our population sent more men to the war than any other State in Australia; as I have already pointed out, we are the great gold-producing State of the Empire; and we therefore have a very direct interest in the manner in which the gold-mining industry is conducted in another portion of the Empire. We cannot forget that in regard to the gold-mining industry South Africa is at the present time our most formidable competitor for the supply of capital, which is needed equally here as there for the development of our mining resources; and if you have a tremendous influx of alien and Asiatic labour on to the Johannesburg fields, enabling the mines to be worked at a very much cheaper rate than it is possible to work them in Western Australia, where do members think the English capital which is available for investment in gold-mining ventures is likely to go? Is it more likely to come to Western Australia, where we have the white labour conditions, or to go to South Africa? [Interjection.] I am not appealing to the Labour party in this matter, but I am appealing to the House as a whole. I am appealing to them on behalf of the great interests of Western Australia, in the interest of the gold-mining industry on which the prosperity of this country depends. I venture to say that if a large influx of Asiatic labour into South Africa will have the effect of diverting English and foreign capital away from our shores to the shores of South Africa, we are entitled to make our protest in the most expressive and public manner possible against this return for the service Australia rendered to the Empire in her hour of need. I very much doubt if the war in South Africa would have been ended even by now if it had not been for

the assistance given by the Australian States, if it had not been for the fact that these States gave military aid of the very kind required to subdue the Boers, a kind of military assistance which was not forthcoming from the mother country. That being the position, we have a very strong claim to the respectful consideration of our statement of the case. If we look through the English papers at the present time, it is impossible not to see that a very definite effort is being made, and unfortunately a very successful effort, to boom the exploitation of South Africa at the expense of Australia. Again and again in the columns of the London Press we see wails about the tremendous indebtedness of Australia, about over-borrowing, and about the reckless methods of Australian government; but we are never told that in the Transvaal the indebtedness per head of the white population is very nearly £800 as against only £60 per head in Australia. We are not told this fact, and the investor in England is not told it; but the investor in England is told that unless a very large influx of alien labour is allowed in the Transvaal, that country cannot exist as a market for English commodities, as an opening for English investment. In Australia we have, whether for weal or for woe, established and affirmed the principle of a white Australia; and if that principle is a good one for Australia it is equally good for South Africa, at any rate so far as the introduction of coloured labour is concerned. Of course we recognise that there is an enormous coloured population in South Africa already, and, as I have indicated, it would be absurd for us to attempt to interfere in any way with that population; but we are entitled to affirm that this principle of a white Australia is applicable to every country in the Empire where the labour conditions and the climate are suitable to the employment of white men. Sooner or later there must be a cleavage between Australia and the mother country unless this question is settled satisfactorily, and in accordance with Australian ideas and Australian ideals. It is useless to talk about preferential trade, Imperial federation, and topics of that kind when we see this great principle which Australians have most at heart about to be openly violated on behalf of the mine owners in

the Transvaal and of the large capitalists who are interested in the mines in that country. We do not ask much of the mother country: we do not ask for the guarantee of a loan of £30,000,000, as was recently done in the case of the Transvaal: all we ask is a fair statement of the case in regard to this country, a fair statement of our position; and although the request is moderate indeed we have not yet succeeded in obtaining compliance. One can scarcely take up an English newspaper, by any mail that arrives from the mother country, without encountering statements of the most erroneous and indeed libellous character in regard to Australia as a whole and the individual States of the Commonwealth. Only the other day I saw an extract from a daily paper commanding a wide circulation in London, stating:—

Recent analyses of the various Australian debts show that the dead-weight debt, making all deductions for productive works, is now as much per head as the national debt of England. Until great economies are effected in the government and administration, and until the extravagant outlay on public works ceases, the prospects of the British investor cannot be considered roseate.

That is the attitude which is being adopted towards Australia. A distinctly different attitude is adopted towards South Africa. Everything favourable that can possibly be said is said. The greater proportion of the British Press is even endeavouring to secure the introduction of this alien Chinese labour. An attempt is being made in the magazines, in the great organs of public opinion, to create an idea that in South Africa itself there is a strong body of opinion in favour of the introduction of coloured labour. I believe that, as a matter of fact, nine-tenths of the Dutch population—that is to say, the native-born population—are entirely opposed to the change. Just as we, when the Empire was in danger in South Africa, came to its assistance, so now I contend we should in a matter of this kind, which is so near to our hearts, go to the assistance of our Dutch fellow subjects in the Transvaal and throughout South Africa; and when I say we should do so I am urging that not only should we go to their aid but also to the aid of the British working population in South Africa. It is also due to us, it is due to ourselves if we

accept the principle of a white Australia. If we believe it to be a good working principle wherever a British community exists under climatic conditions which allow of severe physical labour, then wherever those conditions obtain we owe a duty to lose no occasion of affirming it, to lose no occasion of protesting against its being broken, especially when the intention is to break it on the huge scale contemplated in South Africa. I do therefore appeal to the Premier to give to this amendment his weighty support. I appeal to every member of the House, altogether away from party considerations, also to support it. I ask members not to look on the matter as one of Labour policy or of Labour legislation, but to remember that we stand pledged irrevocably to the policy of a white Australia; and I venture to predict that if we unanimously pass this amendment to the Address-in-Reply, we shall see that we have set the spark to a flame which will burn all over Australia; we shall see that our example will be followed in the Parliament of every State of the Commonwealth, and not only that, but also in the Parliament of the Commonwealth itself. I do not despair that if we get a unanimous expression of opinion we shall succeed even now, at the eleventh hour, in defeating this iniquitous project to deprive something like 200,000 of our fellow white men of their means of employment in South Africa, and to introduce in their stead 200,000 alien Chinese who have no claim on the Empire, who will do nothing to minister to its security, who will do nothing to make a stronger South Africa, but on the contrary will be a factor of corruption working at the heart of the Empire, working ultimately for its destruction, arousing again racial strife in South Africa, and leading to calamities which it is difficult adequately to conceive. I beg to move the amendment.

On motion by MR. HIGHAM, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 10-35, the House adjourned until the next Tuesday.