

am sure the civil servants would be more satisfied if they had an independent board controlling the appointments. One omission, I think, was pointed out by Mr. Oats. No reference has been made to the Transcontinental Railway. I think, until that is an accomplished fact, it should always be one item in the Governor's Speech, because it would tend to keep the question thoroughly alive. We have no new argument at present to adduce in favour of that railway. The old arguments, we think, are quite sufficient; but if we had, at any rate every six months when Parliament opened, or every 12 months when the sessions begin, a reference to this union in his Excellency's Speech, it would bring the matter fresh again before the House and before the people of the country. Before I sit down, I should like to express my regret, and I am sure the regret of all hon. members, at the death of the Hon. Edward Keane. His presence here, and his experience, would have been very helpful to this House. I have pleasure in supporting the motion moved by the Hon. R. D. McKenzie.

On motion by Hon. M. L. Moss, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at eight minutes past five o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 2nd August, 1904.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Regulations under "The Co-operative and Provident Societies Act, 1903." 2, Proceedings under "The Trustees Act (Supreme Court Order 52A), 1900." 3, Rottneat Native Prison—Report for 1903. 4, Inspector General of the Insane—Report for 1903. 5, Land Titles Department—Report for 1903.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: 1, Regulations under "The Mining Act, 1904." 2, Amended Regulations under "The Coal Mines Regulations Act, 1902." 3, Regulations under "The Mining Development Act, 1902."

By the TREASURER: 1, Railways working accounts, in accordance with Section 54 of "The Government Railways Act, 1904," for two quarters ended 31st March and 30th June, 1904. 2, Reports on Government Railways for the quarters ended 31st December, 1903, and 31st March and 30th June, 1904. 3, Copy of alterations to Railway Classification and Rate Book.

Ordered to lie on the table.

MEMBERS SWORN, ADDITIONAL.

Commission from the Governor, read by the CLERK, authorised the Speaker to administer the oath to members not already sworn.

Mr. T. H. Bath (Brown Hill), Mr. C. H. Layman (Nelson), took the oath and subscribed the roll.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) moved:

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, at 3:30 p.m., and shall sit until 6:30 p.m. if necessary, and if requisite from 7:30 p.m. onwards.

The days remained the same as for last session, while the hour of meeting was changed from 4:30 to 3:30.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): Surely we might have started this session by sitting four days a week. The time had come to discontinue the practice of meeting in desultory fashion for two or three days a week early in the session, and of rushing everything through at the end of the session, in the heat of summer, when members were tired. The serious business of legislation demanded that we

should sit four days weekly; and as we had now not only the Labour party but other members who devoted practically all their time to legislation, we should make the session as brief as possible in the cool part of the year, so as not to keep members unduly long in Perth. The matter ought to be reconsidered later, with a view to meeting at 2:30 on four days a week.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): It was pleasant to find that after three years the Premier now proposed to meet at 3:30 instead of 4:30; and before the motion was put one might ask, Would it not be better to make the hour 2:30? He (Mr. Thomas) spoke, as he had spoken in past sessions, on behalf of the country members. He would not support, unless it were necessary, the last speaker's proposal to sit on four days a week; for the country members were entitled to some consideration, travelling as some did hundreds of miles to attend to their legislative duties. To city members, whether we sat four or five days a week was of no importance; but to country members the matter was serious. He hoped the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) or his leader (Mr. Daglish) would move an amendment similar to those of past sessions—that the House meet at 2:30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Country members travelled long distances; and he (Mr. Thomas) did not intend to sacrifice his week end.

THE PREMIER: Was not 2:30 rather early, unless members lunched at the House?

MR. THOMAS: There was every provision for lunching at the House if need be, and 2:30 was not too early. If too early for present Ministers, it would not be too early for those who would take their places before many days. He (Mr. Thomas) moved as an amendment:

That the figures "3:30" be struck out, and "2:30" inserted in lieu.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne) seconded the amendment.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): In this matter he, and he believed the Labour party, were quite in accord with the views of the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas); but he (Mr. Daglish) had suggested to the Premier that we meet at 2:30, and had agreed to a reason-

able compromise between that hour and 4:30. As the Premier had met him by conceding an hour, members in favour of 2:30 might reasonably meet the Government by carrying the motion and meeting at 3:30, at all events for the first few weeks of the session.

MR. THOMAS asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

THE PREMIER farther moved:—

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays (and also on every second Wednesday) Government business shall take precedence of all motions and orders of the day.

This motion proposed to follow the practice of last session. Instead of providing for private members' business half a day on every Wednesday, a whole Wednesday in every fortnight was provided. Which was the better practice might be questionable; but as the method proposed seemed to work satisfactorily last session, he moved that it be again adopted.

MR. THOMAS: Had a compromise been arrived at in this matter also?

THE PREMIER: Surely the hon. member knew it was a usual act of courtesy to discuss these formal motions with the leader of the Opposition, and that the usual course had in this case been adopted.

MR. THOMAS objected to that.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the PREMIER, sessional committees were appointed as follow:—

PRINTING COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bath, and Mr. Harper; to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members, and all papers laid upon the table, whether in answer to addresses or otherwise.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Hastie, and Mr. Harper; with leave to sit during any adjournment,

and with authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Nanson, and Mr. Nelson; with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council.

REFRESHMENT ROOMS COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Diamond, and Mr. Angwin; with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the House Committee of the Legislative Council.

THE PREMIER: This amendment on past practice became necessary in view of the refreshment rooms being common to both Houses.

MR. MORAN: Was this also an arrangement with the leader of the Opposition? Without disrespect one might say that the two members appointed to assist the Speaker were not the best that could have been selected. The last-mentioned was totally inexperienced; yet this committee was the most important we could now appoint, and would have all its work cut out to hold its own. The fact that the committee consisted of three teetotallers augured badly for the quality of mixtures to be supplied.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SECOND DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous Thursday.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): In addressing this House for the first time in the prominent position of leader of the Opposition, I should like to say at the outset that my policy in this position will be that which I pursued as a private member—as far as possible to deal solely with principles, and to avoid any unnecessary personalities. I am quite aware that this course may sometimes lead to such accusations as those of cowardice or of undue timidity; but at the same time I am satisfied that the tone of the House is benefited by such a practice, and I sincerely hope that we shall, during this session, find it possible largely to adopt a method likely to conduce to smooth working, and I venture

to say to a salutary effectiveness alike in debate and in legislation. I do not intend to set the example of delivering a long speech on the Address; because I think, when a session starts so late as this one, it is highly desirable to consider the wants of the country, and to refrain from airing our eloquence at any great length on the numerous subjects that such a debate allows us to touch. I shall, therefore, be as brief as possible, because I think that the House should, without delay, get on with much business which needs attention; and if there be any great delay, the Estimates will not be introduced until nearly one-half of the financial year has expired.

MR. MORAN: That is nothing new.

MR. DAGLISH: No; but it is a very bad practice to continue. Time after time we have had complaints about it from the other (Government) side of the House; complaints have arisen from this side; and I hope that such complaints will ultimately bear fruit. Unfortunately, this year threatens to see us with our Estimates brought down far later than they have ever been before; and I do not wish to do anything to make them later than is necessary. In regard to the Governor's Speech, I must congratulate the Premier on the length to which he succeeded in extending his advertisement of the Government, and must say that the Speech makes up in size for what it lacks in substance. I notice that page 2 of the Speech is almost entirely devoted to an epitaph on the Government. The Government recognise that no panegyrist can do full justice to their merits, or can adequately detail in cold type the work they have accomplished; and so they have themselves undertaken to perform this difficult and I venture to say this unpleasant duty. I think, however, that this "prospectus" part of the Speech might well have been omitted, though at the same time I do not propose nicely to analyse it. The practice of introducing such advertising statements in a speech at the opening of Parliament seems to me one that should be discouraged; and I regret that the Premier has chosen to adopt it. I find we have a very substantial programme of legislation for a short session. We have a programme that includes an amendment of the liquor laws, an amend-

ment of the Land Act, land taxation without any definition whether it is to be on acreage or on value, whether it is to extend to town lands or apply only to country lands. We have a proposal to re-open the question of our mining laws and deal with them in a thorough fashion. We have a proposal to amend the Aborigines Act, and we have a standing item on the bill of fare—civil service reform. I know these works are all very necessary, and likewise that other pieces of legislation must receive attention this session from the Government. One of these pieces of legislation which is urgently required, the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) has already drawn attention to; that is the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Act. As members are aware, a measure was passed last year, with a promise that it should be treated as only a tentative piece of legislation, to be amended at the outset of this session. I notice an omission from the Address in regard to this matter, a matter that is calling for immediate attention, and that I think should have been placed in the forefront of the Government policy. An amendment of the electoral law has likewise been proved to be necessary by the result of the last election. We have seen that the facility for the use of postal votes provided in the Act has been most grossly abused, abused not only in one constituency, but possibly in almost every constituency. We have seen, likewise, that the Government have not always been competent to appoint a suitable man to take the postal votes, and that some most bitter partisans have been appointed. We have likewise seen that employers of labour controlling large bodies of men have been appointed, and in some cases have attempted to use their position for the purpose of furthering their politics. I would invite, for instance, as an illustration of this sort of thing, the attention of the House to the fact that amongst other gentlemen appointed to receive votes was Mr. M. C. Davies. Mr. M. C. Davies is well known, and I fancy his fitness to be the receiver of votes is as well known as that gentleman himself.

THE PREMIER: What is your objection? Because he is an employer?

MR. DAGLISH: Because he is an employer, and an employer of a tyrannical

character. I happen to know of this one appointment, which should not have been made.

THE PREMIER: Have you heard of the stationmaster at Grass Valley?

MR. DAGLISH: I have not heard of the stationmaster at Grass Valley.

THE PREMIER: It is well worth inquiry.

MR. DAGLISH: The Premier mentioned a case of a Government employee. In my opinion, only Government employees should be appointed to receive votes; Government employees in responsible positions who can be dealt with, if the Government think they take any improper part in politics; instead of irresponsible gentlemen over whom the Government have no control. I can imagine no better way of taking these postal votes than appointing head masters of State schools, postmasters, and other similar officers, in addition to, say, police officers and resident magistrates; and then if any impropriety is committed the Government have power to deal with the man guilty of it, and to deal with him in a thoroughly effective manner, whereas over the ordinary J.P. the Government have no control whatever. The utmost they can do is to remove him from the list of justices, or probably from the list of those persons authorised to receive votes. In dealing with this question I may mention that in one electorate, where about 900 votes were received by the successful candidate, that 900 included no less than 280 postal votes, and I must say, and the House will recognise it, that it would be impossible—

MR. MORAN: Where was that?

MR. DAGLISH: I am not going to specify the constituency.

THE PREMIER: Southern Cross, I suppose.

MR. DAGLISH: I was going to say it was impossible for that number of postal votes to be legitimately given if the Act were properly administered. As a matter of fact in some cases gentlemen appointed to receive votes went around in company with the canvassers and assisted in canvassing for votes. From the remarks of the Premier, I should imagine he was trying to imply something of that sort had been done by the Labour party.

THE PREMIER: I say it.

MR. DAGLISH: The Premier says it. I am prepared to condemn what is done by any party, if it be wrong, and am ready to assist the Premier in endeavouring to prevent the probability of such a thing in the future.

THE PREMIER: You only mentioned one case.

MR. DAGLISH: I only mentioned one case. I heard definite particulars in regard to one case, and I am not prepared to make statements regarding things of which I have no information.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Make a charge.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member can do that. He must have a full knowledge of the subject.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Make a charge.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member can give me a suggestion after this House rises. He knows that at present I have one piece of business to attend to which is quite enough to occupy my attention now. Since the House last met we have had an alteration in the *personnel* of the Ministry, an addition to the Ministry which I think surprised members of this House and surprised the country—shocked the country, “surprise” is hardly strong enough—shocked the country, and undoubtedly largely contributed to the failure of the Government at the polls at the last election. I refer to the appointment of the member for Greenough, the Minister for Works (Hon. J. L. Nanson), an appointment that I was sorry the Government stooped to offer him; an appointment that I was sorry the hon. member for Greenough stooped to accept.

THE PREMIER: They both stooped.

MR. DAGLISH: Yes, they both stooped: they were both degraded by the act. The member for Greenough, whose eloquence and whose ability all who have heard him must admire, has, I think, spoken very strongly on every motion of want-of-confidence against the Government, and has voted repeatedly against the Government likewise; in fact on every opportunity he has been on the opposite side. I do not intend to deal with that hon. member's previous changes of front, but I do intend to just ask the House in passing to bear with me while I read a short extract from the speech delivered by the hon. Minister on the 26th of last November, when all the

important work of the last Parliament had been concluded, since which time the Government have had no opportunity of committing any fresh public offence; and this extract I think justifies me in charging that hon. member with selling his political services for the sake of a portfolio, and justifies me likewise in charging the Government with being a willing purchaser. I contend this sort of thing must destroy political morality and must be injurious to the country. It must be injurious not only by the evil it will work for the Government, but it must injuriously affect the opinion of those outside the country of the political morality which prevails in our midst. The hon. member said on the 26th November last on a motion of no-confidence moved by the then leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pigott):—

If this motion remains unamended, I shall find myself in a difficult position; because I shall have to vote for a declaration that the Government have forfeited the confidence of this House and of the country because of faulty administration. Now I do not say that; but I do say that the Government have forfeited the confidence of the House and the country by their attitude in regard to the great question of constitutional reform—the question upon which this House some two and a half years ago received its mandate from the people. There can be no question that when the last general election was fought, the members at present on the Treasury bench were in a special degree representative of those who urged and advocated with all the force at their command that we should have thorough-going measure of redistribution. It was never imagined at present we could hope for redistribution purely on a population basis, but it was hoped that we should go farther than we have gone in this matter; and the Government, had they been true to the principles they held at the last general election—the Minister for Lands had he been true to the principles he enunciated so recently as in the last session of Parliament—would have brought in a Redistribution Bill very different from that which was recently sent to another place. I know the kind of argument used against bringing in a more drastic measure. I know it was said that such a measure would have no chance of passing this year, that it would have been incontinently thrown out, and that we should have had no Redistribution Bill at all. But that argument is sophistical; because if the Government believe in a thorough-going measure of redistribution, it is their duty not to be frightened by what may happen in another place, but as other Governments have done in other countries, to stake their political existence on the question of redistribution, and to go to the country rather than yield to any

demands which the Legislative Council may make. If the Government really possessed the conviction of those of us who attacked them on this question of constitutional reform from these Opposition cross-benches, the Government would not have hesitated to maintain a firm stand over that Bill; and no matter what might have happened, if in another place that Bill had been rejected, then the course of the Government would have been clear. It would have been their duty to ask the Governor to grant them a dissolution, so that they might have an opportunity of appealing to the country, to ascertain whether the country was not determined that the mandate given to Parliament at the previous election should be obeyed. But it must be apparent to all that the present Government have no hankering after a fight of that sort; and when it was seen that such was the state of the case, the conservative elements on the direct Opposition benches were only too pleased to help the Government, and to give them an opportunity of holding back the cause of reform for probably another three years at least, if not for an even longer period. It is for this reason, because I utterly disapprove of the policy of the Government, while recognising their comparative success in the routine work of administration into which questions of policy do not enter, or seldom enter to any great degree—it is because I disapprove of the policy of the Government that I shall move the amendment to which I have referred, to strike out of the motion the words “by its faulty administration.” The motion will then read, “That the Government have forfeited the confidence of this House and the country.”

