

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 18th July, 1905.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: Regulations under the Mines Act, 1904.

By the PREMIER: 1, Fire Brigades Board, statement of receipts and expenditure for 1904. 2, Immigration Correspondence between the Premier and the Department of Agriculture and the Agent General.

QUESTION—MINES VENTILATION, ETC.

MR. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What was the total cost to the State of the Royal Commission upon the ventilation and sanitation of mines? 2, What action does the Government propose to take with regard to the recommendations of the said commission?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, £4,445 17s. 9d. 2, I cannot state any definite opinion while a motion of no-confidence is under discussion.

QUESTION—IMMIGRATION COMMISSION, COST.

MR. FOULKES asked the Premier: 1, What is the cost incurred up to date of the Immigration Commission? 2, From what fund is the same to be paid? 3, When will the report of such Commission be ready?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, £1,311 14s. 4d. 2, General Loan Fund, Agricultural Immigration. 3, The report has now been received.

QUESTIONS (2)—STATE SMELTERS, PARTICULARS.

MR. RASON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What was the total expen-

diture during last financial year in connection with the State smelter? 2, What was the total revenue? 3, Was such revenue the result of sale of copper or of advances obtained against copper? 4, If by advances, when and from whom obtained, and under what conditions? 5, Whether any, and if any what, sum out of the amounts received by Government remains due to the leaseholders?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The total expenditure for the financial year 1904-5 on the State Smelter was:—

(a.) Purchase of ore ...	£14,494	1	3
(b.) Erection of plant ...	6,201	9	10
(c.) Smelting costs ...	18,650	15	2
(d.) Incidentals ...	399	10	9

Total ... £39,745 17 0

2, £29,115 0s. 4d. No account is taken of copper matte and black copper which was in transit to Albany at end of financial year, and which was of a value of at least £5,500. 3, The credit to Revenue was for drafts on Agent General against bills of lading to be met out of proceeds of sale. 4, Answered by No. 3. 5, £1,675 11s. 9d. To be divided in accordance with the regulations for the purchase of auriferous copper ores at the State Sampling Works, Phillips River.

MR. RASON asked the Minister for Mines: How is the amount of £11,115 shown as revenue from State smelters for month of June last made up?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Of the amount in question £11,000 was drawn on the Agent General against two shipments of copper matte, totalling 333 tons 5cwt. 1qr. 18lbs., valued at £12,314 18s., shipped to England prior to the close of the financial year, and £115 was derived from proceeds of the sale of furnace products of a trial parcel of Phillips River ore treated in Perth.

QUESTION—AGED POOR, RIGHT TO VOTE.

MR. NEEDHAM asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to bring down an amendment of the Constitution Act which would allow our aged poor who may be in the various Homes, and those people in receipt of charitable relief, to exercise their votes at all elections in this State?

THE PREMIER replied: I am not prepared to make any announcement whilst a no-confidence debate is proceeding.

QUESTION—PEEL ESTATE, PRICE.

MR. BOLTON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has that piece of land known as the "Peel Estate," situated between Fremantle and Mundijong, been under offer to the Government at any time? 2, If so, at what price per acre?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, An area of about 6,000 acres, as shown on the attached litho.,* was

* Not printed.

offered to the Government on two occasions. 2, Once on 3rd September, 1900, at 30s. per acre, and again on 23rd March, 1904, at 16s. per acre.

QUESTION—TREASURY REIMBURSEMENTS.

MR. RASON asked the Treasurer: What were the principal items accounting for the increase in revenue under the head of "Reimbursements-in-Aid" of £12,490 in the month of June, 1905, as compared with June, 1904, and of £37,752 in the year 1905, as compared with the year 1904?

THE TREASURER replied as per the two following statements:—

Revenue for Month of June.

Head of Revenue.	1904.	1905.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Agricultural Bank	1,959 4 7	2,519 13 2	560 8 7	
Agriculture—Disinfection of Fruit a	...	354 0 6	354 0 6	
Do. Rent of City Markets a	...	258 14 6	258 14 6	
Charities—Recoup Imperial Govern- ment	94 18 5	96 11 3	1 12 10	
Commonwealth—Recoup Federal Salaries b	...	123 1 8	123 1 8	
Education—Sale of Books, etc. ...	293 5 11	344 9 7	51 3 8	
Do. School Fees	177 9 7	128 11 1	...	48 18 6
Goals—Work performed for Depart- ments	415 8 3	362 13 7	...	52 14 8
Photo-Litho.—Work performed for Departments	1,031 13 8	1,654 1 5	622 7 9	
Government Printer—Gazettes, Sub- scriptions, etc.	132 1 5	116 13 3	...	15 8 2
Government Printer—Printing for Departments	13,836 9 9	20,439 8 2	6,602 18 5	
Lands—Recoup Freight to Settlers c	...	51 12 8	51 12 8	
Lunacy—Maintenance of Inmates d	...	374 12 3	374 12 3	
Medical—Treatment of Patients ...	886 16 11	455 5 0	...	431 11 11
Do. Recoup Fumigation Ex- penses e	...	12 0 0	12 0 0	
Mines—Survey Fees	665 0 0	663 0 0	...	2 0 0
Do. Examination Fees	24 0 0	43 10 0	19 10 0	
Police Escorts	1,023 11 7	998 7 5	...	25 4 2
Public Health—Recoup by Shipping Companies f	...	63 1 6	63 1 6	
Savings Bank	8,894 16 3	13,295 9 8	4,410 13 5	
Other	480 1 11	39 18 5	...	440 3 6
£	29,904 18 3	42,394 15 1	13,505 17 9	1,016 0 11
Net Increase, £12,489 16s. 10d.				

a. Previously included under Fees of Public Office, Department of Agriculture.

b. Previously included under Miscellaneous Reports, other.

c. New item, previously credited to Expenditure Vote.

d. Previously credited to Reimbursement in aid Medical.

e. New item, previously credited to Expenditure Vote.

f. New item, previously credited to Expenditure Vote.

For the year ending 30th June, 1905.

Head of Revenue.	1904.			1905.			Increase.			Decrease.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Agricultural Bank	1,959	4	7	2,519	13	2	560	8	7			
Agriculture, Disinfection of Fruit...				2,787	8	8	2,787	8	8			
Do. Rent of City Markets				2,121	2	3	2,121	2	3			
Charities, Recoup Imperial Govern- ment	1,532	9	7	1,769	7	8	236	18	1			
Commonwealth, Recoup Federal Salaries				1,477	0	0	1,477	0	0			
Education—Sale of Books, etc. ...	1,583	0	1	1,546	14	7				36	5	6
Do. School Fees	1,340	18	1	1,610	15	0	269	16	11			
Gaols—Work performed for Depart- ments	686	3	8	1,091	10	5	405	6	11			
Photo.-Litho.—Do. Do.	4,551	17	5	4,139	2	6				412	14	11
Government Printer—Gazette sub- scriptions, etc.	1,001	18	10	1,039	8	8	37	9	10			
Government Printer—Printing for Departments	34,878	18	2	39,383	1	4	4,504	3	2			
Lands—Recoup Freight to Settlers				215	13	3	215	13	3			
Lunacy—Maintenance of Inmates...				2,668	12	10	2,668	12	10			
Medical—Treatment of Patients ...	5,600	18	7	4,510	16	5				1,090	2	2
Medical—Recoup Fumigation Ex- penses				175	10	0	175	10	0			
Mines—Survey Fees... ..	8,248	5	6	6,378	12	0				1,869	13	6
Mines Examination Fees	289	19	0	177	13	6				112	5	6
Police Escorts	4,302	6	4	4,874	6	7	572	0	3			
Public Health Recoup by Ship. Cos.				400	6	11	400	6	11			
Savings Bank	8,884	16	3	13,298	19	8	4,414	3	5			
Other	791	6	9	418	19	10				372	6	11
Mines Recoup of Expenditure on Works carried out and handed over to Water Boards				20,800	0	0	20,800	0	0			
	£75,652	2	10	113,404	15	3	41,646	1	1	3,893	8	8
			Net Increase ...			£37,752 12 5						

QUESTION—ABORIGINES IN THE NORTH, DEPREDACTIONS.

MR. CONNOR asked the Premier: In view of the reports appearing in the Press in reference to the depredations by the blacks in the northern part of this State, what steps, if any, have been taken for the protection of the lives and property of the settlers?

THE PREMIER replied: The police in the northern parts of the State have clear instructions as to their duty where offences by natives are reported, and every effort is being made, and will continue to be made, to suppress native depredations. As regards the Kimberley Districts, the Commissioner of Police is now in the North, and will be in a position to deal with reported native troubles on the spot. With reference to the re-

ported murders in the Peak Hill and Pilbarra Districts, a strong party consisting of Corporal Sunter from Perth, two constables, and two trackers, will be immediately despatched from Peak Hill to farther inquire into the alleged outrages, and, when necessary, arrest the offenders. On the return of the party it can be decided whether it will be necessary to permanently station police in that part of the country.

QUESTION—TREASURY FINANCE, LOCAL INSCRIBED STOCK CANCELLATION.

MR. RASON (without notice) asked the Premier: 1, What was the total amount of stock cancelled in order to increase the reserve of the Savings Bank? 2, When was it cancelled? 3, What was

the total amount of stock borrowed immediately prior to such cancellation? 4. What was the total loan authorisation provided by Act of Parliament at the same date as No. 3?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER replied: 1. In order to increase the reserve fund and to have available for purposes of the Agricultural Bank, repurchase of estates, and other statutory demands liable to be made upon this fund, local inscribed stock to the amount of £242,000 was cancelled. 2, 15th June, 1905. 3. It is impossible to say without communication with London. £1,400,000 was placed on the London market on 8th June, under the terms of the loan prospectus, and on date of payment in full, namely 18th August, 1905 (unless in cases where instalments are prepaid), stock will be issued for this amount, and will thenceforward, till redemption, appear in the Public Debt Account. 4, £18,273,253 7s. 3d.

SUPPLY BILL, £648,628.

Message from the Governor (received previously) recommended the appropriation out of Consolidated Revenue and from General Loan Fund, of a sum of £648,628 for the services of the year ending 30th June, 1906.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. H. Daglish) moved: That this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of Supply, and also of Ways and Means, for the purpose of considering His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 1, recommending that an appropriation be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and from moneys to the credit of the General Loan Fund for the purposes of a Bill intituled "An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of Six Hundred and Forty-eight Thousand Six Hundred and Twenty-eight Pounds to the service of the Year ending 30th June, 1906," and that the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to admit of the reporting and adopting of resolutions therefrom on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of the Bill through all its stages in one day.

MR. RASON (Guildford): Speaking upon the question of the suspension of Standing Orders for the purpose of

granting supplies to the present Government, I do not intend to oppose this motion; but I take this the very earliest opportunity of saying that I trust the Treasurer will tell this House in what state the Estimates now are, and at what date, assuming that this Government remains in office, the House may expect to have these Estimates placed before it. Any Government, if necessary, should have supplies to enable it to carry on; but I should like to point out here, in reference to the suspension of Standing Orders dealing with this question, that it would have been open to my friend, in dealing with another matter of very great importance, to have adopted the same course as he has taken with regard to the obtaining of supplies, and it would have been, to my mind, still more strictly carrying out the letter of the agreement—I am referring to the Midland Railway, if you, Sir, will allow me—if that, instead of being included in the Governor's Speech, had been made the subject of a separate proposal, and the hon. gentleman opposite had moved to suspend the Standing Orders, in order that the House might have considered that question also on its merits. I intend to offer no opposition.

MR. MORAN (West Perth): I do not propose to offer any opposition to the proposal of the Premier, but to express a desire that on this occasion we may have the Estimates a little earlier than usual. I hope they are in such a forward condition that any new Government, if such a thing eventuate, may be able to deal with them. I earnestly trust and hope that the Standing Orders of this House will not be suspended for the purpose of giving any favour in debate to the Midland Railway.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I wish to give members an assurance that, should this Government remain in office, I hope to be able to bring down the Estimates next month; but of course in regard to that, I have to await a notification from the Federal Government. I hope it will be possible to get it in time to bring the Estimates forward next month. I have asked for two months' supply, with the impression that I can, before the two months' supply is exhausted, be in a position to submit the financial proposals of the Government to

this House. I may add that I have furnished on this occasion in the Supply Bill particulars of the method in which it is proposed to expend the money, so that members shall be able to satisfy themselves that it is not sought to obtain supply for the purpose of entering on any new undertaking without having the fullest sanction of Parliament. With regard to the reference of the leader of the Opposition to the method which might have been adopted in regard to the Midland Railway, I do not think I would have been justified in bringing forward a proposal of that importance in the shape which the hon. member has indicated. I do not think the House would be satisfied to deal with the question of a vote for supply for the purpose of purchase; and to my thinking, at all events, there would not, if the hon. member's method were adopted, be the opportunity for the House to discuss it which will be afforded to members.