There has been since that time no change in the policy of the Government.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. L. Nanson): How did you vote on that motion?

MR. DAGLISH: I did not vote at all on it. There has been no change in the policy of the Government since that motion was put forward, no change since that able speech was made. There is no mention of this constitutional reform for which the member for Greenough was so anxious in November last in the policy of the Government, and apparently the hon. member has been rocked to sleep, as far as constitutional reform is concerned, on the soft couch prepared for him by the Government. Dealing with another aspect of this question, the member for Greenough was good enough last session to give the House his opinion of the Minister for Lands (Hon. J. M. Hopkins), a gentleman who had opposed the Government previously on one question only, as far as my memory serves me. [MR. MORAN: The same question.] Yes,

the same question—and accepted a portfolio.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Do you say I was in opposition to the Government?

MR. DAGLISH: On that question.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Precisely.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member for Greenough said with regard to this matter:—

Undoubtedly any member who was honest in this House, who was true to the political convictions he held, must appear to act in an acrobatic way when the Government was itself acting in that manner. When he (Mr. Nanson) went over from the Government side of the House to the Opposition side of the House, he only found out a little earlier than most members in this Chamber what the liberal professions of the Government were worth. He knew in the first session of this Parliament what the democratic sentiments of members forming the Government were worth. He very soon found it out. It was part of his business perhaps, as a journalist, to weigh and examine carefully the words and actions of public men, and he knew very well that sooner or later their liberalism would be exposed as the sham, delusion, and snare it was. Again, he had been twitted because for a time in this House he led the Opposition. There had never been the slightest doubt, either in the House or the country, as to the terms on which he led the Opposition last session, because it was stated clearly, when he delivered his speech as leader of the Opposition in the Queen's Hall, that if he did not find himself in accord with the party he was then leading, if he found his views were not in harmony with their own, then he would take the opportunity of resigning the position he held, and going back to his old position as a private and unofficial member. Members of the House knew that, whatever might be his faults, whatever might be his errors of judgment, whatever intemperance of language he might at times have been betrayed into, as soon as he found it was absolutely hopeless for the direct Opposition and himself to come together on what he considered to be the basic principles of liberalism, on what were to him political principles he held most strongly and most dearly, and which no consideration, not even the offer of a portfolio, would induce him to surrender, as the member for Boulder was induced to surrender his—

That was repudiated by the Minister for Lands.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is right.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member went on:—

That explained the hon. gentleman's fierce indignation and the falsehoods in which he indulged to-night. His conscience was whipping him, was scourging him. He was feel-

ing the whip not of his (Mr. Nanson's) words, but of his own conscience. That explained the fierce indignation and the falsity in which he had indulged. His conscience was whipping him. He knew that again and again during the course of the debate on this Bill, he had been challenged to justify his position, and to show why last session he had come before the Chamber and told us that the Bill was a thing of shreds and patches or a rag of a Bill, as he termed it, and why this session, having in the meantime accepted a portfolio with all the emoluments of office, he had gone back on his old principles. One did not desire to be uncharitable. Nor was one actuated by the belief that the member for Boulder would sink all his principles to get on the Treasury bench. The hon. member was writhing under the challenge to justify his position. Instead of doing so he came into the House and read extracts from newspapers, extracts from his (Mr. Nanson's) speeches; all attempts to cover his own retreat, his own apostasy, his own infamy—simply abuse of the other side.

The hon. member who says this in regard to the Minister for Lands, now sits cheek by jowl with him; a member of the same Government, fathering the same legislation that he himself opposed a session ago, and I presume prepared not only to justify the Minister for Lands and his action of a year ago, but prepared to justify the Minister for Works and his action—far more difficult of justification than that of his colleague. I do not propose to go farther into this somewhat personal question. I allude to it because I think we should at all times in this House raise our voice in favour of political purity; and it is necessary, when an appointment of this scandalous nature is made by any Government, and acquiesced in by the person who receives it, to speak in no uncertain terms of the disgraceful job in which both parties are shamed. In regard to the Government, while they have presented us with a very lengthy Speech from the Governor, there is a great number of matters which are not touched in that Speech that might well have been introduced. The reorganisation of the Civil Service is again promised. It has been promised us for the last three years, but we have had no attempt whatever made in that direction. We have, it is true, had the appointment of an expensive and incompetent Civil Service Commission, a commission which I felt compelled to urge this House, when it had done but a small portion of its work, to disband; a commis-

sion which the Government insisted on retaining, although it had cost the Government and the country a considerable sum of money. The most noteworthy work it did was to recommend an increase of a substantial sum in the salary of the chairman of the commission; and to recommend the abolition of the office of a professional rival of his attached to a somewhat similar department. At the present time the Civil Service is more unsatisfactory, more disorganised, than it was three years ago; and yet we have the same old promise, and probably we may expect from the Government the same neglect of performance. We had another promise from the Government at the very outset of their existence, and that was that we should have a reduction in the cost of administration, that we should have no unnecessary offices and no new appointments; but we find that administration is more costly at the present time, in almost every department, than it was three years ago.

A MINISTER: That is not so.

THE PREMIER: Which are the departments?

MR. DAGLISH: I can show which they are.

THE PREMIER: You are making a statement; prove it.

MR. DAGLISH: I am prepared to prove it; but the Premier knows it is impossible to deal in detail with a statement like that unless one has at his finger's ends the necessary figures.

THE PREMIER: You should not make a charge like that unless you are prepared to prove it. I challenge the statement.

MR. DAGLISH: I will take an opportunity of proving it before many days are past. It is impossible for me to burden a speech on the Address-in-reply like this with a lot of lengthy figures. I prefer not to do it. I have not the time and the country has not the time to wait for this detail. Another matter which has been wilfully neglected by the Government is that of public health. The public health has had no consideration whatever at the hands of the Government. At the early part of last Parliament attention was drawn in the House to the unsatisfactory nature of the constitution of the Public Health Board, and attention

was likewise drawn to the unsatisfactory neglect that had been evinced by the board. The only attention the Government have given to the Central Board of Health is to draw away its president from his proper duties, and to appoint him on every commission on which there was any chance of his serving; and the consequence is that the duties in regard to public health have been entirely neglected. We have a good illustration of this in the recent revelations made in regard to health matters in Perth, revelations that should have been known to the Board of Health for years, but the board is so constituted that it is not an independent body, or is so constituted that certain members of the board draw their revenue from the patronage of large property-holders, and that makes it somewhat difficult for the board to interfere effectually. I contend that the neglect on the part of the Board of Health in regard to Perth has been scandalous. The Central Board had power to compel the Local Board of Health to perform its duties if these were neglected; but instead of using these powers, the condition of affairs as disclosed during the last month had been reported previously to the Central Board not once but often, and no action whatever had been taken. I do not know that any action would have been taken at all in regard to the scandalous condition of affairs in Perth if the Local Board had not succeeded in getting hold of a man who is fearless in carrying out his duties of inspection, the City Council courageously backing him up.

THE PREMIER: You know quite well that the City Council moved at the instance of the Central Board of Health.

MR. DAGLISH: I am not aware of that.

THE PREMIER: It is a fact.

MR. DAGLISH: I am aware that had the Central Board moved years ago, at the earliest stage of its existence, these revelations of negligence would not now be made.

THE PREMIER: If you knew it 12 months ago, why not bring it under the notice of the Central Board or of Parliament?

MR. DAGLISH: There was very little opportunity to do so, for I could not get information of this sort, as I had not experienced officers going round inspect-

ing the city on my account. The Premier knows I did my share and every member of the party on this side of the House did his share; and it is absurd for the Premier to attempt now to turn off the responsibility from the Government in this matter, or try to throw slurs on members sitting on this (Labour) side of the House. The Premier knows that the same negligence in regard to public health has been shown at Fremantle, and he knows that no proper attempt has been made by the Central Board of Health to remedy the state of affairs in regard to the outbreaks of plague at Fremantle.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. L. Nanson): In your own municipality you tried to block the Central Board of Health in its action in regard to the condition of dairies. I remember it well.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member is entirely wrong in his statement. The action of any municipal council has nothing to do with the consideration of the Address-in-reply, nor has it any bearing on the remarks I am making.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Your municipal council of Subiaco took strong exception to the action of the Central Board when it attempted to improve the condition of dairies in that municipal area.

MR. DAGLISH: I am quite aware that exception has been taken to undue demands made by the Central Board of Health in regard to the condition of dairies. Probably exception also has been taken to some reasonable demands with regard to the condition of dairies. The fault on the part of any municipal body does not justify neglect by the Central Board of Health or neglect by the Government.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: All the action possible was taken by the Central Board of Health in regard to your municipality of Subiaco, your model municipality.

MR. DAGLISH: If the hon. member can scent any corruption out there, I will be happy to have it attended to. That does not get away from the fact that we have at present a board controlling the public health that has been proved incompetent; and it is the duty of the board if, as the member for Greenough (Hon. J. L. Nanson) implies, any muni-

cipality is not in a thoroughly healthy position, to see that the municipal authority attends to its affairs, or if it fail to do so the Central Board has power to step in and do the necessary work; it has power by Supreme Court proceedings to compel the Local Board of Health to carry out the behests of the Central Board. The local bodies are unsuitable for carrying out these duties, and that fact has been brought under the notice of the Government time after time. Turning from this question, I would remind the House that last session a proposal was introduced to Parliament that timber leases should be allowed to extend over a bigger area than 75,000 acres held by one company. That proposal was defeated; but during the discussion of it we were informed that the corporation known as the Timber Combine already practically holds a very large number of leases, four or five hundred thousand acres in all, and it was brought under the notice of the Premier and of Parliament that if Parliament did not choose to amend the law in regard to the area of timber leases for enabling that combine to hold these large areas, the combine intended to hold them in an illegal way. It is pretty well known to the man in the street that this combine is in existence, and is holding these large areas; and we know that no effort has been made to ascertain whether the combine is holding them by evasion of law or in defiance of law. However, the Act is being evaded by open defiance, or by some evasion with which the Government have not been able to deal. I contend that this combine, which is doing injury not only to the small millowners, but injury to the whole timber industry, should have been grappled with by the Government, and no doubt it would have been had not the combine a certain amount of Parliamentary and Press influence behind it. I would also draw attention to the failure of the Government to enforce certain provisions of the Truck Act against this combine, and against other large timber companies.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (HON. J. M. HOPKINS): What mills does that refer to?

MR. DAGLISH: I am not prepared to give details; but the members who speak later on will be ready to furnish

any details Ministers may wish; and there will not be any trouble in giving full information to the Minister for Lands, if such be required. Then with regard to the local registration of mining companies, a similar neglect to enforce the law, or to amend it if amendment were needed, has marked the career of the Government. Again, as to the recent case just passing alluded to in the last Parliament—the Hicks v. Gregory libel suit—the Government have, in my opinion, done a wrong to the country by agreeing to pay the costs of that suit and the damages also. Personally I have every sympathy with the Minister for Mines. I am fully convinced that he acted in a manner he thought right; but at the same time I contend that a Minister should be put on exactly the same footing as a private member of Parliament, or as a private citizen. If he chooses by a breach of the law of libel to subject himself to an action for damages, then I contend that he ought to be allowed to bear the consequences, be these what they may. If a member on this (Opposition) side of the House had chosen in what he thought was the fulfilment of his duty as a member of Parliament to criticise any public official or ex-public official, is it likely that the Government would be asked to pay the piper, or that if asked they would entertain the proposal and defray the cost of that injudicious speech? I contend that the Minister for Mines should be put on exactly the same footing; and that, if he chooses to make injudicious speeches in public, or to make injudicious remarks for publication in the Press, he must bear the brunt of his own actions. If those utterances or interviews were in fulfilment of a Ministerial duty, then the Minister must be protected; but it is not the duty of a Minister or of any member of this House to make an official statement anywhere but in this House; and in this House the Minister or the private member is fully protected.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Are Ministers never to speak during recess?

MR. DAGLISH: As to any question that arises during recess, Ministers are well aware that they cannot be effectively attacked until Parliament meets; and when Parliament meets there is full opportunity afforded them of making to the House any statement they please.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Are they to remain silent while the House is in recess?

MR. DAGLISH: The Minister who is incapable of speaking without libelling must remain silent. The Minister who chooses to make a statement which is harmless can safely do so, and consequences like those we are discussing will not arise out of it; but I contend that if a Minister, by making a statement like that referred to lays himself open to an action for libel, he must bear the full financial responsibility; and if a newspaper publishes the libel, that paper likewise must bear the same responsibility as it would if it published the utterances of any person whomsoever, whether a public person or a private person.

MR. MORAN: This is a revelation to me, after the stand the Labour party took last session by defending the Minister or Mines.

LABOUR MEMBERS: They did not.

MR. DAGLISH: The Labour party merely voted against the adjournment of the House.

MR. MORAN: They spoke in defence of the Minister's action.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member is wrong.

MR. MORAN: I am not, I assure you.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Should the Minister have waited till Parliament was in session?

MR. DAGLISH: The Minister should make any announcement to the public through Parliament. On an occasion like his when he makes an attack on an official, that attack should be made in Parliament. That undoubtedly is owed to Parliament as a matter of courtesy; and this is the place where a Minister is required to justify his public acts. But the Minister for Works will later on have an opportunity of justifying the action of the Government.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I wished to know whether the Minister should have waited till Parliament met.

MR. DAGLISH: The Minister ought not to be supported by this House, and at the cost of the taxpayer, in making any statements that are held by a jury to be libellous. That is the crux of the whole position. The public funds are misapplied when they are used to support a Minister

who makes libellous statements through the Press.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is not an answer to my question.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member knows well that it is not part of my duty to answer questions on which he will have an opportunity of expatiating a little later. I am not here to be cross-examined and heckled by him. He himself has already enough to answer; and if he succeeds in answering it during the course of this Parliament he will have performed a prodigious feat. Another matter on which the Government have not shown to advantage is that of assistance to local industries. We have had an example of the Works Department sending out work from this State to Austria in order to save a few pounds of the taxpayers' money.

THE PREMIER: What case was that?

MR. DAGLISH: The Minister for Railways knows the case I allude to—that of pipes required for the reticulation of Kanowna, I think. In order to save a proportion of the cost —

THE PREMIER: You said "a few pounds."

MR. DAGLISH: To save a proportion of the expense, the Government chose to send an order to Austria for the construction of those pipes, after first of all encouraging the establishment of a local pipe-making industry. My contention is that the Government should have had the work done in this State.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What was the saving effected?

MR. DAGLISH: About 20 per cent., I think.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: More than that.

MR. DAGLISH: The pipes could have been made here. If not, they could have been made in Australia, and if not in Australia, within the Empire. Last session the Governor's Speech advocated the closer union of the Empire and preferential trade, and contained much high falutin' on those great subjects. Yet in order to save a certain proportion of the cost of those pipes, the Government carry out their intention by sending the order not to the old country, but to a foreign country, so that the work may be done by the cheap labour of some of our foreign competitors.

THE PREMIER: Why do you wear a French necktie?

MR. DAGLISH: If the Premier wishes to discuss matters of dress, I think he ought to choose a more fitting occasion.

THE PREMIER: You do not preach what you practise.

MR. DAGLISH: If the Premier will undertake to make me a West Australian necktie, I shall be happy to wear it, whatever the price. Another matter in which the Government have failed is that of the Audit Act. Mr. Courtney, in my opinion, deserves much credit for discovering the blot in that Act; a blot which I am quite sure was inadvertent as far as the Government are concerned; a blot made in an attempt to rush a great quantity of legislation without consideration through Parliament.

THE PREMIER: The Act was passed in the early part of the session.

MR. DAGLISH: Yes, and I think at one sitting; at all events in a very short time. There was no discussion; only a short speech by the then Treasurer (Mr. Gardiner); and after that short speech the House passed the measure in silence. There was no discussion at any length.

THE PREMIER: Not on the second reading?

MR. DAGLISH: There was no discussion on the introduction in either House. Of course members were well aware that this was merely a formal measure required to make our audit system more efficient; and they were quite willing to accept the statements of Ministers, knowing, too, that we had a Chamber of revision, a Chamber which always prevented the carrying of any hasty legislation—knowing that every measure sent up from here was carefully considered there, clause by clause and line by line. Unfortunately, this is one of the few measures that escaped any prolonged consideration at the hands of the Legislative Council; for in that House the same blot passed unnoticed. Then I understand, in pursuance of his duties, the Attorney General gave a certificate that the Bill was in accordance with our Constitution Act. Now all I allege regarding this matter is that inadvertently the Government made a mistake, and got Parliament to carry a provision which the Government had no desire to put in operation, and did not

really intend to embody in the Bill. As a fact, the then Treasurer, speaking on this very clause, made certain remarks which clearly implied that he did not intend the clause to have the effect which it undoubtedly would have had if operative. At the same time, I mention this matter to commend the action of Mr. Courtney in drawing the attention of the Government to the point.

THE PREMIER: What is the political colour of Mr. Courtney?

MR. DAGLISH: The question of the political colour of Mr. Courtney or of any other gentleman has nothing to do with his actions. I have commended the Premier himself when he has done a good action, and I am quite prepared to do so again. I am only regretting that he gives me no opportunity. I have now to touch on the events immediately preceding the last general election; and I am glad to admit that the Premier ultimately displayed a renewal of energy. After a long quiescence he came out as a fighter. He began, some months before the election, by making that celebrated and historic speech at Bunbury, in which he declared war against the Labour party—against the party who had given him and his measures undoubted support, the party to whom he owed his political existence as a Premier, the party who have since given considerable support to his measures, and who helped on two or three occasions to keep his Government in power. Following up that Bunbury speech, and the attitude of the Labour party at the time of the Redistribution of Seats Bill, the Premier has shown from time to time a pronounced hostility towards the Labour party—a hostility which culminated in a very strong attack made on the Labour party in the Queen's Hall, when delivering his policy speech—an attack which was foreign to the policy speech—[THE PREMIER: I do not think so]—an attack in which he made a number of assertions regarding the Labour party that have been so effectively answered at the polls that we have now in that party the strongest body within the walls of this House. It is therefore unnecessary, as the answer has been given so satisfactorily by the country, for me to give that answer now.

THE PREMIER: Does not that argument apply equally to the re-election of

the Minister for Works (Hon. J. L. Nanson) ?

MR. DAGLISH : He was re-elected by a split vote.

THE PREMIER : The re-election of all the Ministers whom you are attacking was not by split votes.

MR. DAGLISH : Your Ministers were all re-elected, and Ministers are almost invariably re-elected. Some of your Ministers were re-elected by remarkably small majorities ; and in some instances I believe postal votes played a very important part in their re-election.

THE PREMIER : What a shame to have postal votes for Ministers. They should be available for Labour members only.

MR. DAGLISH : In this celebrated Queen's Hall speech the Premier, who had been living with liberalism, made a direct appeal to the conservatism and the reactionaries of this community for support, and he got it at the last election. He submitted, it is true, a liberal policy ; but while calling himself "progressive," while taking in effect the Labour platform to stand on, he attacked the party that promulgated that platform, and those to appeal for support to those who were entirely opposed to his policy ; and the issue has been that the Government are returned with about two supporters, and a number of gentlemen who have promised to give them a discriminating support, who have promised to support them when they think it right, and have undertaken to oppose them on almost every question that appears in the Government policy. The hon. members for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond) and Canning (Mr. Gordon) are about the only two direct supporters of the Government in this House at the present time. Almost every member sitting on the Government cross-benches has spoken as strongly and as earnestly against the proposals of the Government as against the proposals and policy of the Labour party. It is not that they love the Government more but because they love the Labour party less, that they are willing to give this discriminating support to the Government when it pleases them. If there were a possibility of getting a more Conservative Government, many of those gentleman sitting on the corner would be anxious to transfer their support from this Government

to the more Conservative organisation. The Government, in the speech the Premier made in the Queen's Hall, made a direct appeal to the country to reject the Labour members and support the Ministerialists as against Labour members ; but they made a second request to the country, and that was that the country should put an end to the old Opposition party, or to what is now termed, by the newspapers and the Government, the Independent party. Now, the result has been that both the parties the Government have appealed against have been returned with no diminished strength. The only party that is absolutely weak in this House is the Government party which, I say, consists of about five Ministers and two supporters, and a number of gentlemen sitting in the corner who will support the Government when necessary in order to prevent the defeat of the Ministry. As a matter of fact, if the Government propose seriously to attempt to carry out the policy promulgated in the Queen's Hall, they can only do it by the aid of the members sitting on the Opposition side of the House ; and if the Government are sincere in their policy, they must beat their supporters with the aid of their opponents in carrying out these measures. There is hardly a measure in the Government platform that must not be opposed by the discriminating supporters sitting on the Government cross-benches.

THE PREMIER : A bad lookout for you.

MR. DAGLISH : After this grand appeal by the Premier, repeated time after time from various other platforms, we find that the result is an enormous victory for the Labour party, and an enormous defeat for the Government party. The figures as analysed by me show me that altogether, of the 66,000 votes recorded at the last election, 24,386 votes went for Government candidates, 28,633 for Labour candidates, and 13,070 for Independents.

THE PREMIER : How many votes were recorded ?

MR. DAGLISH : As the Premier is so anxious for precise details, there were 66,089 votes recorded. The Government got 24,386, the Labour party 28,633, and the so-called Independents (I simply use the term applied to them by the Premier and the Press) got 13,070.

THE PREMIER : Therefore 22 Labour men were returned by 4,000 votes more than the 18 members returned here.

MR. DAGLISH : The Premier is rather anticipating. Those are the figures of the votes recorded ; but those votes did not return 22 Labour men. Five of them were returned previously. At present I am dealing only with votes recorded. I shall give the unopposed returns in a minute. The Government got 24,386 votes against 41,703 votes recorded against them ; because every vote recorded for an Oppositionist, now called Independent, was as much a vote against the Government as was a vote recorded in favour of a Labour candidate.

THE PREMIER : I shall use the figures the other way when I speak.

MR. DAGLISH : The votes for the member for Sussex (Mr. F. Wilson) were votes against the Government, as the member for Sussex was one of those Independents that the Premier was entreating the country to reject.

MR. F. WILSON : Is that so ?

MR. DAGLISH : Yes ; certainly. He was contesting a seat with a gentleman who was pledged to the Ministerial programme and ran as a direct supporter of the Government. This instance in Sussex is just parallel with the instance of the member for Nelson (Mr. Layman), who was returned by the defeat of the Ministerial candidate as well as the Labour candidate. All these independent votes have to be regarded as being recorded against the Government. The Premier appealed to the country not to return these Independents, but to return in preference Labour members. I made no appeal in regard to the return of Independents. I was merely fighting my own battle ; and I had a big enough battle to fight. I have quoted the figures with regard to contested elections ; but 10 members of the House were returned unopposed ; and as the Premier is so anxious to get figures and secure democratic representation, I have no doubt he will find these figures very interesting. Brown Hill returned unopposed a Labour member with 3,974 votes.

THE PREMIER : Votes, or names on the roll ?

MR. DAGLISH : Votes.

THE PREMIER : Names on the roll.

MR. DAGLISH : Of course, if the Government have sent out rolls of which we are to take no notice, I do not know to what source I can go for figures. I am prepared to judge the Government by their rolls and by their electoral administration. If the Premier condemns that administration, then he condemns himself. We have Brown Hill 3,974 voters.

THE PREMIER : I challenge the statement. There is not that number of voters.

MR. DAGLISH : If the Premier will furnish me with any correct figures that he will guarantee, I am quite willing to make him a present of these and to use his. I am quite prepared to use any figures he will give me, because, if those I give are incorrect, the correct ones will be more emphatic in connection with the case I intend to make.

THE PREMIER : The hon. member knows they are wrong.

MR. DAGLISH : I know most of the rolls are wrong, and that the Government have made no serious attempt to get them right until during the last few days. Since the elections have taken place the Government have taken steps to get the rolls perfect.

THE PREMIER : It was a good job for the hon. member's party.

MR. DAGLISH : The Government have taken no steps except to do precisely what should have been and what could have been done before the elections took place : but I want to get through Brown Hill if the Premier will allow me. In Brown Hill the Labour member represents 3,974 votes on the roll. In Gascoyne an Independent or Opposition candidate represents 563 votes ; in Kainowna a Labour member represents 3,710 votes ; in Katanning an Oppositionist represents 1,228 votes ; in Mt. Leonora a Labour candidate represents 5,898 votes ; in Mt. Margaret a Labour candidate represents 4,811 votes ; in Murchison a Labour candidate represents 2,314 ; in Roebourne, the roll of which I trust is correct, the sitting member represents 691 electors. I do not know whether some of these are dead or removed since the roll was compiled. I should like to have called out larger figures ; but the hon. member is on the Government side, and probably if it were a

bigger roll he would not be there. In Toodyay a Government supporter represents 1,200 votes; and in York a Government supporter represents 1,142 votes. The position is that of all these unopposed members there are three on the Government side representing 3,033 votes, five on this side representing 20,707 votes, and two Independents representing 1,791 votes. Adding the figures recorded at the poll to these figures, we find that the grand total of votes recorded for the Government is 27,419, the grand total for the Labour party 49,345, and the grand total for the Independents 14,861. There were, therefore, 64,206 votes recorded against the Government, and 27,419 for the Government, being a majority of 36,787 against the Government. I have gone to the trouble of getting out the figures with regard to the Labour party, because I do not want it to appear that the Labour party have all this majority behind them as against the Government. The votes for the Labour party were 49,345, and the votes against the Labour party (here I am coupling the Government with the Opposition or Independents) were 42,280, showing a majority for the Labour party of 7,065 votes. Now, I have gone through these figures very carefully, not for the purpose of making a case, but for the purpose of finding the facts and bringing them to the House; and if the Premier by any farther remarks on the subject can show me my figures are wrong, he cannot show that they are not correctly put forward. The Premier may argue against some of my conclusions, but he cannot question any of my figures, which I will be very happy to hand to him for dissection.

THE PREMIER: I have got them all.

MR. DAGLISH: The Premier then admits they are correct. I do not know how he could have got them all if they are not correct. The Premier is anxious to make out a case for the Government; I am only anxious to display the facts. That brings me to the attitude of the Labour party. I stated, immediately after my election as leader of the party, that the Labour party intended to sit in direct Opposition, but were not anxious to make a blackguard rush for the Treasury bench.

THE PREMIER: They always say that.

MR. DAGLISH: The Premier used almost those very words, and said that I was talking almost as all Oppositionists did talk. By the manner in which he prepared the Speech for the opening of Parliament, and the Address we are asked to adopt, by inserting the unusual clause embodied in that Reply, that is an expression of confidence in the Government, the Premier has shown a disbelief in his own statement. I want to say that had the Premier done what I think he should have done, met the House and gone on with the business of the country, we should have been happy to assist him to carry on the business of the country.

THE PREMIER: I know that.

MR. DAGLISH: We would have gladly helped him against the disaffected — so-called discriminating — supporters of the Government. We should have gladly helped him to dish his party every time he was willing to introduce his progressive legislation. The Premier should either have come down and carried on in the ordinary way, until challenged by some party in the House, or he should have resigned and refused to meet the House at all. He should have taken one of these two courses. In either case he would have saved important time; he would have saved a long discussion which is likely to follow on this Address.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Nanson): He would have saved your committing yourself.

MR. DAGLISH: I am not afraid of committing myself. The hon. member has been committed half a dozen times already. As the Premier has chosen to introduce this new proposal, this new clause in the Address-in-reply, to the effect that this Government retains the confidence of the House, I intend to move an amendment to this effect:

That in the Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech, all the words after the word "Parliament" in the third line be omitted.

The object of that is to have the Address-in-reply couched in the ordinary terms, without an expression of confidence or want of confidence in the Government. This will afford the Government a chance of carrying on in the usual fashion. I am proposing to undo what the Government are trying to do, creating a bad precedent by endeavouring to introduce debatable matter into the

Address-in-reply. The strongest argument used against the Labour party is that it is alleged we are anxious to exercise power without responsibility. I have already said we have no desire whatever for the sweets of office. We have no desire to eject the Government or to get in the position of the Government ourselves, but the Government have evicted themselves. The country has uttered in no unmistakable sound its decision, a decision given against the Government which shows that the Government have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. We are therefore prepared, if need be, to act, in the public interests, the part of public executioners of the Government. The Premier has striven to sow seeds of disunion amongst members sitting round me by referring to the fact that certain members of the original Labour party sat on one side of the House and certain other members sat on the other side. I want to say that the Labour party in the last Parliament voted unanimously on all important questions, they voted as one man. The Labour party worked together, they had a common object, and they endeavoured by their united action to achieve what both sections had in view, although sitting on different sides of the gangway. I can assure the Premier that the Labour party of this Parliament, as in the last Parliament, are entirely solid. We are a united party, there is no dissent, and we are prepared to work together, and we are prepared to work with any section of this House for the common good of the country. I may, in conclusion, say that I can endorse the concluding sentence of the Address of his Excellency the Governor, the hope that the work of this session will materially advance the well-being of the State. (General applause.)