MR. MORAN: What is the hurry, anyway?

MR. RASON: That is the ordinary method.

Question put and passed.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES, ELECTION.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER, before going into Committee, had much pleasure in moving—

That the hon. member for Toodyay (Mr. T. F. Quinlan) be elected permanent Chairman of Committees of this House.

Mr. Quinlan was an old member, who had had a great deal of experience of the rules of the House, and on many occasions had filled the position of Deputy Chairman with the utmost impartiality, and had given satisfaction as Chairman to all sides of the House.

MR. RASON had much pleasure in seconding the motion. Mr. Quinlan had filled the position of Chairman of Committees on several previous occasions, and one felt sure that if elected to this position now that gentleman would discharge the duties of the office with impartiality, with dignity, and to the satisfaction of the whole of the members of the House. (General applause.)

There being no other nomination, Mr. Quinlan was declared elected.

THE CHAIRMAN-ELECT, having taken the Chair, said he was much

obliged for the honour conferred upon him, and he hoped and trusted that the anticipations expressed by the Premier would be fulfilled during his term of office. He would endeavour to maintain the dignity of the House, a dignity which for many years past was due in a large measure to the late lamented and sainted Speaker, Sir James Lee Steere.

SUPPLY, DISCUSSION RESUMED.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER moved:

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year 1905-6 a sum not exceeding £496,281 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and £152,347 from moneys to the credit of General Loan Fund.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): There will not, I am sure, be a great deal of importance attached to these two or three little sheets of so-called Estimates, because I notice that salaries and contingencies get the lot, so there is not a great deal of information to be derived from this method of giving temporary supply. I do not intend to offer any apology to the House for bringing under its notice a matter in contention between the leaders of both sides in reference to the alleged amount of over-borrowing lately on the London market by the Premier. I am impelled to do this, all the more from having glanced at the Auditor General's report, to which I refer members, and in which he pointedly differs from the course adopted by the late Treasurer (Mr. Gardiner) under somewhat similar conditions. At page 164 of the Auditor General's report there is a record of the transaction relating to the retirement of £44,000 worth of Post Office Stock by Mr. Gardiner out of loan funds, and the Auditor General speaks of it in these terms:—

This is contrary to Section 58 of the Audit Act, which states: "It shall not be lawful for the Treasurer to expend any money standing to credit of general loan fund except under the authority of an Act."

If that be so in Mr. Gardiner's case, I am well aware that we should have a report next year from the same Auditor General, finding still more grievous fault and complaint against the present Treasurer for his action in reference to an amount of much greater importance, and borrowed under still worse conditions, I maintain. This matter was publicly brought under

the notice of the people of the State in two letters addressed to the *West Australian*, which must of necessity have caught the eye of any public man taking an interest in the State finances; and we shall search far and wide before finding any other topic of equal importance to this House. Not even a no-confidence debate is enough to turn the attention of the House from a full inquiry into the transactions of the ex-Treasurer, not with a view to censuring him, but to find out who is wrong and who is right. If the Auditor General is right, the ex-Treasurer must be brought to book. If the ex-Treasurer is right, the Auditor General should be cashiered. While we have an officer high above the Ministry, and above the ordinary civil service, an officer of the Assembly, the people's House which controls the people's money, it is criminal negligence on the part of this House to neglect to read its Auditor General's reports, and gross carelessness to let the perfunctory explanation of the present Treasurer pass without some farther inquiry. In the letters submitted to the *West Australian*, followed by a clear and explicit leading article in that journal, an article agreeing in every particular with the letters signed "M.P.," we have the following case put forward; and to put the case as fairly as possible I have written out what I wish to say. "M.P.'s" letters state that there were authorisations out, that is to say authorisations which had not yet been drawn upon, for permanent funded stock, or inscribed stock, of £4,320,000. Local stock and Treasury bills drawn against these authorisations in the State accounted for £2,991,780, and left an amount to be raised of £1,328,000. The Premier raised in London £1,400,000; and the contention of the writer of those letters is that the Premier, as far as the then figures showed, had at that time borrowed an amount over authorisation of £71,000. Now we know that the amount in dispute was not £71,000: it is far beyond that. The case is, however, the same. It appears ostensibly that the Premier, if he borrowed £71,000 over authorisation, also borrowed a total amount of £240,000 which he was not, in the opinion of these authorities, authorised to borrow. And farther, that these letters were written by an authority,

I have no shadow of doubt; and if I have a suspicion who the writer is, it only confirms me in paying the greatest respect to them. We do not know him; we can only surmise who he may be. However, the letters show a great acquaintance not only with the finances of the State, but with the statutory law which governs borrowing. "M.P." came to the conclusion, and proved by his figures apparently satisfactorily, that every penny authorised to be borrowed, namely £1,328,000, is allocated at the present moment, and is barely sufficient to complete the works already authorised by this House. That is an important fact. Why? Because if the whole of the money raised by the Treasurer has been allocated, and is necessary to carry on the already authorised works of this House, and if, out of that, £240,000 has already been taken and placed somewhere else, not only has the Treasurer not enough money in hand to do any new works, but he is apparently £240,000 short of funds to do the old works. I propose to quote from one or two of those letters, and to read to the House some of the authorities referred to governing this matter:—

The 1884 statute gives authority in Section 2 to the Governor to borrow moneys authorised by this House and for the purposes mentioned in the Act.

I do not know whether we ever mentioned in any of our authorisations an amount of £242,000 for the retiring of Post Office stock. I should like the Treasurer to explain that. It may be capable of explanation; and in looking through the statutes I have come to the conclusion that there is considerable doubt on the point, and it is only to have that doubt removed that I speak to-day. "M.P." goes on:—

The Governor is not authorised to raise any sum, even to repay an existing loan, without the authority of an Act of Parliament.

Is that true or is it not? I should like the House to have the highest authority in answer to that question. The writer goes on later to meet the possible explanation, and says in these words:—

It may, however, be contended that the Government could raise by sale of inscribed stock, without Parliamentary authority, the £200,000 or whatever the exact sum is, for the purpose of at once redeeming local inscribed stock or Treasury bills to the extent of that sum. I

know of no authority whatever for such a course; and to admit that it is legal or justifiable would be to admit that the Government can obtain the Governor's authority to at once, without any Parliamentary authority, raise by sale of inscribed stock in London a farther sum of three million pounds for the purpose of redeeming the whole of the existing local inscribed stock and Treasury bills. Such a contention is therefore out of the question and absurd.

Is it out of the question and absurd? Has the Treasurer of this State—that is what “the Governor” means—has the Government of this State to-day authority to go to the London market and to raise money for redeeming any short-dated loans raised in this State? I am aware that most of those short-dated credits are given out to outsiders—a local inscribed stock has been sold to the general public—and that phase of the matter may be a little different from the phase in which the Treasurer is at once the borrower and the lender, as he was in the case we are discussing. He lent himself from the Post Office Savings Bank a sum of money, and he paid it back again. The transaction was so far unknown to Parliament. I need not quote the authorities for the raising of local inscribed stock and for the issue of Treasury bills. Local inscribed stock can be issued for any sum or sums of money not exceeding in the whole the sum which at the time of issue was authorised by any Act of Parliament to be borrowed. The Treasurer, so far as we can see, did not exceed his authority in issuing local inscribed stock, nor did he commit any breach of the statute governing the flotation or the making of Treasury bills. But “M.P.” says in reference to this matter:—

The going on the London market for more than he can find authority for—

and he is backed up in this opinion by the *West Australian*, a journal which I am satisfied would not make absurd statements in dealing with the finances—is a most serious matter, requiring prompt action.

We do not need outsiders to tell us that matters of this gravity require our attention. I quite agree that, more especially at the present time, we may have changes of Treasurers; and the finances of the State are not in what one may call a most flourishing condition. In dealing

with our loans we are governed by statute law in every particular. The explanation of the Premier was, I think, very perfunctory. Perhaps he was led off the track. He said:—

It may be true that a technical breach of the law was committed; but if that were so I am prepared to take the consequences.

What does that amount to? That the Premier admits that perhaps the law was broken, but that he is a sufficient law unto himself; that he will take the consequences of his action. It is needless to say that. Public men cannot help taking the consequences of their actions. That is a rather gratuitous admission. The question is whether our Auditor General is to be listened to in this matter. Is it right that, even for only a moment, the debt of this country should exceed by £240,000 the amount authorised by Parliament? That is the second question, and the more serious one. Firstly, has the Treasurer power to borrow money out of authorisation, to cancel short-dated credits—local stock and Treasury bills? Secondly, the Treasurer agreed to have his loan underwritten in London. That is the time the money was available. We shall have all sorts of opinions from all sorts of authorities as to when that loan was floated; but the money was available to this State when some gentlemen of sufficient credit in London underwrote the loan; because the bank was pretty certain to be sure that they were men of substance before the loan was underwritten. Did the Treasurer, when he agreed to have his loan underwritten in London, arrange for retiring those Post Office bills before he floated his loan? We are entitled to know that. Did the Treasurer append his signature to the cancellation of those Post Office notes before he raised his money in London; and if he did, where did he get the money for the purpose? And if he got the money, what authority had he to use that particular money for that particular purpose? That is question 1. If the Premier did not arrange for the retiring of his promissory notes or short-dated Post Office inscribed stock, or whatever they were, if he did not retire them before he went to the London market, then it is as clear as daylight that at one and the same time there was a debt in London of £240,000 when he

arranged to float it on a certain authority in London, and the same debt had already been incurred on the same authority in Western Australia. There was a sum of £240,000 in question. He had either retired it here before he floated his loan, or he had not. If he did retire it here, what authority had he to retire it without the consent of Parliament? If he did not retire it, then I do not care whether it was for a moment, a day, a week, a month: there was a period in the history of that transaction when this State was indebted in a sum of £240,000 more than this House authorised; and the indebtedness was brought about by the act of one of its own servants. That is the most serious phase of the question, and is a state of things altogether too intolerable for any responsible Parliament to permit again. I have brought with me all the authorities on the statute law dealing with loan matters. It is not my province to find a justification for the Treasurer's cancellation of this stock. In conclusion, in looking through the statute law governing the matter, let me say I am in doubt whether the Treasurer has or has not power to cancel stock. The law does not seem to me very clear. I do not know whether the Treasurer will quote any authorities, or will quote what I should quote as a justification were I defending the case—some sections of the Loan Act governing the matter of cancellation of stock, which sections need clearing up. But certainly we ought to know whether it is feasible to exhaust an authority of this House to raise local inscribed stock, and before that exhaustion is withdrawn, to draw again on the same authority somewhere else, even for the purpose of afterwards retiring the first-dated stock. Now this is the question we want cleared up, because if it be now a question of £240,000 and an honest Treasurer, it may later on be a question of £2,400,000 and another honest Treasurer. I hope and trust the Treasurer will give what information he has to the House in the freest and frankest manner possible. I do not wish to look upon this question as having any party significance whatever. It is a question of the Auditor General drawing our attention to a like transaction on the part of Mr. Gardiner, who has defended the Treasurer in a very

brief epistle to the papers. I am not prepared to accept Mr. Gardiner's dictum or that of the Treasurer on this matter. The *ipse dixit* of these gentlemen is not sufficient for me on a matter of law. Why I make this request and wish to go to the fullest length to obtain the information necessary, is so that it may guide us in the future in dealing with this most serious phase to this House—the pledging of the country to large sums of money and the method of handling them afterwards.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): I think we are all agreed that we are indebted to the member for West Perth for drawing the attention of the House to this matter in such a lucid way. The Treasurer, in replying to questions I asked him, has either failed to grasp the point or, grasping it, has evaded it. My concern is not so much whether the Treasurer has the right to cancel stock or not. That does not enter into my discussion for a moment. What I have so far failed in arriving at is whether the Treasurer at one time borrowed more money than he was entitled to borrow by Act of Parliament. The position the Auditor General takes up is another one. He says that money borrowed is borrowed by Act of Parliament, which sets out in the Act itself the purpose for which it is borrowed, and that therefore there is no right to divert money so borrowed to another purpose, such as the redemption or cancellation of stock. That may or may not be. Reference to what past Treasurers have done in this matter does not meet the position I have taken up, and in no way concerns it. I have had neither the time nor the opportunity to go thoroughly into the matter. The books are not available to me, and it would be very difficult indeed to search through an immense quantity of returns; but I believe I am correct in saying that, although previous Treasurers may have cancelled or retired stock, at no time have they ever exceeded in their borrowings the authorisation of Parliament. If they did cancel stock, it was not for the purpose of increasing their authorisation in order to borrow more money, but because they had a very big margin of loan authorisation and could well afford to redeem stock. They never borrowed in excess of authorisation and then paid

back. I submit it would have been far better if the Treasurer had taken us completely into his confidence. It is idle for him to say that if a loan be floated in June, stock for that loan would not be issued until August. Once that loan for £1,400,000 was put on the market, the Treasurer knows he was bound to issue £1,400,000 of stock. It was underwritten. There was an end of the transaction. As a matter of fact, £1,400,000 was subscribed by the underwriters. It is worse than idle to say that he had until the 9th August in which to effect redemptions. If my friend will only admit it the position is clear, and there is absolutely no denial that at one time, beyond all question, for it does not admit of doubt, the Treasurer borrowed in excess of parliamentary authorisation. No one implies, or even suggests, any dishonesty, or anything of that kind. It may be, as the Treasurer said, that it is merely a technical error and of course the Treasurer must take the consequences; but if there has been an error it is more serious than he regards it. The matter may have been put right, and there may be an end of it. I hope happily that is so; but there may not be an end of it. Someone dissatisfied with the price of the stock may raise the question as to whether it had been legally issued; in fact, whether it was a legal issue of West Australian stock. Speaking as a layman, I am inclined to believe that the whole issue was illegal inasmuch as it was not authorised by Parliament. I hope the Treasurer will clear up these points once and for all.

DR. ELLIS (Coolgardie): In looking into this question, I take a somewhat different view of it from the leader of the Independents, the member for West Perth.

MR. MORAN: There is no such party as yet that I know of.

MR. CONNOR: How about the fourth party? The member for Coolgardie is the leader of the fourth party.

DR. ELLIS: As it appears to me, the point at issue is not so much the simple question of cancelling stock as a book-keeping entry, as the view the Treasurer takes of trust funds. If there is one thing that is unsatisfactory in Australian politics, it is the lax way trust funds are regarded right throughout Australia; and

that any Treasurer should have allowed trust funds to get into such a condition that he had only 1s. 8d. in the pound to call on for the Post Office Savings Bank seems to me a much more serious position than whether he was justified or not in cancelling short-dated stock. If we look at this question of trust funds first, we find that there has been a growing demand on the part of Treasurers to dip their hands, if I may say so, too freely into the trust funds of the State. In May 1901, during the Administration of the Leake Government, the amount of trust funds utilised was £438,000. In December 1901, when the Leake Ministry was still in existence, the Morgans Ministry having intervened, the account was up to £588,000. Then the James Ministry raised it to £738,000, and we find that the Ministry preceding the present one brought it as high as £923,000.

MR. MORAN: The people's Government are entitled to deal with the people's money.

DR. ELLIS: That may be the Australian point of view, but it is not in accordance with the ideas of the Anglo-Saxon race. Trust funds are always trust funds, and should always be taken care of by the Treasurer. Whether it is a greater crime on the part of a Treasurer to put his trust funds into a safe position by sparing to them loan money and cancelling short-dated stock, or to go on keeping his trust funds in a doubtful position, is the question. To-day the trust funds borrowed, instead of standing at £923,000, are at £682,000, a much more satisfactory position. Personally I feel very strongly that the Treasurer has done right in getting back into what is a much sounder financial position than before. [MR. MORAN: There is a right way and a wrong way of doing that.] We quite agree to that; but I am sorry that anybody who studies the Auditor General's report will find, unfortunately, that the wrong way seems to materially predominate. The amount of accounts that are more or less illegal, as stated by the Auditor General, is so serious, that it is even pleasing to see anybody using a wrong method to put trust funds right.

MR. MORAN: The Treasurer may use the right method to put trust funds wrong.

DR. ELLIS: That is exactly the thing I am frightened of, and that is a position I should think was far and away more dangerous than the present one. The Auditor General tells us in another part of his report (page 158):—

If our Act is read literally it must be admitted that the Government has power to allow money to be drawn from the public account without Parliamentary appropriations. This, however, is not the intention (*vide* opinions of the Crown Solicitor), and it is considered that the Act requires amending so as to make the point clear.

That means in other words that the Treasurer has power to do things of this kind, and that he is even technically dealing accurately.

MR. MORAN: That refers to drawing money for administrative work.

DR. ELLIS: To make quite sure that I am not overstating the case, I will continue reading from the Auditor General's report:—

The New South Wales Act goes into the matter still more fully, and specifies how moneys are to be drawn from each account, viz. Consolidated Revenue, Special Deposit, General Loan, and Trust.

I take it for granted that the first paragraph refers to all those four, so that the step taken by the Treasurer does come within the meaning of the Act. In looking into these matters to-day I took some trouble to find how the whole position originated; because when we come to consider it, there is a much more serious method of borrowing money than that of borrowing it from our own Savings Bank. So far as I can make out, there is no authority whatever for an overdraft in London. That overdraft is purely a question of the word of the Treasurer of the State for the time being; and if the Parliament of the State is willing to give the Treasurer power to ask for an overdraft of half a million without authority, surely we can give him, especially when it says so in the Act, the power to cancel and renew short-dated stock.

MR. MORAN: You do not say he has power to get an overdraft without authority?

DR. ELLIS: At present there is no authority for this overdraft. There is no Act under which it is raised. He does it practically as he goes to the Government and gets trust funds, the only difference being that in the one case

he gives a written guarantee from himself to himself, while in the other he gives no guarantee at all. He has power in Section 11 of the Inscribed Stock Act to provide for the re-issue and cancelling of stock certificates, so that he had power to to handle this matter. This system was first started, so far as I can make out, by Mr. Illingworth when he was Treasurer. At least Mr. Illingworth more or less lays claim to it. Whether the system existed before Mr. Illingworth's day or not I do not know.

MR. MORAN: It existed in 1897.

DR. ELLIS: I thought it was before Mr. Illingworth's day, but in Mr. Illingworth's speech on his Loan Bill we find that he sets out carefully how local inscribed stock is to be repaid. I consider that is the crux of the whole situation:—

To this add estimated proceeds of unraised loan authorisations, £2,507,320, deduct temporary flotations, that is Treasury bills, £1,000,000 (to which I have previously referred) and locally inscribed stock of £1,052,700, and we have a balance of £454,620. Practically this is the whole sum that the Government have at the present time power to raise without this Bill.

That is according to Mr. Illingworth, and undoubtedly the whole of that column in the 1901 debates refers to the attitude which he took up, that the borrowing of local inscribed stock was more or less a temporary expedient, and was replaced by loan. The unfortunate part about it is that once a Treasurer gets his hand in the till, he is not at all willing to pay the money back again. That has been apparent in other States besides Western Australia. I congratulate the Treasurer that he has at last been obliged to put back the money which was, I will not say improperly but unwisely, removed from the Treasury account. I agree with the member for West Perth that it is time an Act was created to regulate the borrowing by Governments from the Savings Bank.

MR. MORAN: There is an Act about the method. There is only one way of doing it.

DR. ELLIS: There is no limit so far as I can see. The Treasurer can deplete the Savings Bank and not replace the money, and he may leave the next Treasurer with insufficient funds to meet the liabilities. That is a serious position,

and it is time we seriously came to an understanding as to what is the lowest point to which the Savings Bank funds should be depleted in the interests of the State. I know it is an easy thing to hang up borrowing until the money is easy and the market is good, but that day may be long coming and there may be a run on the Savings Bank. I would like to see some arrangement made by which the Government could borrow money up to a certain amount from the Savings Bank, and that it should be the first call on any subsequent loan. At the present moment, any Treasurer in recess can, without the authority of Parliament, deplete the Savings Bank, and that is the great danger. It is a much greater danger in so far as the authority is used right through the Australian States freely and to an unsafe limit. It would materially improve the credit of the country if we had an Act to curtail the borrowing of Savings Bank funds by the Government. I differ from the member for West Perth when he says that the moment a loan is underwritten, that moment the money is borrowed. One might say the moment one gets the right to obtain an overdraft from the bank that overdraft has been obtained, but the money is not borrowed until it is drawn.

MR. MORAN: But you cannot get a loan without authority.

DR. ELLIS: Nor can you get an overdraft without authority; but you have the right to draw, and the Treasurer is perfectly fair in cancelling stock against it. I should be glad to know whether the money is in the bank in London now; but I take it it is very much like the overdraft in London, that is he doubtless authorised the loan to be raised, and then he would not only have £240,000 overdrawn, but £350,000 in London; that is, if the statement of the member for West Perth is correct, that he had his loan underwritten. He would then be half a million over the amount, and not £350,000.

MR. RASON: Remove the overdraft to Treasury bills.

DR. ELLIS: Still the position would be just the same. When you have underwritten the loan you have incurred the liability; but when you have got the right to overdraw at the bank, you have not overdrawn.

MR. MORAN: The bank would look after its own.

DR. ELLIS: What is good in one case is good in another. If it is right to raise a loan to the full amount of the authorisation by underwriting it, it is right to cancel stock to use up some of the loan.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. H. Daglish): The argument raised is based on the legal opinion on which the Auditor General based his minute in reference to the cancellation of stock by Mr. Gardiner, and the legal opinion says it is contrary to section 58 of the Audit Act, which states:—

It shall not be lawful for the Treasurer to expend any moneys standing to the credit of the General Loan Fund, except under the authority of an Act.

MR. MORAN: That is not the argument at all.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: It is the argument that has been raised in regard to this particular transaction. There are two points: the first is the amount of legal sanction for the expenditure of borrowed money by using it to pay back stock.

MR. MORAN: If you have authority.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: If we have the authority. On that question I want to say, if that meaning were given to the Act this State has no right whatever, through its Treasurer, to pay off any overdraft it may have to a Bank without first getting parliamentary authority to borrow the money to pay off the overdraft. Whenever an overdraft is incurred, it would be necessary to come to Parliament to get authority to borrow the money in order that the overdraft may be paid off. As to the question of authorisation for borrowing, our position is very much the position of the individual who has a certain security on which he has borrowed money, and there are circumstances arising between himself as the borrower and the lender which make it desirable for him to transfer his mortgage from one individual to another, to do that he must cancel the old loan and get a new one. In order to carry out that transaction it is necessary for him to obtain the new loan before he pays off the old one, in order to have the cash to pay it off.

MR. GORDON: He acts on his own initiative. You are governed.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: Quite right, he acts on his own initiative. He transfers his indebtedness, but does not increase it by that transfer.

MR. RASON: Surely if he borrows before he pays off, he owes double the amount.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: No. The work is simultaneously done.

MR. MORAN: He must put the security in.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: The work is simultaneously done. What any Treasurer has to consider is not merely the strict letter of the law, but first of all the interests of the State. The argument of the member for West Perth is this, that my action is practically justifiable if I borrowed £1,160,000, provided from the proceeds of the loan for the repayment of this inscribed stock, and then proceeded to cancel the inscribed stock and float another loan of £240,000 in order to utilise the full authorisation. That, I take it, is the hon. member's argument. The hon. member does not complain of the cancellation of the stock.

MR. MORAN: I want to know if you have authority to cancel stock first; and secondly, had you the money to replace when you cancelled? Did you do it after you borrowed the other money?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: My reply in regard to the first question is that in my opinion there was full authority to cancel the stock.

MR. MORAN: And is there still inscribed stock to the amount of £600,000.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: It does not apply to all inscribed stock; because the position is not the same as in relation to the £900,000 which was reduced to £600,000. The Treasurer stood in the position of the borrower and lender. He had the power to make arrangements as borrower and lender; but as to the balance of the inscribed stock issued to the public, the Treasurer would not have the same power, but is subordinate to arrangements made when the stock was issued. On one side a certain amount of notice had to be given—I think it is after 10 years the holder of any inscribed stock can give notice.