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): It is difficult to ascertain with what motive the leader of the Opposition should have concluded his somewhat rambling remarks about municipal matters with the amendment, because the Address-in-reply distinctly raised an affirmative issue, and the hon. member does not improve or alter the position, by moving an amendment. There will be the same result whether members go to a division on the Address-

in-reply which the Government place before the House, as if members go to a division on the amendment. In dealing with the amendment of my friend the leader of the Opposition, I can assure him that I have been long enough in Parliament to take particular care not to be misled by any attempt to obscure the real issue now before the Parliament of the country. Before I deal with the remarks I have to make on this issue, let me tender to the member for Subiaco my hearty congratulations on his appointment as leader of the Labour party. Whilst he was a member of the old Parliament he distinguished himself by his coolness, his keen debating power, and the attention which at all times he showed to the work before Parliament.

MR. DAGLISH: We want an Attorney General, you know.

THE PREMIER: There is no need for that. You can overcome that difficulty. I also want to extend my congratulations to the Labour party. Although they have come back with a number greater than I succeeded in rescuing from the wreck, I extend to the Labour party my congratulations, because I realise that they succeeded by their organisation, and by their earnestness and enthusiasm, which, had these been displayed by other portions of the community, would I think have given us if not better results so far as the members of Parliament were concerned, distinctly better results as far as political life is concerned. I am particularly pleased to see returned to Parliament so many members of the Labour party of the last Parliament. This shows that the labour electors, and the Trades and Labour Council who controlled the labour members during last Parliament fully realised what a difficult position those members had to fill. They came in as a comparatively small body, introducing a new element into the Assembly of the State. They were watched with a good deal of suspicion and distrust, and it is to their credit, their tact, and discrimination that at the end of the Parliament other people recognised that, whilst they could not agree with the policy and views of the Labour party, the latter were men who were sincerely anxious to serve the best interests of the State. I was

amused by the opening remarks of the leader of the Opposition when he told us that he would be brief. If the hon. member intended to imply that he wished to limit the discussion on the Address-in-reply, I will do my best to support him in that direction on whatever side of the House I may be. The ordinary discussions on the Address-in-reply are, in my opinion, mostly waste of time. We find in the Imperial Parliament the discussion on the Address-in-reply is not long because members recognise that there is ample opportunity of discussing the various questions when the Bills come before the Parliament. But we are not to-day dealing with an ordinary Address-in-reply, and the member for Subiaco knows that. It is no good attempting to throw dust in the eyes of members.

MR. DAGLISH: We can make it.

THE PREMIER: You cannot make it, and I refuse to allow you or anybody else to make it. Let us speak out straight, and vote straight on the question. We know that throughout the length and breadth of the country we have to face the question to-day, in connection with the debate, whether the Government is to remain in office or not, and the only alternative Government is a Government to be led by my friend the member for Subiaco, unless in the meantime the caucus changes its mind and elects somebody else. When I heard the speech of the member for Subiaco, I was astonished at his endeavour to drag in municipal matters so as to obscure the real issue. I had a right to expect, the country had a right to expect, and the House had the right to expect that in his address he should give some strong grounds and reasons for the attack made, throughout the length and breadth of the country, on the Government. My friend sought to excuse the shortness of his remarks by pointing to the late date at which Parliament has met. Who was responsible for that? The hon. member knows that the late passage of the Electoral Bill made it impossible for the elections to be held earlier.

MR. DAGLISH: I did not accuse you of that.

THE PREMIER: It was Parliament that was responsible for that; and that

party in Parliament which formed the old "cave" and wasted so much time in idle discussion on the Redistribution of Seats Bill really caused the delay.

MR. HOLMAN: You have a few of them over there.

THE PREMIER: And you have a few on your side. We happen to have the leaders here, and you happen to have the rank and file who were misled. When the Electoral Bill became law the earliest and most prompt steps were taken for the purpose of preparing the rolls for the elections to be held. The member for Subiaco said that we were doing now what we ought to have done then, having a personal canvass so as to prepare the rolls. If time had been available that would have been done. I candidly admit that if I knew so much delay would have taken place from the time when the Bill was passed until the general elections could have been held, I should have seen if in the more populous areas a canvass could have been made. But I was in anticipation when I began the campaign that we could have held our elections at the end of May, otherwise I should not have been a party to unduly prolonging that state of unrest which a general election creates. I admit in connection with the recent elections there are matters which call for the earnest attention of the House, and I hope as we proceed in the session, at an early stage of our work, a select committee will be appointed to inquire into the question of the preparation of the rolls, the taking of postal votes, the question of impersonation, and certain matters surrounding not only the administration of the Act but the conduct of the election. I admit, when the leader of the Opposition talked about the abuse of postal votes, that I was surprised that he should have mentioned the name of any postal officer. He should know as well as I do, and I challenge contradiction, that there were complaints on both sides of the House, and on the part of all sorts of candidates—Government candidates, Independent candidates, Opposition candidates, Labour candidates—complaints were coming from all of them unanimously, and for that reason I think it was in the last degree inadvisable that one name should have been singled out by the hon. member as that of a gentleman not fit to be appointed.

MR. DAGLISH : I was asked to mention it.

THE PREMIER : It is absolutely indifferent to me whether you were asked or not. As leader of the party you ought not to be so entirely controlled by individuals. My desire in appointing postal officers was to appoint as many men as I could, and the Labour party should be the last party to accuse me of any want of sympathy with them in the appointments made, and they know it. I can challenge any of them in any of their contested elections to make a complaint that the appointments of men authorised to take postal votes were issued with any bias to any party.

MR. HENSHAW : The whole of the men appointed in my district were taken from the committees of my opponent, a Ministerial candidate.

THE PREMIER : The hon. member must know that the appointments of postal officers are made on the recommendation of the Chief Electoral Officer, who does not know who are on the various committees. The Minister does not know, but there are instances in your party—if you will inquire, you will find out—where I heard complaint that men were appointed on one side only. I took particular care to see that complaint should be removed, and it would have been a great pleasure to act if I had heard the complaint of my friend. There were, no doubt, as the member for Collie points out, mistakes made; but let me assure the hon. member that complaints as to these mistakes are just as strong by those who think that some men made themselves mere canvassers for Labour candidates, as that of the hon. member himself. We cannot get away from the fact that this postal vote system, a system which we introduced for the purpose of simplifying votes and encouraging people to vote, has been abused. Inquiry should be made into it, but I hope that as the result of that inquiry, whilst we amend the Act and give greater safeguards, and greater precaution, the principle itself will be maintained. When I come to the indictment which was preferred by the hon. member I find very little in it. I have no hesitation in saying the country, if called upon to judge between us on that indictment, and that indictment only,

would overwhelmingly declare for the Government. What is this accusation brought against us by the leader of the other party? What are the charges made, upon the strength of which he asks the country, asks this House, to eject the Government from office? He does not remove the difficulty by saying "I do not want to eject them." As the result of this debate, either the Government will be confirmed in office, or thrown from office. I believe the country was looking forward to a speech from the hon. member giving full expression to the views of the Labour party, indicating in some way how the Government have forfeited the confidence of the House and the country, and upon what grounds they would be justified in ousting us from office. My friend referred to the fact that a short time ago I appointed Mr. Nanson as Minister for Works. I have always claimed the right, and I always shall claim the right whilst I am Premier, to choose my own colleagues. They are the men to whom I have to commit my political reputation, and whether the House approves or disapproves, or the country approves or disapproves, I can confidently leave the decision to that tribunal. But whatever its decision may be, I claim the right to hold my own opinion. I am not, whilst I hold office, going to use any of my portfolios to buy votes or placate votes. ["Oh," from Opposition benches.] I am going to get the man in whom I have personal confidence, and I am going to do this when I choose, and I will do it in the open view of the public. What should I have done? [**MEMBER :** Sent him for re-election.] He was sent for re-election. What, I ask, should I have done? Should I have gone to the country with a vacant portfolio? Should I have asked my friend the Colonial Treasurer to continue to hold office until a general election, and then have a vacant portfolio to dangle before the people? Had I done so, the Labour party might well have had a cause of complaint against me; but I made the appointment before the general election. I had to take upon my shoulders, and my colleagues had to take upon their shoulders, the burden of responsibility.

MR. TAYLOR : Why did you not make the appointment last session?

THE PREMIER: It was understood clearly enough last session that the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Gardiner, would hold office until after the sitting of the State Treasurers in Melbourne. There was no need to make the appointment before that, and until Mr. Nanson himself went away with the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Gardiner, to attend the conference in Melbourne, until a week or two before that, no mention of the appointment was made, and the question was not settled. That perhaps will answer the interjection of the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor).

MR. TAYLOR: No.

THE PREMIER: He asked the question, why was not Mr. Nanson appointed last session? The answer is, as I told him, because Mr. Gardiner had agreed to hold office until the termination of the Treasurers' Conference.

MR. TAYLOR: You knew that before Parliament prorogued.

THE PREMIER: Knew what?

MR. TAYLOR: His intention. Why did you not make the appointment?

THE PREMIER: It was mentioned by the Press and you could not appoint anyone until the vacancy arose. The vacancy did not arise before the State Treasurers' Conference, and that conference did not take place until February. The House was not sitting in February. I say I took an open position, which the Labour party cannot object to. I do not mind what they may think of the *personnel* of my colleagues. My colleagues are responsible to their electors, and going to them they were returned by the electors, and they have the right to come here and say they represent the electors. I have a right to say that as all my colleagues have been returned my action has been approved. But approved or not approved, I exercise, and will exercise in the future whilst I hold this position, the undoubted right to choose my colleagues, submitting only to the will of Parliament and the will of the people. We have got away from the point. I suppose the suggestion is that I should have kept this vacant portfolio dangling over the people whilst the election was on. We get away from that, and we get to the question of paved dairies in Subiaco, and the condemning of buildings in Perth. The hon. member knows

well enough that the question of amending the Health Act has been under consideration for some time. The measure was drafted and almost ready to be introduced last session. I do not know whether the hon. member himself saw a draft of it. A Bill has been introduced in the Legislative Council dealing with that question; dealing with it as I thought it should be dealt with, by placing the power directly under the control of one man, and not a board. If the hon. member will suggest that health matters should be controlled by the State primarily, and not by health bodies, I will agree with him.

MR. DAGLISH: I suggested that.

THE PREMIER: I think one has had sufficient experience of the actions of local boards of health in this State to realise that there is one central individual who always must control health matters. Frequently one finds that local inspectors are too much influenced by the fact that the councillors who appoint them are themselves the owners of property. There is a Bill already before Parliament, and it has been read a first time, I think, by the Council as a privilege Bill. If not, it will be either to-day or to-morrow. Then my friend refers again to the payment of damages in connection with the action brought against Mr. Gregory. I have spoken about that in this House, I have spoken about it also on the public platform, and I do not want to be indefinitely repeating myself. I have said it was the duty of the Government to come to the support of a Minister, if in the honest discharge of his duty he had made a mistake. The Minister thought he was serving the State. Damages were awarded against him, not because of any act he did from which he could possibly obtain private gain. He gave to the Press reasons which they had a right to expect. If I thought with the member for Mt. Margaret, judging from an interjection, that the report was clearly actuated by venom, then I should have acted differently; but I want the hon. member to take up this position, believing as I do that it was by inadvertence unguarded words were used by the man making that report to the Press in connection with a public matter.

MR. TAYLOR: It was on the report. It was not on the spur of the moment.

THE PREMIER: I know that, but I can assure the hon. member, speaking as a man with legal experience, that even written reports and letters are found to contain libellous statements.

MR. TAYLOR: He had any amount of time to revise it before he handed it in.

THE PREMIER: My friend is entitled to use these facts, if he calls them facts, for the purpose of showing there was personal venom.

MR. TAYLOR: I will show it.

THE PREMIER: I do not think you can. You tried to show it at Menzies, but you could not. My friend is entitled to use this, but I want him to put himself in this position: If he believed there was no private venom, would he not have done as I did?

At 6.28, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7.30. Chair resumed.

THE PREMIER (continuing): When the House adjourned I was speaking of one of the counts of this indictment laid against us by the leader of the Opposition—that count in which he dealt with the Gregory-Hicks case; and I was pointing out that the matter had been discussed in the last Parliament and had been placed before the electors of the State; and that its being brought up again to-day throws upon us some obligation to deal for a short time with a matter that I should have thought was definitely settled. I was pointing out that, believing as the Government did, that the Minister for Mines was prompted in the action he took by a single desire to discharge his duty to the State, we supported him, though it may have been that he used unguarded words which laid him open to an action for libel. By the interjection of the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor), one of the most prominent members of the Labour party—I think one of their moving spirits—I gathered that the hon. member would accept that position, but that in his opinion the action of the Minister was due to personal pique or personal feeling; and the hon. member pointed out that the libel of which complaint was made was in writing, and therefore deliberate, and that there had been opportunity for revising that libel, which opportunity had not been taken. But there again we

find another of these frequent instances of the difference between that policy and those principles which the Labour party profess on the public platform or in Parliament, and the policy and the principles which they pursue and practise. There was recently a case in the Supreme Court of this State where a charge of libel was laid against a prominent trade unionist—a libel written deliberately after full consideration, published in the Press of this State, held by a jury to be a libel, and in connection with which damages were awarded against that unionist. We have there the same elements that were referred to here: a written libel, opportunity to amend it, and no such opportunity taken. And what do we find there? The Trades and Labour Council or the representatives of the trades and labour unions met together, came to the conclusion that the action of that unionist was in their interests, and agreed that the unions should find the money to pay the damages and costs.

MR. DAGLISH: Why did not the Ministry do the same in this case?

MR. TAYLOR: And not make the country pay for it?

THE PREMIER: In that case the governing body of the unions recognised their obligation to this individual. They did not take the vote of every member of each union; but as union representatives they committed the unions to finding the money which a jury had awarded against this libeller.

MR. TAYLOR: Are you sure?

THE PREMIER: I can judge only by the public Press; though I candidly admit there is such a wide difference between your professions and your actions that there is a certain amount of doubt about the matter.

MR. DAGLISH: Out of whose funds was the money provided?

THE PREMIER: The Minister is here to represent the country. Who is it that finds the funds unless it be the body of men whom the Minister represents? Am I here less to represent the people of this State because I am Premier, than you or your trade unions delegates are there to represent your members? What is the difference? You stand there as officials of a trade union to represent the members of that union. I stand here—and you

may stand here if caucus will allow you—and you will then represent the people of this State, who are its taxpayers.