MR. MORAN: It is very clearly defined in the Act; but are you not groping in

the dark as to the Savings Bank? Are there no regulations?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: No regulations. From time to time stock has been treated in the manner in which I have treated it. As far as I am able to judge, there is no legal impediment in the way of that treatment.

MR. MORAN: That is the minor point.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: The larger point, as the member views it, is the question whether we have been borrowing beyond the authorisations, and the hon. member's argument is this. Assuming that we desired to redeem £240,000 worth of stock, and we have not the authorisation to enable us to borrow the £240,000, we should first come to Parliament to get authorisation to borrow the money before the stock can be redeemed. In other words, we cannot transfer the indebtedness without we get a double authorisation. We have already authorisation to borrow £18,000,000 and we have borrowed up to that amount, but because there is the transfer of an obligation from one party to another, the argument is that we should have double the authorisation for the £240,000.

MR. RASON: Did you not exceed the £18,000,000?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: No. There was no excess of £18,000,000. A certain time elapsed between the issue of the loan prospectus—seven or eight days—

MR. MORAN: Why not seven or eight years?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: Between the issue of the loan prospectus and the payment of the cash to the credit of the Savings Bank account. That was essential if we were, from the proceeds of the loan, to replace the money to the credit of the Savings Bank account. We could not possibly replace the £240,000 to the credit of the Savings Bank account unless by making a temporary transfer from the consolidated revenue to the Savings Bank fund, to which I am sure the hon. member would very naturally raise a very strong objection.

MR. MORAN: Is the authority exhausted? Can you revive it if it is exhausted by borrowing Post Office money?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I think the reinstating of this was perfectly legal. The hon. member has referred to the Auditor General's report as settling all points of this sort. I venture to differ from the hon. member whether he makes the Auditor General or the Crown law officers the judges. I want to see this House made the judge of the whole question, and I think it is for that purpose the Auditor General is appointed. The Auditor General obtains these legal opinions for the House, not to be himself the judge of the actions of any Minister, but in order that the House, knowing the full facts surrounding any action which the Auditor General may think it necessary to report, may come to an independent decision thereon.

MR. MORAN: Let us have a decision on it then. I think we ought to have a decision for future guidance.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: It has been the custom for Governments to commit acts, strictly speaking, not in accord with the letter of the law. These have been done on many occasions, and it will be necessary on many occasions for Governments to do similar acts in the future. I will give members a practical illustration of this fact. Last year we had a deficiency on loan account amounting to £142,000. As loan account was deficient it was necessary to provide funds to make up that deficiency temporarily from some other source, and the then Treasurer, the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason), transferred funds from other sources, from trust moneys or from consolidated revenue, in order to meet the charges on the loan account.

MR. RASON: That was loan suspense account.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: The hon. member, according to the Auditor General, did an illegal act.

MR. RASON: That is not the point at all.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: The hon. member had no option at that time but to do an illegal action, or, immediately loan funds were exhausted, to at once stop all public works that were being carried on out of this loan fund; and in my opinion the hon. member took the better course in the interests of the country, and for the public welfare was

guilty of a technical breach of the law. The Auditor General reported that matter to the House, and the House was entitled to either justify or condemn the then Treasurer for his action. The position here is quite a parallel one. It seemed to me desirable that the Post Office Savings Bank account should be strengthened, and I strengthened it by the utilisation of borrowed money, by transferring the debt owing to the Post Office Savings Bank to certain men in London who lent money to the State.

MR. MORAN: That is not correct. You liquidated it. You did not transfer it, so far as I know.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I transferred the debt. What need is there to question terms of that kind?

MR. FRANK WILSON: You did not transfer local inscribed stock in London.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I cancelled the debt by local inscribed stock and issued debentures to replace the stock.

MR. RASON: You borrowed money and then paid off the local inscribed stock.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I paid off money obtained by local inscribed stock, which I redeemed with borrowed money, and in doing so I was actuated by a desire to strengthen the Savings Bank fund.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Your motive was right.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: The hon. member says the motive is right. Then the whole question is whether the circumstances warranted me in translating that motive into action. My contention is that the circumstances did warrant me in doing so. The contention of other members is that the circumstances did not warrant that act.

MR. RASON: That has never been contended.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: That is a matter which I am perfectly content to leave for members to decide; a matter this House has a full right to deal with. The member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) referred to what he called my perfunctory explanation in regard to this matter. I have the right to complain of this, that last Thursday when I was prepared to make the very fullest explanation on that subject, I was constantly interrupted by the member for West

Perth, the member for Guildford, and one or two others; that I was prevented by these interruptions from making my statement with that sequence and clearness which is only possible when dealing with these financial questions by allowing a member to make his statement without any interruptions at all.

MR. MORAN: There is no place like Committee for these things.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I would have had a far better opportunity of making that clear and full explanation if the hon. member had been good enough to afford me a chance of doing so, in my own words, without interruption. I have endeavoured to place the facts fully and clearly before hon. members at the present time. I hope the hon. member has now a thorough grasp of the position. As I said on Thursday, I am willing to take the full responsibility of my action, and, as the hon. member has indicated, I am compelled to do so. When I took that action I realised that fact, and I took it with that full knowledge. I believe, however, the action to be one likely to be advantageous to the community as a whole, by the mere fact that it has made available for utilisation in various directions funds that could not have been so used had I not employed them in the manner I did, to increase the balance available on the Savings Bank account.

MR. MORAN: Oh, you only put them there to use them again, like.

MR. RASON: Just a few words more on this subject. It is not now, and I take it never has been, a question of whether the Premier was justified, in the light of doing what was best for the State, in acting as he did, but whether he was authorised to do as he did. If the Premier had only stated when first this question was raised that he had borrowed in excess of the authorisation, there would not have been this trouble; but in reply to the questions asked him to-day, when there was no interruption, the Premier even then did not say he had borrowed in excess. In fact he denied it. Now the position the Treasurer takes is that we must not regard local raisings as affecting the loan authorisation.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I did not say that.

MR. RASON: What has made the Treasurer alter his mind? I contend that so late as the 21st December the hon. gentleman had a perfectly true and correct idea of what is the duty of a Treasurer in this respect. He gave those ideas to this House in these words:—

There are existing altogether authorisations which represent £17,523,253. Of these there are unraised £3,551,650; but local inscribed stock issues should account for £2,304,385 of this amount, leaving therefore a balance of £1,247,265. Against this there are, as I announced recently when I made the Financial Statement, Treasury bills issuable representing £500,000; and likewise there has been issued since the beginning of July last stock amounting to £199,285, representing altogether a deduction of £699,285 from the balance available, which is thereby reduced to £547,980.

He goes on to say:—

In any circumstances, however, we have available an authorisation of only £547,980.

There is the Treasurer's own statement. There is no misapprehension. He is convinced that is the limit of his authorisation. He got a farther authorisation of £750,000, which gave him a total authorisation of £1,297,980. So, therefore, on these figures alone, and according to his own showing, he went on the London market for more than he was authorised to do, even on those figures. But between the 21st December and June the position became ever so much worse, because there was still farther local borrowing. There can be no question, I submit—I ask every member of this House, from what he has heard already, if he is not convinced in his own mind, that there has been a borrowing in excess of Parliamentary authorisation.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I should like to point out to the Committee that these words which the hon. member has quoted deal with the authorisation which included the £44,025 for which local inscribed stock had previously been issued and cancelled, and therefore I adopted precisely the same argument then as I do now. I consider that the cancellation of that local inscribed stock revived the authorisation.

MR. MORAN: I think we have elucidated the position somewhat. I should consider the matter was heading for some purpose in eliciting from the present Treasurer of this State that

he considers he is at liberty, at any moment, to go to the London market for the remainder of the money on local inscribed stock and short-dated Treasury bills, without any reference to this Chamber. I do not propose to let the matter drop here. I have no illwill whatever towards the Treasurer, but I say that he, in the present instance, appears to be simply the instrument of the Treasury Department. He is simply the Treasurer for the time being, but the constituted law and authority of this House over money is something which does not alter, and is not to be affected by the opinions of the Treasurer, however experienced or inexperienced. I have elicited information this afternoon which I did not have before. I am sorry that one interjection given when the Premier was delivering his great speech was sufficient to put him off on an important matter like this.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: One?

MR. MORAN: Goodness help him in his future career if he is to be put off like that. If he is so put off, we shall be a long time in getting particular statements on a matter like this. I think that is rather an *ad misericordiam* appeal, of which the Premier will think better. I was deeply interested in this phase of the Minister's speech, and asked him, as *Hansard* will prove, one or two leading questions, which I am asking to-day most respectfully and with a desire of eliciting information. As an independent member of this House, who may be entitled to vote as he wills without the decision of any outside body, I want this information, and I am going to have it. We have it from the Premier that for eleven days after he had raised the amount of money, £240,000 over what he was authorised to do, if I am correct, this State was indebted for an amount of £242,000 over and above all authorisations given by this House. He says that he did not cancel that local stock for eleven days after he borrowed the money. [Interjection.] Seven or eight—well, I will call it seven or eight millions, if you like. Let us take seven or eight days. I hold and defy contradiction that for seven or eight days this State was indebted for an amount of £242,000 over and above the amount which this House had given authority for.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: What is the position now?

MR. GORDON: You paid it back. Misappropriation.

MR. MORAN: I am sure that the two recent additions to the Ministry are entitled to their views on this matter. I know very well they will not be far apart from their leader's opinion on the matter. In fact, I know that the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) entirely approves of the Premier's action in this matter, and that the hon. member thoroughly understands the finances of the State. But remember that at the present moment we do not exist in this House as parties: we are dealing with a question of statute law in which everyone, whether a private member or a Minister, has the same interest. I am seeking the opinion of this House because that opinion will not be an empty one. There are two millions or two and three-quarter millions of short-dated stock floating about this country; and the present Treasurer tells me that those authorisations are not exhausted but sleeping, and that he can awaken them of his own volition and put them on the London market. That is not a fact with which to trifle, that the Treasurer can consider himself right in revivifying any authorisation, not by meeting the obligation first, but by going to the world's market for money where-with to meet that obligation. Is it not true that if it were a matter of three millions the truth would be no greater and no less than it is now? When he borrowed that money, even if he had a right to do so, for the time being the indebtedness of this State was, in reference to those authorities, at least double what it ought to have been. I can see no shadow of doubt about the matter. As to the motive of the Treasurer, it was a very excellent motive indeed; very justifiable in every way—the strengthening of the Savings Bank credit. But I do not want a red-herring of that sort drawn across the track. I am dealing with the statute law governing borrowing by this House. The central feature of the main law, the only law governing borrowing by inscribed stock, is that money cannot be borrowed beyond authority, and must be borrowed for the purposes authorised by this House. I

suppose the majority of members are prepared to say the Premier did right. Then in the future, when some other Treasurer does a similar thing, I hope we shall have no criticism of his actions. I am not satisfied. I think we ought to have an elucidation of the statutes in question; and I will quote to the Premier a section which he does not appear to have seen.

LABOUR MEMBER: Did you not justify similar action in the last Parliament?

MR. MORAN: I did not justify similar action in the last Parliament.

LABOUR MEMBER: What did you say about Disraeli?

MR. MORAN: Disraeli did not use the State funds to purchase anything. He arranged that Baron Rothschild should use his funds to make the purchase, and promised that he (Disraeli) would repay the money when Parliament authorised him to so. I will quote from the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act in order that the matter may be discussed, and that the Auditor General and the Crown law authorities may give us their opinions. The Act appears to me to give the Governor power to cancel stock. Perhaps the leader of the Opposition was not aware of that fact. Section 29 states that the Governor may authorise the creation and issue of such an amount of inscribed stock in exchange for the securities held for such loans as may be necessary. Why did not the Premier quote that?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: It does not touch the issue.

MR. MORAN: It is hard on the issue. It seems to enact that the Governor has the power, without the consent of Parliament, to create inscribed stock to take the place of short-dated stock. It seems as if the Premier had more authority than he imagined he had. The Acts appear to clash. This Act provides that the Governor shall also have and may exercise the following powers and authorities, or any of them—may authorise the creation of such an amount of inscribed stock in exchange for the securities held for such loans as may be necessary; and may authorise the creation and sale of any such inscribed stock for the purpose of raising money for redeeming any outstanding loans, and in paying any expenses incurred in the creation of

inscribed stock. Can the leader of the Opposition explain away that section? The matter is not clear.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: That does not touch this question.

MR. MORAN: That is what we want to find out.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: That relates to the issue of inscribed stock to replace loans; not to the cancellation of inscribed stock.

MR. MORAN: I assert that there is a section in the Local Inscribed Stock Act providing for the cancellation by the Governor of local inscribed stock.

MR. RASON: Provided that all issues are always subject to authorisation.

MR. MORAN: That is the main question. But it seems to me it is high time we had a clear exposition of the law in reference to loan matters. I must frankly confess that I am not clear in my own mind as to power to cancel local stock. I am not aware whether the first section I quoted governs the subsection in Section 29. Has the present Treasurer any right to assume that the authorisation exhausted locally is not dead and is not really exhausted, and is only exhausted when it is finally converted into inscribed stock in London? I hope the discussion will result in some expression of opinion. I trust our leading newspapers will inquire into and express opinions on the matter, and that the Treasurer will undertake to present us with the opinions of the Auditor General and the Crown law authorities in reference to what appear to me to be two contending sections. I should like to see an interpretation of the law first. I admit that this House is the final authority. If we decide to give any Treasurer the right, of his own volition, to transfer from local inscribed stock or from Treasury bills or from post office advances into inscribed stock in London, then let us do so. That will mean that any morning we may awake to find that the Treasurer has gone to the London market for another £3,000,000 loan to replace local inscribed stock. That may be a wise or an unwise thing to do; but it is very unwise to allow matters to continue in their present position of doubt and uncertainty. I offer no apology for introducing this question to the House, and I hope my action will lead to a clear

exposition of the law and the custom in reference to borrowing.

DR. ELLIS (Coolgardie) : I do not see any difficulty in the Local Inscribed Stock Act, 61 Vict. No. 8. The power is very clear. Section 15 provides that the Governor has power to make, repeal, and alter regulations for the following purposes or any of them, that is to say, prescribing the mode of purchase, the cancellation of debentures, bills, and inscribed stock purchased by the Treasurer under the provisions of the Act.

MR. MORAN : Regulations do not override an Act.

DR. ELLIS : The Act says the Governor can make regulations for the purpose of cancelling inscribed stock.

MR. MORAN : That is when the stock falls due.

DR. ELLIS : Nothing is said about that. The section reads :—

And generally for all such purposes as may be necessary for carrying into effect the provisions of this Act and the efficient administration thereof.

I cannot see any difficulty in the Act. Whether the granting of such power is advisable is another matter.

MR. W. NELSON (Hannans) : It would seem that this House is in a serious fix. We have just had four financial experts explaining their opinions; and unfortunately they seem to differ so fundamentally that a person like me, utterly innocent of any knowledge of finance, feels in a state of some jeopardy. I do not know what to do. I think when, for example, the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran), after a most eloquent speech, states that he does not know anything about the matter, when he occupies nearly half an hour in communicating to the House what he does not know, it makes me feel that some action is urgently necessary so that we may have a definite opinion to guide us. I think that up to the present the Premier has not done anything of which we can justly complain. I submit that he has not exceeded the total indebtedness which he was authorised by this House to incur, and hence there is absolutely nothing except objections of an exceedingly technical and frivolous nature to take against him. But in spite of that fact, I defer to the opinions of hon. members. I recognise that the member for West Perth

thinks that he is not quite sure about the matter, that there may be legal difficulties in the way. The leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rason), also personally acquainted with this subject, agrees to some extent with the member for West Perth, and profoundly differs from him on other aspects of the question. On the other hand, the Premier does not agree with these experts; and so far as I can judge, the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis), undoubtedly the greatest authority of all, differs from the others. In these circumstances I think it highly necessary that we should have some kind of a committee of inquiry. [MR. A. J. WILSON : A Royal Commission?] I shall object to a Royal Commission, for I am sure beforehand that I shall not be a member of it. Moreover, I strongly object to the Premier, the leader of the Opposition, or the members for Coolgardie and West Perth being members of that Commission, because I believe that as a rule Royal Commissions last much longer than they should; and if those gentlemen form that Royal Commission, it will continue for ever. Nevertheless, I believe some kind of committee ought to be appointed by the House, so that this question may be permanently settled.

MR. RASON : The last speaker need not have gone to so much trouble to tell the Committee that he knows nothing of the subject. That was obvious the moment he started his speech.

MR. NELSON : In that respect I resemble the hon. member opposite.

MR. RASON : It is quite refreshing to find a member of this Committee admitting that he knows nothing of the subject he is talking of, yet saying he is convinced that his leader is quite right.

MR. NELSON : On the point at issue.

MR. RASON : The Committee will be able to put their own value on the hon. member's remarks.

MR. MORAN : Has the Premier promised to obtain an expression of opinion on this matter from the Auditor General and the Crown law authorities? I hope we shall not have any more Royal Commissions, which are growing of late. I have an objection to them, because so far as I have recently noticed they cause trouble in the ranks of those who are not appointed as commissioners. They seem to confirm immensely some people's loyalty.

Will the Premier have this matter looked into, so that those who wish to take an interest in it may do so? I trust that when serious matters of this kind are discussed, we shall always have one jester at least to relieve the monotony.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I quite recognise the point of the hon. member, and that it is desirable to get a settlement of this question, so that if there be need the law may be made thoroughly clear. I am willing to assure the hon. member that I will take steps to get an authoritative exposition of the law, and when that is obtained, to present it to this House with a recommendation on the subject.

Question passed, the resolution reported, and the report adopted.

IN COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: I move:—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year 1905-6, a sum not exceeding £496,281 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Western Australia, and £152,347 from moneys to credit of the General Loan Fund.

MR. MORAN: I desire to repeat the question I asked incidentally in my other remarks, and which ought to affect hon. members more than any other: Is all the authorisation the Treasurer had requisite to carry out works already authorised by this House and in hand? If so, how is he going to get on after paying £240,000 into the Savings Bank? Will he now have a shortage for the works authorised by this House?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: That question brings up a point that I did not refer to earlier in the discussion. This £240,000 had already been spent on some of these authorised works, although it had not been allocated to the works for which it was used.

MR. MORAN: Your returns show that you still want that amount.

THE TREASURER: The hon. member is aware that no authority is given except for specific purposes for a work under any Loan Act. The authorisation to borrow is the authority for the work to be constructed. In other words, last session Parliament passed a Loan Bill of £750,000, with a schedule. All our Loan Acts that are original Acts authorise

borrowing for certain specific works; therefore the authorisation to borrow and the authorisation to do the work go hand in hand. Consequently we have no authorisation to enter on new works that have not been provided for in the various Loan Acts that have been passed.

MR. MORAN: I do not know whether the Premier means to infer that he has sufficient loan moneys in hand, without the £240,000, to finish works in hand to-day.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: Yes. Question passed, the resolution reported, and the report adopted.

SUPPLY BILL.

Consequent on the foregoing resolutions.

Bill introduced; the first and second readings agreed to without remark.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. QUINLAN in the Chair.

Clause 1—Issue and application of £648,628:

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER said he had rather hastily misled somewhat the member for West Perth in stating that there were sufficient funds in hand to carry out all the works taken in hand. He should have said there was sufficient in hand to carry them on to the stage provided for in the last Loan Act, which was passed to provide funds to carry us on to the end of the present year. He now took the first opportunity of putting the statement right.

MR. MORAN regretted that the Premier and Treasurer was wrong in the first instance and right now, because there was a serious difference between carrying on to the end of the financial year and finishing the works in hand. Taking into consideration the bill of fare provided in the Governor's Speech, the position became of great gravity, especially if we were to plunge the country (inside the next few weeks) into the purchase of a railway line which we already had, and of land which was already here and ought to be used. If we were to plunge the country into a debt of another million and a half, and to find enough money after the last loan to fulfil works already authorised, where was the money coming from to do other public works foreshadowed?

MR. RASON : In reply to the member for West Perth, the Treasurer had said there was only sufficient money to carry on loan works to the end of the year.

MR. MORAN : The financial year.

MR. RASON presumed the Treasurer meant the 30th June next, but desired to be clear on the point. When speaking to the last Loan Bill, the Treasurer had said it would only provide sufficient money to carry on until the end of December, 1905. Did the Treasurer mean that there was sufficient to carry on until that date or until June next?

THE TREASURER : Loan Bills were usually brought forward to provide sufficient money to carry on until the end of the calendar year. The last Loan Bill was introduced with the statement that it would enable us to carry on to the end of the present calendar year, but he was now quite satisfied that we could carry on to the end of the present financial year.

MR. MORAN : No doubt we must.

Clause put and passed.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES, NOMINATIONS.

MR. SPEAKER announced that, in accordance with Standing Order 21A, he had nominated as Deputy Chairmen of Committees the members for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes), Perth (Mr. H. Brown), and Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis).

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

FOURTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous Thursday.

MR. W. B. GORDON (Canning) : I trust I will be able to convince members that I am not a believer in the present Government. Charges have been laid at the door of the Government and proved, that the administration during the present Government's term of office has been an utter failure; and the failure is more marked on account of the jauntings that the members of the Ministry have made throughout the State on every occasion. The protestations of the Premier and Ministers that their endeavours would

be to do their best for the State, have been more than usual. They have almost said they would forfeit their rights in the interests of the State. The curiosity of the people of Western Australia was aroused to find that six able-bodied men who had made such protestations had proved such a failure. Surely the Government will not admit their want of ability or say that the Independents have placed obstacles in their path. I think the failure of the Government has been due to the fact that they have forfeited their self-respect and esteem in abandoning the pledge, as they have done, and the principles of Labour. It is necessary for a man to have some innate pride, and that is the reason the Government have failed to carry out their promises or have failed to succeed in regard to ordinary administration. We know that in the political race they nominated, they entered, and they accepted as the champions of Labour and the Labour colours they put up—socialistic colours, as a matter of fact. But what do we find? That during the race they have turned to individualists, and as individualists they have put on one side the country, they have put on one side the Labour party, and they have put on one side the Independents, the gentlemen who wet-nursed them into political renown. Their failure as representatives of Labour will always be an evidence of how the emoluments of office can do away with a pledge. To criticise the weak spots of their administration I would place myself in the position of a man who was handed a gun when a tiger got loose from a circus and was advised to shoot the tiger on the spot, and he asked, which spot? If I attempt to explain the weak spots of the Government, according to their record I find my work would be very great. There are two questions that the people of this country certainly expected to be dealt with by the Labour Government, and those two matters would have been welcomed by the Opposition because of their democratic nature. I refer to the question of the unemployed and the reduction in the cost of living. Neither of these questions have the Labour party attempted to unravel or administer. I am prepared to admit there is no serious cause for alarm yet as to the unemployed,

but in the other States the unemployed question has become chronic, and is argued and fought over every day. Therefore I think it should have been the duty of the Government, and what might have been expected from them, to have attempted to provide in the future for the unemployed. We cannot always expect to progress as we have done in the past, especially if we have a Labour Government in power, for they only cause unemployed. Therefore the least thing the Government might have done was to have attempted to deal with the unemployed. The Government could have started some form of employment, and even if the beginning proved a failure the Government would have received credit from the Opposition side of the House and the country for trying to elucidate a question that at present is causing, and will in the future cause, much trouble. The cost of living is a question of more serious moment than probably appears on the surface. It is having an effect to-day that will, if the matter is not dealt with shortly, put the State back many years. I refer to our manufactures. It is openly admitted and stated that we have factories in Perth having branches in Adelaide and the other States, and the owners say that if wages here were reduced to the level paid in the other States they could manufacture here and not have to import as at present.

DR. ELLIS: Are you in favour of reducing wages, then?

MR. GORDON: I will come to that later on. The difficulty is that the living wage is dearer here than in the other States, and unless we can reduce it we cannot expect to compete with the other States in regard to manufactures. The question that appears pertinent is, will the Government advocate a reduction of wages if the cost of living is reduced to what it is in the other States? The Government have made no effort to reduce the cost of living, although the affairs of the State demand that such should be done. That is one of the most serious questions we can have to deal with. I may go farther and state that not merely the fact of a Labour Government not being game to tackle a matter like this, but the fact of a Labour Govern-

ment being in power will retard advancement in this direction.