MR. DAGLISH: We do represent them already.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

THE PREMIER: I wish to point out that instance as one of many instances of the difference between the principles we hear preached on public platforms and in Parliament, and those acted on by Labour members when they come to apply their principles to either their union life or their private life. Then I thought we had another count of this indictment, dealing with the Audit Act. One has very little indeed to say about that count. I do not think it worth consideration. The hon. member (Mr. Daglish) thinks it is; and if I took up the position he took, and thought that the Government should be ousted because we do not look after municipal fowl-yards down at Subiaco, I should say that it would be a good count in an indictment of us that we did not prefer the constitutional opinion of an ex-journalist on a question of constitutional law. My friend is entitled to the full benefit of that. If he cares to fill up his time by going round the country interviewing all and sundry in order to rake up some possible charge against the Government, he is entitled to do so. It is sufficient for us to say that if we were addressing a body of independent members in this House, prepared to vote in accordance with the dictates of reason, there is not one man in this House, on that (Opposition) side or this, who could say that a case had been made out against the Government.

MR. TAYLOR: It will be made out before the debate is finished.

THE PREMIER: Will be made out? How many leaders are there in the caucus party? Are you all leaders? Are we to have a repetition in this House of what we have seen before? A leader stands up and makes a few observations; his various lieutenants add to them; and if, subsequently, one wishes to pin them to a particular observation, "Oh," they say, "he is not the leader."

MR. TAYLOR: You have two leaders on your side.

THE PREMIER: If you have 22, they are all incompetent. I have the right, in accordance with the ordinary courtesies of

debate, the ordinary rule and observance applied where one party pits itself against another, to expect that the leader of that party which is attacking the Government should place before the House and the country the grounds upon which that attack is made.

MR. DAGLISH: The indictment is made by the country.

THE PREMIER: If the only indictment made by the country is that made by the member for Subiaco, God help this country! If contentions like that and statements like that are sufficient to convince the electors to return hon. members who sit on the front Opposition bench, then I say they have proved worthy of the electors.

MR. TAYLOR: The Premier's past actions have deserved it.

THE PREMIER: By that statement we are to have this indictment, unfolded by the member for Subiaco, added to by speaker after speaker. That may be the new method, to attack a member in the first instance and, after he sits down, to attack him on other items. It has not been the custom to make a charge after a man's mouth is closed. I do not know whether the Labour party are going to depart in this instance from the elementary rules of fair play. If it suits them, after I sit down, to make farther charges against the Government of which I am the Premier, they are entitled to do so by the rules of debate. Whether they are entitled to do so by the rules of fair play is a question I submit to the people of this country through the House. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) strangely enough, when dealing with the case of the present Minister for Works, referred to some observations made by that hon. member in November of last year, and took his view of the Government then, and remarked that since that time the Government had had no opportunity of committing any other political offence. I think those were the observations made by the hon. member. They were to the best of my recollection.

MR. DAGLISH: I did not quite catch them.

THE PREMIER: I think the hon. member, when he was quoting some observations from a speech by the present Minister for Works uttered in November of last year, referred to the Minister's

view of the Government then, and said that since that time the Government had had no other opportunity of committing any other political offence. I think "political offence" was the expression made use of.

MR. DAGLISH: I think that is the sense of what I said.

THE PREMIER: It is near enough. Will the hon. member, or one of his many co-leaders, when they deal with it at a subsequent part of this debate, tell me what item of this indictment urged by the member for Subiaco was not committed before November last, with that one exception? If in November last the administration of this Government, the policy of this Government, the action of this Government, were so strong as to justify the Labour party in supporting the Government, what has been done since to justify this opposition?

MEMBER: The Premier's own challenge.

MR. DAGLISH: The Government had to get certain laws through.

THE PREMIER: We may or may not have had to get certain laws through. As a matter of fact, in November last the only impending law of any importance was the Redistribution of Seats Bill.

MR. DAGLISH: Yes; and the Electoral Bill.

THE PREMIER: It was already settled then; but one of the hon. member's greatest charges is that, in the Redistribution of Seats Bill, we neglected our duty to the State. If that was so when the Labour party supported the Government in November, why did not the Labour party oppose the Government then? They might have put a model Government into power to carry out the Redistribution of Seats Bill they wanted.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Labour): The Labour party were not as strong then.

THE PREMIER: Am I to understand this from Kalgoorlie, that while seven men were justified in supporting vicious principles, they are not justified with 22 men? What has strength to do with it? The Labour party count by noses. I do not. If I had a party of seven, and I thought the Government were wrong, I would vote against them just as readily as if I had a party of 22.

MR. JOHNSON: You do many unwise things.

THE PREMIER: Quite so. I never knew the time when it was unwise to be honest.

MR. HOLMAN (Labour): You may find it out some day.

THE PREMIER: I may; but still that is one of the risks I must run. I expected that the member for Subiaco, appearing before this Parliament as the leader of the Labour party, which we have heard so much about on public platforms, more especially when nobody else was about to contradict them, and which we have heard so much about when a few people get together and make a noise to prevent their opponents from speaking—I naturally thought that when he came into this Parliament representing their views, he would tell us what were the aims and aspirations of that party, and to what extent those aims and aspirations justify and demand that the Labour party shall oust this Government and take control of the reins of office. In the Speech of the Governor we point out what has been done during the course of the past three years. The hon. member, with wise discretion, passed that by. "Advertising," said he. I say this, that if after he and his party have been three years in office they can place before this State an advertisement speaking so strongly as to the material, moral, and social advancement of the people as that Speech can, the country will not have cause to regret his having been in office. We placed it in the Speech distinctly challenging those who want this place (the Treasury bench) to say what there is in our administration or in our policy that justifies them in the action they have taken. We are arguing now before the electors of this State. Depend upon it, members may delude them for a moment by appealing to blind prejudice; but the time will come when they will exact from Labour members, and from anybody else, an account of their stewardship. Labour members may smile now. They have been successful in the election by appealing to that prejudice which has stood them in such good stead; but they will have to appeal to the electors with a record of work done, and the electors will see how they can justify it. Long before this election, anyone who studied Australian politics could see the trend of the Labour party—a party brought into

existence as a third party, with no desire to attain office, but with one desire to see their principles carried out, prepared not only in Parliament but prepared in the electorates to give their votes and support to that man who adhered generally to their principles, whether he belonged to their party or not. That is the province of a third party—to secure certain ends, working independently, apart from those ends. We can see, not only in this State but throughout every State in Australia, that during the course of the last year or two there has been a distinct change in this party. From being a party abstaining from power for the purpose of enforcing principles, they became a party for the purpose of obtaining office.

MR. F. CONNOR (Independent): That is not so.

THE PREMIER: I do not believe the hon. member ever studied politics or anything else. I am expressing my opinion.

MR. F. CONNOR: And I am expressing mine.

THE PREMIER: Of course the hon. member is, but his opinion has no value. One could see that this party was now prepared to oppose friend and foe alike. It was a matter of indifference to them whether a man they were opposing was a good democrat, whether his principles were sound or not. They said: "If he belongs to us, signs our pledge, belongs to our party, subject to selection we will support him; unless he does that, we will oppose him." It was obvious it was becoming a question of either signing or resigning, as recently pointed out in a prominent speech. I could see this coming plainly. I thought it my duty to draw the attention of the electors of this State to the main issue, which I thought would prove to be the real issue of this general election.

MR. DAGLISH: The results were unexpected.

THE PREMIER: There was reason to justify that view. Watching the trend of politics in the Eastern States I knew what took place by that time. I knew what had taken place in this very Parliament when, in July of last year, the Labour party by a caucus decision agreed to sit in direct Opposition to the Government. It was not sufficient for them then to say they had in power a Government of whose policy they

approved; it was not sufficient for them throughout the whole of that session to vote for every item of that policy.

MR. DAGLISH: They did not.

THE PREMIER: All the main items of that policy. That was not sufficient. When they thought there was a chance of getting into direct Opposition they passed this caucus decision to get there. Now, if the action of any Government justifies a man or justifies a body in getting into direct Opposition, it equally justifies and calls upon him to go into Opposition direct or on the cross-benches. I never yet have heard an explanation of what happened. While the party were prepared to go into direct Opposition, and sit on the front Opposition bench, they were not prepared to go and sit on the cross Opposition benches, and from those cross-benches oppose that Government which they believed to be so entirely wrong that they were anxious to oppose it from the front Opposition benches. Of course one could see through it plainly enough. It was not a question of opposing the Government. It was a question of taking the first step towards office.

MR. DAGLISH: Seven members!

THE PREMIER: The Government could be opposed from that side (Opposition cross benches) as well as from this (front Opposition benches) side; but the latter side, of course, is a short step to office. First, second, then office. It did not satisfy them; and so, if members will realise that fact—that the party which had supported nearly every item on the Government platform during the course of that session, at the early part of that session, when they had a policy placed before them, that policy for which they afterwards voted, passed a resolution that they would go into direct Opposition. Yet it is the party who passed that resolution, and so behaved, who complain that when I spoke at Bunbury I threw down a challenge. Where is the challenge? What is the difference between the party that says, "We will stab you in the back as soon as we can do it," and my going to Bunbury and saying "If I am to be stabbed, I will be stabbed on the public platform." That is the idea. I want this question settled on the public platform.

MR. DAGLISH: So it has been.

THE PREMIER: I expressed that opinion at Bunbury, and I expressed it, too, on every platform in the State where I spoke.

MR. HOLMAN (Labour): And the public replied.

THE PREMIER: Do you call yourself the public?

DR. ELLIS (Labour): A representative thereof.

THE PREMIER: Then a very insignificant representation.

DR. ELLIS: Better than yours.

THE PREMIER: I said it on every public platform. I went into the camp of the enemy to say it, and I have to thank them in many instances for a patient hearing. I wanted to convince them that the position I hold, and the views I hold, I am not afraid to place before any electors in the State. The position that arises in this State after all is the position that arises in every other portion of the Commonwealth. A disregard of principle, a disregard of services rendered, a mere desire to secure adherents to their own party as a stepping stone to office. I notice Mr. Deakin, in a recent speech, deals with this matter, and he says:—

The party was being pushed too far, and one of the keenest and saddest proofs of that was to be found in the fact that members who had sat side by side with the Labour members in the State and Federal Houses, who had voted for them on every division, and who were a bulwark of strength to the Labour party in the House, went to the country with the Labour pistol to their heads, and the demand to sign or resign. No consideration was shown for past friendship, past work, or services. They must bow the knee entirely to the organisation.

Are not these observations abundantly justified by experience in this State? There is no one in the State who has done more for the party and their principles than I have, and they cannot deny it. They are regardless of that. What do they care? Not for a man's past services, not for the work he has done, but whether he belongs to their organisation or not; and my experience, and the experience of the Minister for Mines, and the experience of the Minister for Lands, adds local evidence and colouring to the truth of these observations. I wanted at the general election to emphasize what was the real issue. I did not for a moment expect complete

success. When you hear members on the Opposition side of the House taunting me with the fact that we have not succeeded at the first time of asking, have they built up their organisation by early and continued success? If they have built up their organisation to success after early failures, then it had to be fought with equal strength and equal endurance by the other electors who do not agree with their views. I am not discouraged because at the first time of asking the electors of the State have failed to realise the position. They know to-day that what I spoke three months ago is true. What do we find is the position to-day? When we watch a general election and hear the speeches made, is not this thought impressed upon us, that whilst there are in this country a great number of electors who believe in liberal principles and progressive legislation, who do not come to this new party as a fount of knowledge in these things, who can point to the acceptance of these principles long before the party came into the House, there is still no salvation for those who will not sign? Was not the lesson coming home to us of the growing intolerance and the self-sufficiency of the trades hall party, that ever increasing subordination of principle to party and their bitter attacks upon the personal integrity of most of their opponents? These things have forced the electors to realise that they must, in humble submission, bow their knees before this infallible organisation or fight for freedom; and depend upon it, that fight will be made. Depend upon it, we will find the men in this State as in other States who will not allow a continuation of that narrow-minded intolerance. We are going to fight in public life, or on the public platform, or the public field, as fair-minded men appealing to a fair-minded jury, and not a squared one. My friends at once count noses. They readily admit themselves that they have no leader, each one is fully qualified to lead the House and to occupy a Ministerial portfolio.

MR. TAYLOR: So are yours.

THE PREMIER: They are, no doubt. It is due to this, that there has not been that full discussion that there ought to be on the public platform

and in the Press of the State. Year after year goes by, and we find this organisation always telling the same story, always preaching the same tale.

MR. TAYLOR: They are consistent.

THE PREMIER: Yes; but man can be consistent just as much in error as in the right. I found it out as soon as I saw the new methods of the Labour party. They exemplify it. Not only that, but we often hear complaints about the want of fairness from the metropolitan Press. You hear them after a victory say they have beaten the Press, this Press which they say does not give them fair play. Will they tell me of any of their Labour newspapers that give a report at all to any speech by those opposed to them.

DR. ELLIS: They are not worth reporting.

THE PREMIER: That is what the Perth Press said about the Labour speakers, and you felt hurt. Again, I say we hear from the party the talk of such high principles, but we never see them carried out in practice. For instance, in the Governor's Speech we desired to place before the electors what has been accomplished. To a certain extent we are placing before them our case. I am prepared to assert, without the least hesitation, that no one Labour newspaper in the State will have a report, even a condensed report, of that Speech. If they did not report a Labour member's speeches they gave paragraphs on their observations. I have never seen in any of the Labour newspapers any consideration shown towards anyone else but the Labour members.

MR. HOLMAN: You ought to give them a bit of the Government advertising. The printing of the rolls, for instance.

THE PREMIER: That might have been done if it would have made the war fair. What I want to point out to the party who complained so much of want of consideration, is that they never give any consideration to the other side. In all the Labour newspapers we find misrepresentation and suppression, so that no one can come to a conclusion as to what was intended.

MR. DAGLISH: What newspapers do you refer to?

THE PREMIER: The *West Australian Worker* and the *Democrat*.

MR. DAGLISH: The *Democrat* never had a speech in it.

THE PREMIER: It has very full paragraphs from speeches. The fact is, we want every centre of the territory, if we possibly can, to have a contest on these various occasions, to have both sides of the issue placed before the electors. We are handicapped, I admit, from the fact that very rarely we can find men who can afford to live on the Parliamentary salary, who can put forward the views which we believe ought to be carried. You cannot in all cases therefore have a contest; but judging from experience of past elections I should like to see that contest raised, because I candidly admit, although we have been defeated, I am astonished to see so good a record put up in places where the Labour party has had its way uncontradicted so long. During the election the Government placed before the country a policy which is progressive. Do members deny that?

MR. DAGLISH: You took it from us.