DR. ELLIS: You mean a reduction of wages?

MR. GORDON: The two main items of consumption, it will be generally admitted, are meat and bread. We are almost now in a position to grow enough wheat for our own consumption, but the question of meat is one which we really must take up. It means the settlement of graziers on the land, and to induce settlers to go on the land the Government will have to break up their platform of nonalienation. We have within two hundred miles of Perth a lot of country, but it is not good for farming purposes. People will not buy it unless they can get it at a very low price, and the instalments are made to extend over a long period of years. We have not, as in the other States, land suitable for fattening and topping off purposes near the city. We have the farming district of York, but there we have not the class of country that will carry the number of stock which we require in this State. People must go farther north for land, and the land will have to be cleared and fenced, because in its natural state it is not suitable for grazing purposes; therefore the Government should induce people to take up country with the hope that stock grown in the north will be sent down for fattening purposes, so that we shall have a more reliable market for beef and mutton. The newly-appointed Minister for Lands, we know from what he has stated on the floor of the House, is in favour of the nonalienation of land; it is almost a religion with him, and I may go so far as to say that he thinks an acre of land at Derby as good as an acre in York—it must not be sold. I should say that the Minister for Lands is of the Yankee class of politician, who, after expressing his views, said, "Those are my views, but if they do not satisfy I can alter them." The hon. member's views will expand to the same extent as the views of any other member of the Cabinet do. It is not right to leave in power a Minister for Lands who holds such principles as the present Minister does. Only the other day a deputation of stockowners of Kimberley waited on the Minister, and there are some curious facts in regard to that deputation. What happened at the

deputation I do not know, for I was not present, but according to the reports in the newspapers it was serious enough. Six or eight stockowners waited on the Colonial Secretary and asked him to cancel a regulation so that certain stock could be sent from Sturt's Creek to Derby, because they were coming from country that is said to be ticked, but which is not ticked. The stockowner had a certificate from the stock inspector saying that the stock were clean.

MR. CONNOR: They have not been inspected yet.

MR. GORDON: The stock inspector stated that to be so.

MR. CONNOR: The stock have not been inspected yet. They are due at Hall's Creek next week to be inspected.

MR. GORDON: The hon. member led a deputation that attempted to stop some five or six thousand fat stock coming into the market next year, which would have reduced the price of beef.

MR. CONNOR: I gave no opinion at the deputation. I was present merely as member for the district, and introduced the deputation, but gave no opinion.

MR. GORDON: I do not accuse the hon. member of giving any opinion; I said he introduced the deputation, and I expressed the opinion that these cattle being stopped from coming here will seriously affect the price of beef next year. In the face of that, the Colonial Secretary has almost immediately warned Mr. Copley that if he does not hurry up the stock they will not be allowed to come through. One of the very largest owners of stock in this State, and the owner of land through which the stock would have had to pass, said at the deputation that if he had known the Government would have permitted the stock to pass he would have bought the stock himself.

MR. CONNOR: What would you have done?

MR. GORDON: I would have done as the other man did; but I would not have gone to the deputation and admitted that if I knew the stock would have been allowed to travel I would have bought them myself. That shows the undercurrent in reference to this question. It does not appear altogether on the surface. It is going to affect the price of beasts next year, if these cattle are not to come down. I have been in touch with the

cost of meat in this State for many years, and I know well that the fact of Mr. Copley going into competition in the trade here has altered the prices considerably; and if you are going to put him out, you leave it then to two or three. I am not trying to make out that there is any ring or any combine; but I go on the broad basis that the more competition the Government can induce to come into this State, the lower will be the price of meat in Perth. [MR. CONNOR: Hear, hear.] Therefore I warn the Government not to be too harsh on Mr. Copley or on any man intending to bring stock down from the Kimberleys, because it is a very speculative game at any time—[MR. CONNOR: Hear, hear]—and as long as the sanction of the Chief Inspector of Stock is obtained in reference to this matter I would be as liberal as possible, even if they broke the law. They do not want any recommendation in that direction, for they do it every day. I would impress upon the Government that if they can induce more competition of stock traders in the North-West, it will go very far to elucidate this question in reference to our factories; more probably than anything else, because after all that is what we have to do—reduce the cost of beef and mutton. Our manufactures are not established in this State. In the other States the manufactures have been established for many years. Some of them have been dead for years, but have revived; and for every day that this question is put off, it will take a week to recover our only trade and our natural trade. From a Labour point of view, the Governor's Speech must be very objectionable as compared with the platform of Congress, and it places the Labour members of this State in a very awkward position. I have no sympathy whatever with the Labour party either in this State or in any other of the States, as to being in the straits they are in; because they know perfectly well that it is not many years since their leader and Premier opposed the Labour candidate in Victoria, that it is not two and a half years since he was carpeted by Congress at Fremantle; and he told them practically he would do as he liked, that his district was first and his Labour promises second. In the face of that, they allowed the gentleman to nominate, and

without any ballot be elected as their representative. [MEMBER: Shows their confidence in him.] Their confidence in him! They thought they would, for the time being, he having a great deal above the average ability of the Labour member, make use of him, and eventually when they had climbed into a position be able to say, "We have done with you." They would throw in his teeth his statements in Congress, because I venture to say they are marked and ticketed off for hearing some day. Had that time arrived they would have told him to go; but what has happened? He is using the Labour party to keep in office. Therefore I have no sympathy with the Labour party in the straits in which they find themselves. I do not know what the result of this division will be, and I am sure there are many members in this House who do not know; but I hope that no member will place himself in such an abject and servile position as to vote here for a policy which a few days ago at Congress he spoke against. I hope the country will not be subjected to such an insult as that. It seems to be out of all reason. It seems almost the position of a maniac to attempt to represent the people in this House on one platform, and go to Congress and speak against them on the other. Not only have some members spoken at Congress, but they have spoken in their own electorates, and they have said they have no confidence in the Premier. Here the leader of the Opposition is asking them if they have confidence in the Premier. There are the two questions, as opposite as day and night. How are they going to vote? I hope the country will not be subjected to such a sight as that, and that the result of this election will be each man voting in accordance with his own conscience. The Labour members are in a very bad position, and an apt saying of a very great man, in my opinion, fits it; that is, "There is no greater slave than the man who thinks himself free when he is in bondage." That is the position of every Labour member on the other side of the House. I support the amendment.

MR. N. J. MOORE (Bunbury): I was in hope that a member on the other side of the House would have followed

Mr. Gordon. It appeared usually understood to be the custom, and I understand it has been the custom hitherto in this House. In supporting the amendment to the Address-in-reply, I do so in the first instance because I think the House early in the session should have an opportunity of clearing the political atmosphere. When Parliament met last session, the House consisted of 22 Labour members, 21 supporters of the then Administration, and 6 Independent members. After Mr. Dalglish carried the amendment to the Address-in-reply, the House was composed of 22 Labour members, 4 Independents, and 23 Oppositionists, Messrs. Piessé and Harper having refrained from crossing the floor of the House. Thus, on reassembling, the present Government were really in a minority. However, it was the desire of the members of the Opposition and the House generally that the Dalglish Government should have the opportunity of proving their capacity as administrators, and I do not think the Government can accuse members on this side of any captious opposition throughout the session. It was their desire, as far as possible, to fulfil the legitimate functions of an Opposition by criticising and opposing those measures which they thought not in the best interests of the country, while at the same time giving encouraging support to that legislation which had for its object the betterment of the people as a whole. The Government, having decided to alter their policy later on in the session in regard to the question of immigration, secured the support of the members of the Independent party, and the session closed without any alteration in regard to the state of the House. Since then, however, a reconstruction of the Ministry has been effected, and in my opinion the Government have not at the present time that support which they had when they took over the reins of office. There has been trouble in the dovecot, and I think it is just as well that the Premier should know by the division on the floor of the House whether he has the support of the majority of members of the House or not. I think what is required in the present state of affairs is economical administration, and in my opinion that can only be secured by the House being divided into two distinct parties as the result of a dissolu-

tion or of a test vote taken as a result of this no-confidence motion. I think it is absolutely necessary that we should be either characterised as partisans of the Government or the Opposition. If the Government policy is right, then I say we should support it. If the Opposition are right, support that party; but I do not think that we should carry on as we are at the present time, and I think it just as well that this vote should be taken. Members on the other side had a good deal to say about the leader of the Government, and no doubt before this debate closes they will give us the benefit of what they have had to say outside this House. I am sufficiently conscious of ability to be tolerant of all opinions; but if we are satisfied as to the policy of either party, I think we have the right to support it, and it is necessary to fight for it, and in my opinion that can be done without interfering at all with the very friendly personal relationships which exist on both sides of the House.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR: What is your policy?

M^r. N. J. MOORE: I will deal with the hon. member later on. I have not got down to "justice" yet. The Premier, in speaking at Subiaco, stated that the Government was unfortunately composed of modest men who did not like to travel about the country boasting of their achievements, and therefore not half as much had been made of what the Government had done as could have been had they been more inclined to talk in public and place themselves on a pedestal before the public. Possibly the modesty has not been so conspicuous as the absence of achievements. We have had the Premier careering about the country in a sort of "I am holier than thou" attitude, lifting up his hands and exclaiming that no person could truthfully lay any accusation in the nature of a job or undue political influence against the Government or any individual member of it. Even if true, and by all accounts even this statement may be challenged, it does not seem anything very remarkable to boast about. It has been reiterated so often that one is forced to the conclusion that the Government are experiencing a degree of great satisfaction at having remained commonly honest, or he wishes to infer that other and previous

Governments have been guilty of corrupt practices. If the latter, then I protest against such insinuations. I think that the men who have preceded us in this House and men who have constituted the preceding Governments are honourable men and patriotic men; and I think it ill becomes any public man to make such inference unless he has something to back up his statement. Teach our people to believe that every man who goes into public life has an axe to grind and has his price, and we shall be inflicting incalculable harm upon our country. Teach them that the only way to succeed in politics is to follow such arts, and we shall deter every honest, self-respecting man from entering the field of politics. In reviewing the administration of the past year and the progress of the State, we find that the Government had practically a free hand in regard to administration. They were unhampered by any factious opposition and they had generous support from the Press, in addition to which they had a credit balance of some £83,000. No Government could set sail under more auspicious circumstances, or with a more loyal and enthusiastic crew—a crew none of which at that time, apparently, wished to ascend the bridge and take the post of captain. Since then, however, there has been a mutiny. The crew have threatened to throw the captain overboard; and so apprehensive has he become for his safety that he has caused two of his lieutenants to "walk the plank." On nearing port, several shoals have been struck, and altogether the ship's crew are not the happy family they constituted at the commencement of the voyage. Dropping the simile, it may be asked what has been the result of the year's transactions. We are told that the population has increased; that the finances of the State are not in a very bad way. As a matter of fact, only about 12,000 souls have been added to the population, notwithstanding the enthusiastic efforts of our Agent General. I am one of those who believe that no country with so many diversified products as Western Australia can become great unless it is favoured by a continuous stream of virile people coming to settle on its lands. It is useless asserting that we have the fee simple of the whole of the lands of Western Australia, and

are therefore justified in closing our doors to those anxious to settle within our borders. What influence was brought to bear on the Premier to induce him to refrain in the Speech from any mention of an immigration policy is a matter of conjecture, more especially when we remember that he was singing a duet with the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) towards the end of last session, with a refrain to the effect that "There is room for all, both great and small." While some of the leading politicians of this country are discouraging immigration, other British countries are endeavouring to attract it. Recent figures from Canada are very instructive; and I may be pardoned for reading an extract from a letter I received from a settler there, who was for many years a resident in Western Australia. It is an instance of what that colony has been doing for years past. Referring to the accommodation of immigrants on their arrival—something different from what meets immigrants in Western Australia—he writes:—

The Government agents furnish everything; see to it that no time is lost in getting the new settler into harness. If the immigrant is scant of capital, as is usually the case, and is not able to go on the land right away, he has ample choice of well-paid employment with the older settlers, who continually require farm help. The women are offered abundant employment as domestics in either farm settlements or in many towns that have grown like mushrooms throughout Western Canada during the past five years. As farmers thoroughly know, the first year is the really crucial test for the individual who takes up the new life, whether he be a new arrival or a town-bred village settler. This first year in Canada is very carefully watched by special Dominion agents who keep in the closest touch, through accurate registration of address, etcetera, with all prospective settlers. After hiring out for a year, the immigrant, by thrift, is able to support himself the following year, when preparing his holding of 160 acres for the wheat crop. This system of hiring out for a year or two when first arriving in the colony has in practice been found to accomplish two very desirable ends. The newcomer gains valuable experience from the older settler as to the best method of breaking up the soil; and he is enabled to go on his holding and make a start from his own earnings, which in itself imbues the individual with a certain amount of the right kind of independence.