THE PREMIER: It is a bold policy—that we believe in the future of the State; that we believe the future of West Australia needs the development of its material resources, and the safeguarding of the social and domestic well-being of the people. We placed that policy before the electors, believing in the saving commonsense of the electors, and we believe so still. We are not so craven-hearted, because for the moment we may appear to suffer defeat, that we lose our faith in the principles that will far outlive the life of this and other Parliaments. We believe in it entirely. Our position during the election as a body of progressive men was to place before the electors a progressive policy, and in doing that we come into opposition with the extremists on the one side and the other. That is the position the Liberal party has to face throughout Australia altogether. That position was pointed out in a speech by Mr. Deakin. Where he referred to the Liberal party I have made a slight change and made the Liberal party the Government. Mr. Deakin said:—

The Government party stood between the two sides, avoiding the falsehood of extremes. It was exposed not only to attacks from one

quarter, but to attacks from both—from those who moved too fast and from those who moved too slowly. Both found the Government party an obstacle, because it stood for practical and practicable progressive legislation.

I think the elector very frequently overlooks that which is practical and that which is practicable. I cannot use a better term in referring to it than in quoting the words which I believe came from the member for Hannans. We overlook the word "practicable"; we ignore the fact that history proves that man is a slow scholar and that the task of winning the whole earth is one of the most difficult undertakings, and perhaps after all the work of the practical reformer does more to make possible the ultimate realisation of the ideal future—may I add to that, than the most high-sounding promises of the noisy demagogue. I admit until these theories have been brought to the test of practice, until those who make these promises have had a chance of carrying them into effective execution, they have always that effective cry, when they go on the public platform and say how they are going to re-model the world, whether by single-tax, socialism, or Labour party, when they get a chance. I wanted in the elections to impress upon electors what the real question was, what the Labour party knew it to be, what they determined as far as they possibly could to make it, but what too many of us who, although progressive, do not belong to the Labour party, failed to realise. What after all is the result of this election? A body of men, mark you, organised, working together, standing shoulder to shoulder, and taking particular care that they claim the full credit for every piece of liberal legislation passed in this country for the last three years; a body of men who with one or two exceptions never gave any credit at all to the Government for what had been done; who prove by their speeches and their actions that the expression of gratitude was an expression that the party did not understand the meaning of—you had this organisation fighting against the disorganised forces of the other side. What, after all, is the result? Twenty-two Labour men, 18 Ministerialists, and 10 others.

MR. DAGLISH: You have "nobbled" some of the others, have you not?

THE PREMIER: When one hears these lofty sentiments, these appeals to the great voice of the people, of the member for Subiaco, these observations about how lamentably the Government have failed, one would think the Government had come back with a party of six and the Labour party with 22. But after all their attack, after all their organisation, after all the difficulties we had to face in bringing a direct issue for the first time before the electors, they come with a majority over us of four.

MR. DAGLISH: Thirty-six thousand majority against you.

THE PREMIER: I will deal with that presently. All your figures are inaccurate. I will prove them to be inaccurate.

MR. DAGLISH: You admitted them.

THE PREMIER: I did not. I want to put this case before the House; it is for them to decide. The Labour party came back with 22. I say the other members of this House were not returned as Labour men. Take the Labour party and their 22. In the contested electorates there were 28,727 votes cast. I am carrying out this calculation on the assumption of no other votes than those cast. It is distinctly a calculation in favour of the Labour party, because they polled within 10 or 15 per cent. of their full strength, whereas the others never do. [MEMBER: Question?] I am putting that before the House.

MR. HOLMAN: To suit yourself.

THE PREMIER: I say the Labour party as a rule poll within 10 or 15 per cent. of their full strength.

MR. BATH: What grounds have you for making that assertion?

THE PREMIER: The metropolitan area. You do not know, because you were not opposed. Take 28,000 votes for contested Labour seats. If you take the average of votes cast, say in Menzies, Boulder, and Kalgoorlie, you will find the votes cast were about 60 per cent. of the names on the roll; not more than that. The percentage of votes not recorded of the names on the roll was from 40 to 44 per cent. in those three electorates.

MR. MORAN (Independent): It is a very high percentage.

THE PREMIER: I am taking the names on the roll because we know there

are various duplications. I want to point out that the rolls were inflated, so that when you come to deal with the uncontested returns you have a fair test, and in the uncontested returns there were 15,900 names on the roll.

MR. DAGLISH: You have omitted Mt. Margaret, the same as the *West Australian* did. The number should be 20,707.

THE PREMIER: I may have made that mistake. In those uncontested seats I will deal with my figures first.

MR. DAGLISH: But they are wrong.

THE PREMIER: But may I deal with my figures first? Dealing with the figures which I have, in these uncontested electorates there are about 16,000 names on the roll. If 40 per cent. of that number be deducted, the balance is 9,500, which represents what we assume to be the voting strength of these electorates. That and 28,000 votes recorded give roughly about 38,000 votes for Labour. If you take others, that is outside the Labour party, because my contention is that the real issue is between the Labour party and the other members of the House and other members of the community—

MR. MORAN: They supported you. We will make our own estimate.

THE PREMIER: We will take the other members of the House. The number of votes in the contested electorates was 37,000, and the number of the electors in the uncontested electorates, adopting the same reduction of 40 per cent., gives 3,000. The member for Subiaco suggests that I have overlooked one electorate.

MR. DAGLISH: I think you have neglected to take that 40 per cent. off the 4,700.

THE PREMIER: In uncontested electorates 4,800 on the roll. I treat that as 3,000 effective votes. That gives a total of 38,000 votes cast for the Labour members, and over 40,000 cast for those opposed to the Labour members. If it should be, as the hon. member points out, that I overlooked Mt. Margaret, that would give on the same basis about 3,000 votes, which makes the number for the Labour members 41,000 and the number for the others 40,000, thus giving a thousand votes in favour of Labour. But bear in mind that, as I have previously pointed out, in

this calculation I am giving the Labour party credit for every vote in uncontested seats, I am giving them credit for every available vote in a voting strength of 9,500, whereas I can only get the benefit of a voting strength of 3,000. If the Labour party will contend that in these various electorates where there was no contest every single individual who would have voted would have voted one way and one way only, then they can say they are entitled to 9,500. I can only point out such has not been the experience in any electorate. I say assuming that all those 9,000 voters in the uncontested electorates would have voted for the Labour party and no one else, the difference is only 1,000.

MR. TAYLOR: You have proved that the 22 electorates represent more electors than 28.

THE PREMIER: I am taking one point at a time. I am glad to see I have made that point. I have referred to these figures, and I said I would refer to them for the purpose of placing before the country what is the real issue, the voting strength as between the two parties, Labour on one side and the other members of the House on the other side. I am giving by that calculation credit to the Labour party for 9,000 solid votes in those uncontested seats. [Interjection by Mr. Daglish.] I am dealing consistently right through on the one plank. It is a straight issue between the Labour party and the other portions of this State, and the hon. member knows it, but he will not face it.

MR. DAGLISH: You said another thing at the election.

THE PREMIER: I did not.

MR. DAGLISH: You said it was between the Government and the Labour party, and there was no room for an Oppositionist.

THE PREMIER: Am I to understand that the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) and the Labour party are working for a coalition?

MR. DAGLISH: No; I am simply calling attention to the point that you raised.

THE PREMIER: I think it would be just as well if the hon. member looked after his own party, and left the other party to look after itself. For the present I want to deal with the Labour party, as I say

the issue is clear throughout this State, and the hon. member knows it. I am quite satisfied with the election. We have had an election, and after all it does not matter so much for the present purpose what may be the number of votes behind each member. We are here to-day for the purpose of settling as far as we possibly can some method by which stable government can be obtained, and the affairs of the State carried on. I wanted to give these figures as to voting strength for the purpose of pointing out to my hon. friends that they have not so very much to talk about after it is all done. They have not so very much to crow over the Government about after you once examine the figures. They got every seat they could, and obtained one or two they ought not to have got. They ought to be very thankful for that. Had those of us who disagreed with the Labour party been able to unite our forces, the result would I have no doubt have been slightly different; but I do not expect, as I said previously, that you could work a combination at once with a body of men who for years have not been subject to organisation, and I am quite satisfied with the results attained. When we realise the difficulties that have had to be fought, and the years of patient effort the Labour party themselves have had to use before they could perfect their organisation, and when we compare the results with the number of votes recorded, the comparison is by no means discouraging to those of us who disagree with the methods and the tactics of the Labour party. But while that may be a matter which affects the election, we are here to carry on the affairs of the country; and in the Speech we wished to bring that issue directly before members. I did not for one moment desire any word I used to be offensive either to the Opposition or to the Independent members. I wished to point out as honestly as I could what was the real issue: that, as the House was divided into three parties, there was need for the House to make up its mind to support some one of those three parties, so as to enable Government to be carried on. Now is not that the issue we have to face to-day? We have three parties: not one of them unaided can carry on the affairs of the State. Which one is to do it? We do

not wish to take up the position that because we for the time being occupy office we should be allowed to carry on for that reason alone. If at the general election the Labour party had been returned with an absolute majority of the House, our course would have been simple, our duty clear. But as the Labour party were returned with only 22 members and we with 18, the balance of power being held by the remaining members, there was a need, not only in our interests, not only in the interests of the Labour party, but in the interests of good government also, that some early step should be taken to place before members the real issue, so that they could make up their minds to support either one side or other. No matter which side we support—the direct Opposition, the Government, or the Independents—we must make up our minds to support some party, and to give them a majority strong enough to carry on the affairs of the State. We have to decide that to-day in the circumstances which face us. We need not concern ourselves so much as to who won the elections or what number of votes was recorded. We are here now as members of Parliament, to try as reasonable men to devise some means by which His Majesty's Government can be carried on; and I should have thought the member for Subiaco would have welcomed the action taken by the Government in their determination to bring this question to such an issue that there should be a majority on one side or other. Now what does the decision mean? I submit—and I hope the Independent members will not think I am personally offensive or politically offensive to them—I think they will agree with me that the issue is: You have to support either the Government or the Labour party. Is not that the issue, the real issue before the House, just as I believe it to be the real issue before the country? And I did my utmost to explain to the electors, to impress upon the electors, that this was the real determining question upon which they should make up their minds when casting their votes.

MR. MORAN: The question just now is non-support or support of the Government: beyond that, nothing.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Chaos.

THE PREMIER: Well, I hope no member will take up that stand. In the division on this amendment members should make up their minds to commit themselves to one side or other. I do not say to commit themselves indefinitely. I should no more ask that than would the member for Subiaco. But the question each should ask himself is, What is the best means of carrying on the Government for the present, allowing the future to take care of itself? I do urge that there should be no attempt at all to introduce an element of uncertainty that may result in a want of stability—a want which all of us would deplore. I would myself a hundred times rather sit on the Opposition benches, and give my aid to the Labour party to carry on stable government, than see a condition of affairs comparable to a see-saw depending upon the votes of one or two men. I do not believe in that; and I can assure the Opposition that if they come into power they can rely upon it that I will not encourage that style of dealing in this House. Above and beyond all parties on this side or that side of the House is the duty we owe to the State; a duty which must be discharged regardless of any individual consequences. Parliament represents the State, and we must discharge our duty to those whom we represent. That being the issue, I hoped that the leader of the Opposition would have placed before us more fully the real grounds of his indictment, so that having heard them I could have answered them. I think the hon. member himself will admit that the man who for the time being holds office as Premier is entitled to have charges made against him—[MR. DAGLISH: No]—charges which he may have an opportunity of answering before being ousted from office.

MR. DAGLISH: My speech was not an indictment, but simply a proposal to remove from the Governor's Speech that expression of confidence.

THE PREMIER: I do not want to quibble.

MR. DAGLISH: You want to put it in your own way.

THE PREMIER: I do not want to put it in my own way. I want to put it that way which represents the real facts; the way in which the fighting members of your party would put it if they had their

choice; the way in which the State will put it. I am not willing to hold office on sufferance. Do not worry about that. I am quite clear on that point.

MR. DAGLISH: The matter has been settled by the country.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member, with his adroitness—for I will say he is adroit—knows the weakness of his case; but he looks forward to the time when he will have an independent body of electors to address. He knows he cannot formulate charges against the Government to justify his putting them out. I challenged his party on public platforms before the elections, throughout the length and breadth of this State.

MR. HOLMAN: And you know the result.

THE PREMIER: I challenged his party on various platforms in this State to tell us what were the charges and accusations they brought against us; to tell us what was the indictment they brought against the Government with regard to our past administration or the policy which we placed before the country. And I say without hesitation that the challenge was never taken up.

DR. ELLIS: Was it not?

MR. TAYLOR: You were defeated.

THE PREMIER: You may have defeated us; but the point I want to make is that if men are not defeated on charges made and proved, they must be defeated on blind prejudice. [LABOUR MEMBERS: No. no.] The member for Subiaco realises the true issue. He is one of the most adroit parliamentarians in the House; and if he had those good charges, that good indictment, of which one hears rumours depend upon it the hon. member would have been the first to bring them out; and that he did not bring them out shows they are not in his possession. Of course he could not formulate his charges. How could he? The position is so clear—

MR. DAGLISH: A perfect Government.

THE PREMIER: Our administration in the past has been largely carried on by the aid of our friends opposite (Labour party). If we have made mistakes, they are as responsible as we are. If the legislation we have passed is wrong, they as much as we are responsible; and they realise that difficulty. They in November of last year approved

of the policy of the Government as a whole; and from that time onward what has taken place to justify this change? Take our past policy. The member for Brown Hill (Mr. Bath) will, no doubt, when he addresses the House, point out that the Labour party have no cause of complaint as to our legislation in the past; and I challenge any member in Opposition to look at the most important Acts on the statute-book in this State, and he will find that those Acts were passed during the last three years. I challenge them to mention the names of those Acts which they believe to be the most valuable; and I will guarantee that these Acts were passed during the last three years, and were the results of the work of the Government they are now opposing. Of course they cannot challenge us, they cannot attack us; and the member for Subiaco, wise in his day and generation, knows it.

MR. BATH (Labour): But you lapsed from the paths of political virtue.

THE PREMIER: I always thought the Labour party attacked openly, and not by way of interjection. We have lapsed from virtue! How have we lapsed from virtue?

MR. BATH: We will let you know later on.

THE PREMIER: I ask, how have we lapsed? and the hon. member says he will let us know later on. Why should I not be told now, when I have a chance of replying?

MR. BATH: I cannot speak now.

THE PREMIER: You and your party are all one and the same—all caucus. None of you apparently dare make a speech of which the caucus has not approved.

MR. TAYLOR (Labour): You will not say that when I have finished.

THE SPEAKER: It would be better for the Premier to address the Chair.

THE PREMIER: It may be that on the completion of the speech of the member for Mt. Margaret I shall think the caucus has not approved of it. I can thoroughly understand that. I have many strong objections to the caucus governing the Labour party; but I hope I shall never have so low an opinion of that caucus as to think it approves of everything said by the hon. member. There are some things of which honest men can-

not approve. We are told by interjection that we have lapsed from virtue since passing the legislation to which I have referred. This in itself shows that, at all events up to that stage, we are justified in demanding the confidence and the support of every progressive elector in this State. How have we lapsed? We can have lapsed in only one way; that is by a want of freedom, by a want of democracy, by a want of progressiveness in the policy we have placed before the electors.

MR. BATH: That is right.

THE PREMIER: By interjection the member for Brown Hill says that is right. Why did he not, during the election campaign, come to the metropolitan area and tell us that? The only objection we heard of in the metropolitan area, the only objection reported in any portion of the Press, was this: "The policy of the Government is so perfectly good that they have stolen it from the Labour party." Where then have we failed? Where have we strayed from the paths of political virtue, if the only objection which our opponents can urge against our policy is that it is part of theirs?

MR. DAGLISH: That is the objection of your supporters.

THE PREMIER: And one of the Labour candidates said indeed that we had taken their best planks. But as a fact, the only points of disagreement between our policies—there was disagreement on administration—were questions of immigration and the public works policy.

MR. BATH: And loan policy.

THE PREMIER: Public works policy.

MR. BATH: Loan policy, land taxation, and old age pensions.

THE PREMIER: I say, without fear of contradiction and without hesitation, that no party in power for the next three years will succeed in placing on the statute-book a greater number of reforms than those indicated by the policy of the Government. It is idle for members to go before their electors with two or three dozen kinds of reform, and think they can carry them out in the course of a single Parliament. As the member for Hannans (Mr. Nelson) will point out, we must above all things be practical; we must move slowly; and the member for Hannans will be the last to say that the Labour party's policy will be placed upon the statute-book in one

Parliament. How much more can the Labour party place upon that book than we can? They do differ from us, I admit, on public works policy and immigration policy. On the others we do not really differ. I do not want to say much on a public works policy. This State cannot progress unless we are prepared to extend railway facilities and various public works in various parts of the State. We have lived on it in the past, and made a success of it in the past. In this State of enormous distances we must have railway communication. We cannot open up our land, mineral and agricultural, unless we have these facilities.

MR. MORAN: That is the reason why the hon. member always opposed these proposals when they were made by Sir John Forrest.

THE PREMIER: I did not.

MR. MORAN: You and your party.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member now says "party."

MR. MORAN: Yes; the hon. member's party.

THE PREMIER: The member for West Perth has made a statement that this was the reason why I always opposed these proposals. Then he said "my party." I only opposed one public work of Sir John Forrest's.

MR. F. CONNOR (Independent): The hon. member poured cold water on all of them.

THE PREMIER: I supported strongly all the others. All his railways I strongly supported. I opposed only one public work. I openly came to the direct Opposition benches on the question of federation, and not on a question of public works. The statement that our party opposed public works is absolutely inaccurate. I want to check these inaccuracies that are so frequently made. I make the statement; the hon. member can search *Hansard* and find if it is correct. We have to settle our lands, and we have enormous agricultural resources to open in the South-West. We have an increasing flow of population into the State, but nothing like what it ought to be; and if we are to properly develop our agricultural resources, we must induce people to take up agriculture here. It is idle to think that, if we have a number of unemployed, we can settle the question by ceasing to carry on

public works, and ceasing to attract population. My own opinion is that, within reasonable limits, the more people we have, if we have a vigorous land policy so as to settle them on the soil, the more employment there is and general prosperity. Our best chance to build up a prosperous State is to push on, as far as we can, every work that will add to its material prosperity. I do not want to stop there. Ever since I have been in the House I have said that, while we move forward with material prosperity, then is the time to look after the social and mental advancement of the people of the State. I have proved that in our educational policy, and in various other ways. While I have been Premier, and long before I was, I have shown how much I have appreciated the obligation not to be so much wrapped up in material prosperity, but to see if we could not build up the mental and moral character of our people. We cannot develop the resources of this State unless we have a vigorous policy of land settlement, coupled with the policy of immigration of agricultural people. This is the only way to develop our South-West territory, and that South-West territory is one of the most valuable assets this State has as yet untapped. These, after all, are the main issues between us. I say we must borrow money to a certain extent. [LABOUR MEMBER: Out of revenue.] We cannot build all these public works out of revenue. The member for West Perth will support me when I say that we do out of revenue to-day a far greater number of works than any other State. We do out of revenue a far greater number of works, in the construction of public works and other items, than any other State. We cannot do it all out of revenue. People will say we can do it with a system of increased taxation. Even then we cannot do it. We cannot get a yield from an income or a land tax that will materially increase our spending power for the purpose of public works. It cannot be done. The money is not available. One can see that this cry is put forward by men who say, "This will be a good excuse to tax the other fellow, and we are going to do it—we say we want public works, and I am going to tax the man who has more income or who owns more land than

I do." It is taxing the other man all the time.

MR. DAGLISH: Who says this?

THE PREMIER: The Labour party. I will give one instance alone. The Labour party suggest an income tax with an exemption at £200. That is exactly the amount the member for Subiaco draws. It will be £1,200 later on. That is all I submit—it is simply brought forward as an excuse, or as some justification, for increased taxation; but increased taxation in this State on land and income will not give us, after paying the cost of collection, a large enough amount to be appreciable.

MR. DAGLISH: We have never advocated such taxation for public works.

THE PREMIER: The Labour party advocate building public works out of revenue. The taxation goes to revenue. What is the difference?

MR. DAGLISH: We have never advocated land taxation and income taxation for public works. Where is the contention? It is not in our platform.

THE PREMIER: The member for Brown Hill will tell you. It has been mentioned on more than one platform that the Labour party are opposed to farther public borrowing. If so, what public works policy can be put forward? Absolutely none. What have we? We have these advanced theories, which (and the member for Hannans will endorse my observations) are not all practical. We must judge a policy not merely by the enumeration of its virtues, but by what we can do in the three years available for doing it. The Government have been in power for three years, a continuation of the Leake Government. I said before, and I say now, that mistakes were made. There is only one party inside Parliament that is infallible, and it is on the front bench opposite. The Government do not claim infallibility. We admit mistakes; but, notwithstanding these, we can point to a record of public works, a record of administration, and say, "That is a record of which we need not be ashamed; nor need the men who support us." We say to the Labour party who oppose us: "What are the grounds of your indictment? What have we done to forfeit the confidence of this country? Tell us, whether you say it on the public platform or to-night." We have heard

the indictment from the member for Subiaco, who for the time being leads that party. He tells us where we failed.

MR. MORAN: There is no indictment that I can see.

MR. DAGLISH: There is no indictment at all.

THE PREMIER: We have it from the member for Subiaco.

MR. DAGLISH: There is a 37,000 majority against you.

THE PREMIER: I am very glad at last the member for Subiaco is so ashamed of the indictment he put forward when he was making casual observations on municipal matters, and now says "There is no indictment." He says the whole question is settled by the number of votes; and in counting up the number of votes, he has some thousands of duplications and dead-heads, and is counting them as part of a majority of 37,000. I thought the hon. member was returned by live men and not by dead ones?

MR. DAGLISH: I am talking of the Government party.

THE PREMIER: I am sorry indeed that my friend, in his remarks, did not give me something to which to reply. I know the position clearly enough, and I think I have been emphatic enough during the course of the last general election. This issue is between the Labour party, bound hand-and-foot by caucus—

MR. BATH: Nonsense. The Premier has said that before.

THE PREMIER: It is a question between the Labour party, bound hand-and-foot by caucus, who, during the course of the last two days, have held several caucuses on various details—[MR. HOLMAN (Labour): No "bird-lime"]—who hold a caucus on every question, and who come to-night bound by the rules and organisations of caucus, for not one member of that party dares express his own opinion; and a party on the other side who, while agreeing in general principles, does not expect any one of its supporters to give blind adherence to every item of its platform. The Government know just as well as Labour members know that there is not one of the Labour party who, speaking his individual opinion, would support every one of the planks of its platform.

Labour members know it. Let them be honest!

MR. TAYLOR (Labour): Who is the hon. member's informant?

THE PREMIER: One picks up this information by casual observance. I know every one of the Labour members. Against the Labour party are a body of men who place before the country a progressive policy. We hear too frequently these insinuations about honest government. We heard to-night from the member for Subiaco about the honest Government that was to come. Does he say that this Government has been dishonest?

MR. DAGLISH: Yes.

THE PREMIER: He is a coward. Why did he not make the charge on a public platform when he stood there?

MR. DAGLISH: So I did.

THE PREMIER: In what way?

MR. DAGLISH: In regard to the Minister for Works. I said that the Government and he were absolutely dishonest. I accused them of political prostitution, and I repeat it.

THE PREMIER: That is not the meaning of the word "dishonest" as used by his party.

MR. DAGLISH: It is bribery.

THE PREMIER: That is a quibble. The hon. member knows all he intends to convey. It is not that, and not one of the Labour members dares make that statement, although there are these insinuations. I can say this about the Government: we have been honest and clean-handed. My friend refers to the appointment of the Minister for Works. The Minister for Works was appointed in the presence of the public, before the general election, when we could take upon our shoulders all the burden one way or another. Could a man do more than that? Would the hon. member want me to wait until after the election to do it? That is what he apparently would have done with his party. We took upon our shoulders the responsibility, and I will take upon me to do it again, if I am Premier of this House. We can go out of office with clean hands, despite those accusations against the personal honour of every member of the Cabinet, made by the Labour Press and one or two Labour members. We can go out with clean hands. We have

in our hands an amount of patronage that no other Ministry has left to its successors. There are the Agent Generalship and various other appointments available, which we said before the elections we would not fill until after the new Parliament had been elected. Tell me an instance of another Government in Australia that has done this. We, in all these matters, are prepared to accept the decision of the people first, and next the decision of Parliament. The attacks made against my politics, my administration, and my legislation I can expect in the ordinary political battle; but I cannot stand the accusations against my personal honour, or the personal honour of my colleagues. Whatever other faults I have, I have been clean in my administration, as my successors will find out. The Government come before the House with no intriguing; we come back here with 18 supporters, and with our supporters we can go into Opposition. We had the chance of intriguing. We would have none of it. It is for the House to decide on one side or the other. No Government ever held, when attacked, a stronger position than we hold to-day. With a past record which our opponents cannot challenge, which indeed some of them have aided us to make, and with a policy with which they agree, they oppose us now, not on principle but as partisans; not as men anxious to enforce a policy of which we are opponents, but as men aspiring to office which we now fill. The Government seek office only at the will of the electors; the Government have refused all intrigues, held out no promises. We are not ashamed of our past or of our policy. Our record will remain indelibly engraven in the material advancement and social well-being of the State. The Government ask for the support of those who honestly believe that under the circumstances which exist that support is deserved. We will bear no ill-will to those who, thinking differently, vote against us. The Government leave office or stay in office, resolute in our determination to keep faith with the electors; to work for them whether in power or in Opposition; and in either position to show that no elector who voted for the Government will have cause to regret the vote cast on the 28th June last. We stand for the State; we are

loyal servants of the people; but we can hold office on no terms other than those that will allow us as honourable men to honourably discharge our trust to the people. (General applause.)

MR. W. NELSON (Hannans): I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I rise with considerable timidity to venture some reply to the exceedingly able and eloquent speech to which we have just been privileged to listen. It is my intention on the present occasion to be brief for two reasons, first because the real point at issue, I take it, is whether or not the present Administration shall continue, a question of so exceedingly simple a nature that it ought not, I think, to unduly detain the House; and secondly because I naturally desire to maintain untarnished that reputation for brevity of speech which I have so long enjoyed. I desire at the very outset to approach the subject of the Government with that feeling of reverence and veneration generally accorded, and I think rightly accorded, to the dying and the dead, for rightly or wrongly, wisely or otherwise, the death sentence has undoubtedly been pronounced on the present Government.

THE PREMIER: Why not give them a trial.

DR. ELLIS (Labour): You have had three years.

MR. NELSON: I will explain that by and by. I say that the power which in democratic countries makes and unmakes all Governments has decreed, in my opinion, that the James Government must die. We are really here to take part in a sort of funeral ceremony. The Premier, whether he likes it or not—and on the whole I think he rather likes it—is attending his own funeral. It is only fair to add that he seems to meet his fate with considerable courage and equanimity, and goes to his doom with as much cheerfulness as the member for Brown Hill (Mr. Bath) lately went to his wedding. The Premier has entirely misunderstood, if he will permit me to say so, the real issue before the House. I think it will be generally admitted that, administratively and legislatively, the James Government have been undoubtedly an improvement on the Governments that have here gone before them; and I believe it may justly be claimed that the James Government have passed better

laws and have administered the law already in operation with greater purity and impartiality. The Government are going to their doom, not because the people think they are hopelessly bad, but, rightly or wrongly, because the people desire something better. In other words—and in this I am expressing a sentiment which has been general throughout the country—the present Government were condemned only in an indirect way. There has been growing throughout the world—not only throughout this country, but throughout the world—a desire for something better and rather than any particular objection to the James Government, this has resulted in their indirect defeat. The Premier entirely misunderstands the issue when he imagines that because of his especial wickedness he has been defeated. As a matter of fact, the same party which have caused the defeat of the James Government here have caused similar defeats to similar Governments right throughout Australia; and accordingly I think the Premier makes a serious blunder in taking the recent election as specially a vote of censure on himself. In the course of his speech the Premier declared that he had a right to expect to hear why the James Government had been attacked throughout the country. Speaking personally, I never took the trouble to attack the James Government. My especial care was to advocate the principles in which I believe. If the James Government had been absolutely pure in their administration, if they had been absolutely spotless, that would not in the slightest degree have prevented their downfall. Again, the Premier put the question, on what other grounds the Opposition asks the House to force the Government from office. I say it is precisely because the people have pronounced against the Government in the indirect way to which I refer. For example Brutus declared that he killed Cassa not because he did not love Cæsar, but because he loved Rome more. I believe the people of this country—I accept the figures as practically conclusive on both sides—in an indirect way, have defeated the Government. I believe the people have condemned the James Government, not so much because they did not like the Government, but because they had greater faith in some

other body with more correct principles, and that body was going to embody its principles into law. In another part of the Premier's speech he tried to accuse the Labour party—the party on this side of the House—of having altered our policy. He pointed out that originally the Labour party came here pledged to certain definite principles, and that they were quite willing to accept any fair instalment of these principles from the Government in power; they were quite prepared to give an indirect support to the Government so far as that support resulted in the establishment of the measures which the Labour party desired to carry into law. The Premier said there had been a departure from that principle in the attitude taken by the leader of the Opposition to-day. I claim that no departure has taken place from the principles originally acted on by the Labour party. I claim that there has been no inconsistency: our conduct to-day is not different from our conduct of yesterday. It is because events have transpired which justify an alteration of our position. For example, we have been returned by an undoubted majority of the electors of the country; the result of the elections has been that we stand in this House numbering 22 members, that the Government have a much smaller number; therefore if the public verdict means anything at all, it means a mandate to us to take upon ourselves the responsibility of carrying those principles which we advocated on the public platform into effect. We have not changed our position. We are holding to the principles we have held all along. If the James Government were prepared to adopt the platform on which we were elected, if they were prepared to accept as their policy for the next three years the platform of the Labour party—a platform which by no means is revolutionary, but which in some form or other is actually embodied in law in some part of the British Empire—I say that if the James Government were to adopt that platform and come to the House with that policy, so little is our desire to enter office, and so great is our desire to carry out the principles we were sent here to carry out, that I have no hesitation in affirming that the leader of the Opposition, instead of moving what is practically a vote of

no-confidence, would on the other hand have been endorsing and advocating to the best of his ability the continuation of that Government in office. I submit, therefore, that there is no inconsistency in our attitude, that we are here to do the best we can to carry out the principles to which we are pledged. Seeing that when we were a comparatively insignificant minority, when the best thing under the circumstances to get our principles embodied in law was to give a kind of independent support to the James Government, we did so; not out of any love for the James Government, but purely and entirely because we desired to carry our principles into law. So on the present occasion we practically vote a want of confidence in the James Government, not because we do not like them, not because we particularly hate them, but because we believe now as we believed all along that our primary duty is not to be bound to any Government or any party, but to do our utmost to carry into law the principles to which we are pledged. In the course of an exceedingly able speech the Premier declared over and over again, practically by implication rather than directly, that we had been making an attack upon him, that in short the recent elections were in some way or other a great reflection on his own personal character and on the character of his Government. I say that is not so. It is quite true that the leader of the Opposition in his short speech did touch somewhat lightly on some defects in the administration. I quite admit that he did so, but I hold that the cardinal point of his criticism and the ultimate justification of his action was that the country has clearly and conclusively declared by the returns that have been handed in, declared by a considerable majority—