I should like to say that the rush of immigrants to Canada has not had the effect of decreasing wages, as was

generally expected. The writer of the foregoing letter, a gentleman well known here, states that in Canada wages have gone up some 25 cents per day during the last 12 months; so, if the right class of settler is encouraged here, we need not be afraid of a reduction in wages. I do not for a moment advocate a policy of unrestricted and undisciplined immigration. I believe that a carefully thought-out scheme, generously administered, will enable us to introduce to our shores many of the best men of Britain and Europe. [MR. A. J. WILSON: What do you recommend?] That when an immigrant comes here he should be met on arrival; that some accommodation should be arranged for him in a Government building; or that at least some situation amongst the settlers should be found for him. [MR. A. J. WILSON: That is socialism.] It may be socialism; but that is a socialism which I am prepared to support. Some of that £10,500 voted last year by Parliament for the promotion of immigration might have been far better expended. What has been done with the money? Has an extra lecturer been engaged? No. The only lecturer is Mr. Wilbur. If the Government had spent the money in ringbarking and clearing land, they might have done some good. It is somewhat absurd to advertise as one of the attractions of Western Australia that we have no income tax and no direct land taxes, when the contrary has just been promulgated by the Government. I trust that a cable has been sent to the Agent General, asking him to delete from the publication he has been distributing in London and the provinces the statement that there is no income tax and no land tax. [MR. MORAN: There is not, and there may not be.] As one who has been associated with some of our very early settlers, I know it is bad business if we have to descend to deception to induce people to come here. Many of the old settlers who arrived 60 or 70 years ago were enticed to Western Australia by devices similar to those of the pamphlet now being published; and many of them were greatly disappointed. The town of Australind was depicted with parks, gardens, esplanades, and all the rest of it; and the immigrants when they landed found it a barren sand-

heap. If any such deception is now practised, it will do more harm than the most eloquent lecturer will ever repair. The very casual reference by the Premier to the financial condition of this State has occasioned considerable surprise. Like many others, I misjudged the Premier. We have been accustomed to look on him as a gentleman somewhat devoid of humour—grim, austere, and weighed down with his responsibilities. But it might have been the immortal Micawber himself, who in the face of great financial difficulties stated that “the finances of the State will require close attention.” Starting with a credit balance at the beginning of last year of £80,000, we find ourselves at the close with a deficit of £46,000. Even making a just and generous allowance for a falling revenue, due largely to the operation of the sliding scale, still the discrepancy must cause a certain quietude. No man likes to think that he cannot pay his way; and no self-respecting State can afford to belong in that parlous condition. That we have got into financial shallows is regrettable; and the fact cannot be dismissed by vague and flippant phrases. We are informed that by the exercise of due economy for the present financial year, and some slight extra taxation, the deficit may be made up—about as vague a statement as we can imagine. No figures whatever are given. If we are £50,000 behind this year, we shall have to raise about the same revenue as we raised last year, plus the £83,000 deficit with which we started, plus the loss to be incurred owing to the operation of the sliding scale. The new taxes foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech are simply an income tax, a land tax, and a tax on the totalisator. No doubt the income tax will be popular with those of us who have not incomes exceeding £200 a year; and the same applies to the land tax with its exemption of £400. If we intend to tax land, tax it. I do not see any reason for the exemption. As to the income tax, in a country like Western Australia, with an area of 640 million acres and a population of 250,000 scattered over it, it does not appear to me that a tax on incomes exceeding £200 will be worth collecting. Say there are 80,000 adult income-earners—one-third of our population; suppose these received on an average £4 10s. per week each. [MR.

NEEDHAM: I wish they did.] I am assuming this, following the example of the Premier, who is evidently a great believer in algebra, because he used “x,” the unknown quantity, to a large extent. If 80,000 adults have an average income of £4 10s. a week each, the Government will be able to tax 10s. per week of each income, or £25 per year, making a total of some £2,000,000. Suppose the tax is 2d. in the £—and I do not suppose it will start at a higher figure—it will bring in an annual revenue of between £16,000 and £20,000. Then the question arises, is it worth while to create such a new tax, bearing in mind the cost of collection, and the fact that to collect it we shall have to create a new department? I do not think it is worth while; and I think a similar argument will apply to the exemption in the land tax. [MR. SCADDAN: Do you believe in the land tax for raising revenue?] The original idea was that it should be used to burst up large estates. It is a question whether the local bodies cannot burst up such estates. None of these are exempted from roads board rating. If any roads board we like to mention were obliged to make a £400 exemption, that board's revenue would not be worth having. I have made valuations for roads boards; and I know that if there had been an exemption of £400 in respect of the unimproved value, the rates would not have been worth collecting. I am of opinion that the power to impose an income tax should be a reserve of taxation, to be drawn upon in the event of national emergency; and the need for that may not be so far off as many of us possibly imagine. The mover of the Address-in-Reply said that the Government were to be congratulated on the land selection and settlement they had encouraged. The statement certainly does not apply to the South-Western portion of the State. Very little encouragement has been given to the selector there, and those who have selected have in many instances left the State, so disheartened have they been at the neglect of the Government to fulfil their pledges. Possibly, if there is one thing more than another which had a serious effect on that part of the State more than on any other part, it has been the neglect of the Government to com-

plete the Collie-Narrogin railway as originally passed in this House in September, 1903. The effect can be seen by a reference to the *Government Gazette* of the 16th June last which contains a list of forfeited conditional purchase areas within the area affected by that railway. I have not had the opportunity of dealing with the figures for the Wellington district, but in the district of Williams alone I find that no less than 330 blocks were advertised for sale through forfeiture. This represents a loss of revenue to the extent of £1,600, and a total area of something like 60,000 acres with a capital value of £30,000; and, taking a rough average of three blocks per individual, it would appear that some 100 selectors have thrown up their holdings in the Williams district. Undoubtedly, I say this is due to the fact that the Collie-Narrogin railway has not been constructed right through. Men were encouraged to go on to the land there by Government land agents and Government publications on the strict understanding that the railway would be constructed. Speaking with all deliberation, I think that the fact that these men have thrown up their selections is largely due to the railway not being constructed. [MR. CONNOR: How many of these men would it really affect?] I have received word from the Collie that many men have thrown up their holdings on account of the nonconstruction of this railway; and I get my other details from the *Government Gazette* of the 16th June of this year. Apart from this, it may be urged that many others would have settled there if the railway had been constructed. While touching on this question, I should like again to refer to the fact that, if the railway had been constructed through to Collie, and the settlers on the Darkan Area—one of the finest in the State—in a very short time were in a position to export wheat, they would have an opportunity of sending their stuff to the nearest natural port of Bunbury, some 80 miles, instead of by the route of 220 miles the produce has to follow at present. Is it the policy of the Government to encourage centralisation or not? Goodness knows we have few enough ports in Western Australia, and it is a fair thing that every port should be given the trade due to it by its geographical position. I am sure this

will appeal to the member for Kimberley, a practical man. By constructing this railway it will mean that on every bushel of wheat the men at Darkan grow there will be a difference in the rate, according to the new Rate Book, of 10s. per ton, or 3d. a bushel, which is a very big thing in a wheat cargo. Therefore we can realise what the construction of this railway means to the people on the Darkan Area, who would have now to take their stuff 220 miles to Fremantle instead of 80 miles to the natural port of the district, Bunbury. While dealing with the land question, another matter is the neglect of the Lands Department to throw open an area reserved for a couple of years in the vicinity of the Harvey River. I understand that the drainage surveys have been pretty well completed; and I think it would be well if the Government threw some of that land open as early as possible. We have an opportunity of seeing what can be done in close settlement in that same settlement at the Harvey. [MR. CONNOR: Dairy farming.] That land is an object lesson. It is subdivided into 10-acre blocks, and we have families residing on them; and I think the Government should, as early as possible, throw open that land which has been reserved for the last three years. I think, too, a little more might be done by the Government to encourage the timber industry. We have heard from all quarters that there is a combine practically controlling the timber industry; and an opportunity should be given to the small men to have a cut at the timber combine. If they like to grasp the situation, the Government have an opportunity, for they have a fine area of country, known as the Flora and Fauna Reserve, to the south of the Jarrahdale concession, consisting of some 250,000 acres. A considerable number of applications has already been put in for that land. It is a matter of common knowledge that some of these applications have been in for six months; but nothing has been done. Whether it is that the Government are afraid to accept the responsibility of building four or five miles of railway from the South-Western Railway I do not know; but they should not be afraid to tackle a question like that, more especially as Parliament looks to the Government. At the same time,

we have the Commissioner of Railways duplicating railway lines and making deviations without reference at all to Parliament, at a cost of £40,000 to £50,000. We have evidence of what is being done by him in connection with the duplication of the railway line from East Perth to Armadale at an expense of £30,000. The great argument used in connection with the construction of the Jandakot Railway was that it would relieve the traffic from the South-Western Railway. This duplication has practically relieved the traffic to a large extent; and I think, bearing in mind that it was the policy of Parliament to construct the Jandakot Railway, it is much to be regretted that the £30,000 was spent in duplicating the South Western Railway, when the money might very well have been spent in connection with the Jandakot Railway. [HON. W. C. ANGWIN: It was an act of the late Government.] It was done without any authorisation, I believe. I asked a question last session and was told that Mr. George had constructed this duplication at an expenditure of £30,000 out of the loan funds vote for additions and repairs to railways. Whether that is correct or not, I do not know. I have not had an opportunity of getting any information. [MR. HOLMAN: Ask your leader.] If a few miles of railway were laid into this Flora and Fauna Reserve, it would give many small mill-owners an opportunity of coming into competition with the larger company. We had a statement from the Premier the other day in regard to the Public Works Department expenditure. Dealing with the question of salaries and expenditure the Premier referred to the fact that the total expenditure on loan and revenue works last year amounted to £734,000 as against £1,005,905 in the previous year, and that the cost of administration this year was £56,222 as against £60,681 in the previous year. That certainly was only a difference of about 1·6 per cent., but it means that the Public Works Department cost proportionately in salaries some 27 per cent. more than it did in the previous year. Boiled down, it means that for every £100 expended in 1903-4, there was spent in salaries £6 0s. 7d., whereas for every £100 spent in 1904-5 there was spent £7 18s. in

salaries. That, at any rate, I think is not very good evidence of economical administration. Possibly the most important matter we shall have to deal with, and that is referred to in the Speech, is the proposed purchase of the Midland Railway subject to the approval of Parliament. Not having any information with regard to this question or in regard to the extent or classification of the land, or the value and condition of the railway and rolling-stock, it is impossible at this stage to offer any definite opinion as to the advisability of the purchase or otherwise. Until such necessary information is forthcoming, I do not propose to take any definite stand in regard to this question; but it seems to me that the two points we have to consider in connection with the purchase of this railway are: Can the State at present afford to buy it? and, Will we get value at the purchase price of £1,500,000? We are, I think, desirous as far as possible to own all our railways; but it is open to question whether we should saddle ourselves with an expenditure of £6 per head, man, woman, and child, when, according to the authority of the Agent General, we could have purchased the railway at a quarter of a million less. We shall have an opportunity of discussing this matter at a later stage; but I should certainly be in favour of devoting the profit derived from working the railway after allowing for maintenance, and also the money realised from selling the land, to a sinking fund to wipe out this one and a-half millions. [MR. MORAN: We cannot borrow without a sinking fund.] But that is a very small item compared with this proposal. I do not think that the revenue we derive straight away by selling the land, if we sell it straight out, should go into the current lands revenue.

MR. FRANK WILSON: We should not make any profit running the railway.

At 6·30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7·30, Chair resumed.