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. NELSON: I know that the Premier has made an attempt to show that the majority is not large, in fact hardly exists; but he only does that by taking to himself the credit, or rather by claiming on his side, the votes that have been cast for Independents. I hold that according to his own basis the statement is absolutely unjustified. I quite admit we have no right to these votes, and we do not claim them. The right way to look at the figures is to leave the In-

dependents out altogether. They stand by themselves. They are neither subject to the Labour party nor are they subject to the James Government, and the James party have no more right to claim those votes than we have. Keep them out, and what is the result? The result is that, on the clear issue which the Premier declared the country should decide, that is between Labour and the Government, the country has decided by a considerable majority in favour of Labour. And my opinion is that it ought not to be necessary for this party to take up the position it is now taking up. I think the Premier would better consult his own dignity and would show a greater fidelity to the principles of constitutionalism in which he believes, if, instead of waiting for a vote of want of confidence by this Chamber, he came to this House and said, "Gentlemen, the country has declared, rightly or wrongly, that it does not want me; the country has given a verdict against me; and although I think that verdict unfair and unjust, nevertheless I will bow to it until by my subsequent conduct I have succeeded in altering that verdict." In the course of a very able speech the Premier was good enough to occasionally cite my own opinions, to quote them as bearing some authority. I trust that on this matter, as in other matters, he will also pay some heed to my advice and gravely reconsider whether the time has not arrived to ignominiously haul down the flag and unconditionally capitulate. I have no sympathy with a great deal that has been said by the Premier in reference to the lack of freedom which prevails on this side of the House. It is quite true that we have caucus meetings.

MR. JOHNSON (Labour): The Government had one the other day.

THE PREMIER: There was a vast difference, though.

MEMBER: There were not so many there.

MR. NELSON: It is quite true we think it is a wise and proper thing for members of a party to consult together in some sensible way before coming to this House; but I utterly fail to understand in what way the Labour party, in any of its methods during the election or subsequent to the election, have done any-

thing inconsistent with rational human liberty. For example, we were told during the Premier's speech to-night that we were bound by the unions, and that we were bound by the caucus. What really takes place when a general election is going on with regard to the Labour party? What do we do? First of all a number of Labour people, rightly or wrongly, have arrived at certain conclusions, which conclusions we call the Labour platform. We join together in an organisation for the purpose of advocating that platform; to try and convince other men that it is a wise and just platform calculated to promote the well-being of the State. Will anyone dare to say that it is a violation of human liberty for me, believing in certain principles to bind myself in order to advocate those opinions? I think not; therefore, so far as regards joining organisations with the chief end of propagating opinions, cannot be said that we do anything to violate human liberty. Subsequently when the election comes round we find it is a good, reasonable, and wise thing that prior to the election we should make a selection as to the candidate most likely to serve us in the Legislature, and the result is that we have what is called the Labour ballot. The Labour ballot, in my opinion, with all its defects is an undoubted attempt to apply to the selection of a candidate the same democratic principles as are applied in the ultimate election of a candidate. What do we do? We do not, as has been constantly urged, even confine the selection to unionists. Every man who agrees with our platform, whether he be an employer or a worker, whether he be rich or poor, every man who agrees with our platform and is willing to join our organisation receives from us a hearty welcome. When that organisation is formed ultimately, and when in time a selection has to be made, every member in that organisation has an equal right to vote. The class to which he belongs and the particular trade which he follows are matters into which we do not inquire and when that selection is ultimately made, the candidate selected receives the support, the endorsement, the sympathy and the aid of all his fellows in the organisation. I ask, is there any violation of liberty there? It is almost a

impertinence to say so, and surely it is right that men who agree to a certain opinion can bind themselves together to advocate that opinion, and the members of a given organisation have a perfect right to select a representative of that organisation to be put forward for selection or otherwise. It should never be forgotten, but apparently it is forgotten, that ultimately the Labour candidate has, like every other candidate, to submit himself to the test of the electors. Ultimately in the longrun that man has to come forward, and when he is finally returned to this House he is returned, not by the votes of this organisation or that organisation, not by the votes of this union and that union, but by the votes of the whole of the electors in the constituency for which he is standing. Surely, therefore, it is utterly beside the point, it is grossly illogical and grossly unfair to contend that so long as the Labour party act in that way they are guilty of any violation of the rational liberties which should be exercised by wise men. Again, it is said that when we come to the caucus we violate liberty in some way. In what way? I have said on the public platform, and I repeat here, that I am pledged to absolutely nothing but the platform on which I secured my election. I represent the electors of Hannans on that platform, and nothing else. It is quite true that when I enter into that caucus there are many matters of detail which may be brought up, and it is quite true that I have a perfect right, which all rational men exercise in fact, to help to secure by a small sacrifice of individual liberty that unity of action which is necessary to ultimate success. For example, if in the caucus meeting there is a question whether we should put one measure before another, whether we should even elect a Speaker, if in a matter of that kind any individual member feels it is a question which ought not to find vent in caucus, that it is a question to which he is not pledged, the caucus extends to that person an absolute right to exercise his own judgment. I submit, therefore, there is no violation of liberty.

THE PREMIER: What about the case Mr. Fowler and the Common Rule cause?

MR. NELSON: Let me give a simple example to the Premier, in order that he will understand that not only do we maintain our liberty, but on some questions, possibly on all questions, we secure to each member a larger measure of liberty than used to be enjoyed by those belonging to the old party. Take for instance the great fiscal issue. We had over and over again in the Federal Parliament samples of a freedom such as is never enjoyed by the older parties. The Labour party recognised the wisdom of allowing absolute freedom on that question, with the result that when the division took place in the Federal Parliament we saw Labour men on one side and Labour men on the other; showing that they recognised that even on an important and fundamental question such as that it was wise to permit liberty in order to secure solidarity. Whereas we find that members of the other parties in that Parliament practically made the fiscal question a supreme issue; and the Readite or the Deakinite who, while that great issue was being discussed, had seceded from the party majority would in all probability have been condemned and ostracised. I therefore hold that the charges of the Premier in reference to our lacking liberty and freedom of action are utterly unfounded and unjust, and that we enjoy, and I believe will continue to enjoy, that necessary measure of liberty requisite to the successful performance of the great duties we have been called on to undertake in this House. Just a word or two more. The Premier declared that this was a straight issue between Labour and the party outside Labour.

THE PREMIER: Between Labour and progress.

MR. NELSON: In my opinion there is surely no antithesis between Labour and progress. As a fact, whether the Premier borrowed his policy from the Labour party or whether we borrowed our policy from the Premier—whichever view we take of that—during the last three years there has been such a fundamental agreement between the Premier and the Labour party as to the policy of this country, that I fail to perceive why he should view with the indignation which he has evidently lately developed the party whom I now represent. It is really not at all a question of the

Premier's being attacked by us. Practically the Premier says, "Why not allow us to carry on as we have been doing"?

THE PREMIER: I did not say that.

MR. NELSON: The leader of the Opposition has declared that in his opinion the Government of the country should be transferred to other hands, and the Premier practically objects to such transfer.

THE PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition did not say that. He said that the Government ought to carry on.

MR. NELSON: So far as I understand it, the leader of the Opposition said, and expresses his opinion in his amendment, that the time has come when the James Government should cease to govern this country; and the James Government are amazed at the result, and practically say, "Why should we not go on"? My reply is, "Why should you not stop"? I admit that the leader of the Opposition is an interested party. Very likely he wants to be Premier. The Premier also is an interested party. Very likely he desires to continue in his high position. Therefore let us leave them both out, and go to the power that is higher than both, and what does that power say? The people of this country, by a majority clear and decisive, have declared that the James Government are not wanted, that another Government must have a trial; and whether or not the Premier likes that, I think it is his duty to be true to that democracy which he professes, and to bow with becoming grace to the verdict of the people. I wish also to emphasise once more that it does not follow that because the people of this country prefer a Labour Government, they have any special objection to the James Government. Let me give an example. Only the other day the member for Brown Hill (Mr. Bath) took unto himself a wife. Now in that act of taking unto himself one woman he did not reject all other women: he merely manifested a preference, and I believe an absolutely justifiable preference, for the happy woman on whom he bestowed his affections. And so, in precisely the same way, the recent elections did not blame James, did not condemn him; in fact, to tell the honest truth—and I must apologise for having

to say it—I never referred to the Premier in the course of my election speech, and I believe the same may be said of other Labour members. So that just it would be very wrong for all other women in the world to go to the member for Brown Hill and say "Why did you reject me?" so it is in my opinion equally wrong and foolish for the Premier to regard the recent victory of the Labour party as in any special sense a rejection of himself or of his Government. On the contrary, as I hinted before, the great movement which the Labour party has the honour to represent is as wide as civilisation itself. It is growing everywhere, not only in Australia but in England, not only in England but in America, not only in America but throughout the whole civilised world. There has grown up a new party, with new aspirations, new ideals, new hopes; and the old parties confronted with a power which never confronted them before. In the old days Liberalism was very largely a form of Government by which the great working classes used their power to hoist the higher orders into political positions. In older countries like England there are two great historic parties, the Liberals and Conservatives. The Liberals, generally representing the great manufacturing interests of England, used to say to the working people, "Send us to Parliament and we will save you." The Tories said to the people, "Never mind those Liberals we are the people to save you; send us to Parliament." And generation after generation the people tried first one party and then the other. They put the Liberals in power, and the Liberals somehow did not succeed in saving them. They then tried the Tories, with the same unfailing result. They tried the Liberals again, and there was utter failure; until there grew up in the hearts of the workers the feeling that the Tories could not save them, and the Liberals could not save them that if they were to be saved at all they must save themselves with their own hands and their own hearts. Now I submit that is the meaning of the great Labour movement we are here in this House to represent. It means an especial condemnation of the Premier. Personally I wish to say that I admire his ability and his courage, and am truly grateful for the splendid work he has

done. I wish to say right here—I have said it on public platforms to my electors, and I say it in absolute sincerity—that I trust the time is coming and I believe it is when there will no longer be a war between classes; that the time is coming when the men who are workers, whether workers by hand or by brain, will unite against the lazy fellows who do not work at all; and I personally regret and deplore the fact that the Premier and those who are with him have not seen their way to be more frank and more courageous in the expression of their democracy. When George Leake, I think about two years ago, delivered his policy speech, I remember deploring the fact that it was too moderate, that it did not find a sufficient echo in the hearts of the people. I believe that the policy of the present Premier also is too moderate. I believe that if James dies this week he will have killed himself. I believe, in absolute sincerity, that the Labour party have no desire for office. I do not think that the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), I do not think that the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis), I do not think that one member of the Labour party desires to hold office. That was the most ungenerous and most unkindly statement made to-night by the Premier—made, I believe, with a lack of that sincerity which generally characterises his statements—when he insinuated that the new attitude of the Labour party resulted entirely from a desire for office. I believe that is absolutely unfair, and without a shadow of justification. I can assure the House that the Labour party recognises its manifold imperfections; it recognises how difficult it is for inexperienced men to take upon themselves the high responsibility of the Government of a country like this; and I can assure the House that had it not been for the action taken by the Premier—an action which I hold does him credit—the attitude we have adopted to-night would never have been adopted. Before sitting down, I cordially re-echo the more generous sentiments of the speech just delivered by the Premier. One thing has impressed me in coming into this House, and in conversation with many of my colleagues I find it has impressed them, namely that in spite of honest and fundamental differences of opinion, there exists, and I believe there will continue to exist, that personal

friendship and personal courtesy among members which, after all, lends to Parliamentary life a sweetness it would not otherwise possess. I believe that feeling will continue. I believe in fair fighting. I think the Premier made to-night a fighting speech; and I believe that his bold and courageous front, his fine assertion of what he believed to be his rights and dignity, will commend itself to no section of this House more than to the section sitting on this (Opposition) side. We ourselves are fighters. We have come to this House to fight for great principles. We recognise that we have men of great capacity, and I believe of equal integrity, on the Government side of the House; and I believe that the ultimate result of discussions in this Chamber, and even of this discussion in which we are now engaged, whether it ends in the defeat of the Government or in their continuing to hold office, whatever the result may be I believe it will be found that the members of the Opposition, as well as those on the other side, recognise the great responsibility which they have to discharge, recognise that we owe great and far-reaching duties to those that have sent us here; and we shall do our utmost, not only by what we do but also by what we forbear to do, to uphold the honour and dignity of this Assembly.

On motion by DR. ELLIS (Labour), debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER: In moving "That the House do now adjourn," we shall meet to-morrow at 3:30 o'clock; and I hope, as there seem to be about 45 orators in the House, members will take care to have their speeches ready, so that we can bring this debate to a close as soon as possible.

The House adjourned accordingly at 12 minutes to 10 o'clock, until the next day.