MR. N. J. MOORE (continuing): Before sitting down, I wish to refer very briefly to the Auditor General's report as to the existing state of the finances, and I would like to make a quotation which practically frames itself into a

strong indictment against the Government in regard to financial matters. The report says:—

We are informed that a large sum has been spent without the necessary Parliamentary authority, that the books of the various departments are in such a complicated and confused condition that the Auditor General confesses his inability to submit accurate balance sheets, that in the matter of stores a large sum of money has been illegally spent and it is impossible to say whether the stores are actually in existence or not.

Whether this is the fault of the administration or the fault of the system in force at present, I do not know; at any rate it is deplorable that occasion should be given for such a report to be written. I do not intend to speak at farther length owing to the fact that one speaks with the depressing conviction that truth or logic will not affect the issue before us. That is recognised on both sides of the House, and I do not think there is any object in continuing the debate. Members opposite, though possessed of feelings and intelligence and inspiration, may not exercise these faculties. The hon. members are in a groove from which they cannot depart without reference to some outside power. That body instructs them, and members have no voice whatever. Though it may appear we are dealing with numbers, we are dealing with an entity, and it is only as such that I can construe the hobbled emissaries of a section whose ideals tend to the suppression of independence of thought and action and self-reliance. In conclusion I can only say that whatever is the result of the division, I shall endeavour consistently to represent the electors who placed me here as their member, and endeavour loyally to serve the State of which I am proud to be a native.

MR. J. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): I am surprised, after sitting here for three or four days and listening to members on the Opposition side trying to make out an indictment against the Government, that at last they have come to the end of their tether. [MR. RASON: Are you the end?] I am at the right end of the tether this time, and the leader of the Opposition is at the wrong end as usual. I listened patiently to the leader of the Opposition trying to make out his indictment, and I think it fizzled out this afternoon in Committee. I thought that immediately the

leader of the Opposition would ask leave to withdraw his amendment, and I am surprised that he has not done so. Apparently the Opposition have something else which has not appeared on the surface. In regard to the indictment against the Government—and I am awaiting anxiously with other members on the Government side to hear would-be Ministers making out some indictment—the leader of the Opposition stated that one thing was not to be a party question and that another matter was not to be a party question; it was only to be a game of the ins and the outs; and the leader of the Opposition was content to allow the amendment to go to a vote without making out any genuine indictment against the Government. [MR. R. G. BURGESS: You are led by some outside organisation.] The member for York in his usual manner is making out an indictment in place of the leader of the Opposition. He says Parliament is being led by some outside influence. [MR. BURGESS: Your side is.] I am speaking for myself, but the member for York attempts to speak for me sometimes, and he is trying to do so now. I waited to hear the member for York make some remarks, and I did believe that if there were members in the House who would give the Government credit for what they have done, those members should be the agricultural members. I notice members laugh. Those on the Opposition side who laugh know as little about agriculture as they do about other things. I notice the member for Menzies laughed. I know he is an expert in agriculture, very much like myself, and the less he says about the matter the longer will he remain an authority. I am surprised to notice that no goldfields members or those interested in mining on the Opposition side have attempted to say anything against the Government, therefore we may take it they have nothing to say against the Mines administration of the Government. I expect the Opposition are waiting until the Minister has spoken, and then they will condemn him. The better course would be for members to make out an indictment and give the Minister an opportunity of replying. The leader of the Opposition, when making his alleged indictment, complained that preference to unionists was not made clear in the Governor's

Speech. He wanted to know if the preference to unionists was what was generally understood; but I think the member for Fremantle has made the point very clear. There are no two opinions about it that the Government will give the same preference to unionists that is not given to organisations of employers under the Arbitration Act. No fair-minded man can complain of this. The leader of the Opposition did not complain, and no doubt will support the Government on that matter. The leader of the Opposition has pledged himself to a considerable number of the planks of the Labour platform, and when a vote on the debate is taken, I expect the leader of the Opposition will be found voting with the Government in keeping with his pledges. The leader of the Opposition states that the Norseman line was not a party question. In my opinion it seems that very little that comes before the House is considered to be of a party nature. If the Government bring forward a measure for the construction of that line, does that not make it a party question? But the leader of the Opposition does not want to lose any support; therefore he will not make the Norseman railway a party question. The leader of the Opposition has attempted to make out an indictment, but he leaves it to members to vote the Government out of power. I listened with great attention to the member for Canning, who also added something to the indictment, as did the member for Bunbury. But I am afraid the complaints of these members are not in reference to maladministration, but a lack of proposed legislation. These members complained that nothing was being done in regard to immigration, and reducing the cost of living to workers, but they put forward no scheme themselves. Continually members complain because the unemployed difficulty is with us, but these members will not put forward any scheme to relieve that difficulty.

MR. GREGORY: The necessity did not exist before.

MR. RASON: Suppose you try.

MR. SCADDAN: I was unemployed myself once, but I believe I have found plenty of employment now. The leader of the Opposition, instead of following the example of the member for

Canning in trying to reduce wages, is endeavouring to increase his own if possible; but I think the chance is very remote. The member for Bunbury referred to the question of immigration in Canada and Western Australia. Surely that member must understand we have not the area of land to offer that Canada has; therefore we cannot go in for such a scheme of immigration as Canada can. The hon. member would not have us believe that he desires to go in for the same description of immigration that Canada does. But the hon. member was very vague on that point. However he was not favourable to unrestricted immigration to these shores. I contend this country is not ripe for the description of immigration some members desire to go in for. I think the time has arrived when we should be careful whom we admit as immigrants to these shores. We have, as the member for York (Mr. Burges) will bear me out, something worth offering to immigrants of a proper type, and I think we should be very particular in asking those people who come here that they shall reside on the land, and not flock into the towns and increase the number of unemployed workers. The matter of the number of forfeitures in the Williams District referred to by the member for Bunbury (Mr. N. J. Moore) is, after all, purely a myth. These people have not left the land because the Government has failed to carry out the promises by a previous Government to construct the Collie to Narrogin railway from the Collie end. In my opinion these people have held the land in the hope that the line would be built, and in very few instances, probably five or six, have they resided on their holdings and now left. A member tells me it is more, but I believe that the majority of those lands forfeited have been held for speculative purposes only, in the hope that the line would be constructed, that the value of the land would be increased, and they could pass the land on to some other individual for cash. I do not think they have left because the Government have failed to keep faith with them. I believe the Government intend to construct the line right through to Collie as funds will permit. In my opinion they have taken the proper course in commencing at the proper end, that is Narrogin. The

hon. member says the proper outlet is through Bunbury harbour. That may be so, and if the hon. member will assist, probably the time will arrive when we shall be able to give railways to our agricultural centres which will allow the proper outlet through Bunbury harbour. I hope the member for Bunbury will assist us in that; but the time is not ripe and we cannot do everything in a day. I think the hon. member may rest content that the Government will carry the line through from Narrogin to Collie, at least I hope the Government will, and thus make a connecting link to the Bunbury harbour. There are other matters I may refer to, but there is so little to answer. I am completely at a loss to know exactly what to answer from members. They seem to put each other up for the purpose of getting a little bit of time. The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) usually occupies three or four hours, but on this occasion he occupied something like 35 minutes. The member for Canning (Mr. Gordon) in his usual manner occupied something like five minutes; and it is supposed to be an indictment against the Government, something for which the present Government are to be placed on the Opposition side. If there is anything that can be brought against the Government, bring it out. Why stop until Ministers have spoken and their lips are sealed? If the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory) has something to say, he should take the earliest opportunity of saying it and allow the Ministers to consider these matters and reply to them in a proper manner. I am sure the country desires that should be the course, and it is the only honourable course, too. When this vote is cast I shall be on the right side. I usually vote with the majority, and I believe I shall do so on the present occasion. I believe the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) is going to vote on the right side. I am sure I shall be pleased to see him. I understand now he is a teetotaler. At least we will consider whether he shall sign the pledge farther or not. Anyhow, when the vote is taken I think I shall be voting on the majority side, and that is with the present Government.

MR. H. BROWN (Perth): We have heard the member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) ask what indictment the Op-

position had against the Government? It is not so much what they have done, it is more what they have not done, and greatly what they propose to do in the future; and I think that the platform, I may call it, as outlined in the Governor's Speech, of drastic legislation which they propose introducing for the members of their own political Labour party is quite enough to turn them out. We all read a few weeks ago that very long, expensive, elaborate, and practically uncalled-for cable to the Agent General by the Premier to be read at the annual Western Australian dinner in London. One remark there was:—

Every indication is most reassuring as to the future.

After other elaborations he winds up by stating that—

The numbers employed in factories have materially increased, and on every hand are indications that the future is hopeful for every industry.

It is really against their own policy when we hear on all sides the subject of State monopoly; therefore how is it possible, with that plank of their platform facing them, that they can send home what they know is entirely wrong—that every industry is bright and flourishing—when we know distinctly that some of those industries are, through probably competition from the other States, now the tariff is wiped away, shut up. Then we find they have only been nine short months in office, I think it is, and they come in to face the country with a deficit of £46,000. If they had carried out their public works policy, on which they show £50,000 which has not been expended, practically their deficit would have been over £100,000. [A MEMBER: Do you blame them for not doing that?] I say they have starved their public works. The Government came down here with estimates for £240,000 and came back showing a deficit of £46,000, which, as I said before, would have been increased, if they had carried out the works as promised in this House, to nearly £100,000—[MR. KEYSER: Is that a charge against them?—in addition to which they have borrowed £1,400,000 as against their public utterances that they were not going to raise loans, except specially for reproductive works. [MR. GREGORY: They borrowed about

£2,000,000.] I am informed that they have borrowed over £2,000,000 during that short recess, and it is altogether against the Premier's utterances of some few months ago; in addition to which they are hunting about now to try and raise revenue from all quarters. More especially we see outlined here a totalisator tax (which probably a majority agree with), but in addition to that they propose a land tax and an income tax, which I am entirely opposed to. With regard to the deficit, we have not had an assurance from the Premier, as Treasurer, that the whole of the outstanding accounts incurred before the 30th June have been paid, and it is generally said outside that a great number of outstanding accounts are not paid, which would have helped materially to swell the deficit. But I trust that in a very few days, when we occupy the other benches, we will be able to find out the absolute financial position of this State. We also heard those Ministers asking to be allowed to get into recess to overhaul their Departments and make savings in their administration; but what do we find? We find that on the eve of Parliament sitting again two of those Ministers, who ought by this time to have had a good grasp of their departments, are turned adrift, and two new gentlemen put in their places; consequently the same trouble now will recur. Those gentlemen who now are occupying these positions will absolutely be unable to attend to their departments, at all events until after the session is over, if they get through that distance. There is another question that we hear of in regard to that platform, and I think it would have been far more honest of the Premier to have told us in the Governor's Speech what he meant in speaking of preference to the worker, which on inquiry his able lieutenant the member for Fremantle (Mr. Needham) states boldly means preference to unionists; and that I am entirely against. If these unions would make their workers pass an examination and guarantee that all those unionists were skilled workmen, then there would not be so much against it, because we found during those Arbitration and Conciliation Board cases that they demand always the minimum rate of pay. Whether those gentlemen are

skilled or unskilled workmen at their particular trade, they must all receive the same pay. Preference to unionists is to prevent the majority of men getting a living at all. If it is good enough for the unionists, it surely should be good enough for the non-unionists; and so long as I am in this House I will object to the preference to unionists every time. I would like to read to those gentlemen on the opposite side an extract showing that the tyranny of these unions is increasing, not only in this State, but also in New South Wales:—

In No. 2 Arbitration Court yesterday, an elderly man was sued by the Typographical Association for £1 9s. 3d. arrears for subscriptions. He denied that he was a member of the union, as 18 months ago he paid all arrears, sent in his resignation, and received an acknowledgement of his withdrawal from the secretary. The secretary explained to Judge Gibson that the union had no power to accept the resignation, seeing that at the time there was an industrial dispute pending in which it was one of the parties. "Well, your Honour," said the respondent, "will you order the union to free me from membership? I am not able to get employment at the minimum wage on account of my age." "I have no power to do that," replied Mr. Gibson. "It is the law of the land. The Act clearly states that during the pendency of any reference to the Court there can be no discharge of membership from an industrial union." "And will I have to keep on paying subscriptions until the union's case is settled?" asked the respondent. "If the reference keeps going on for ten years," observed his Honour, "you will have to pay for ten years, even if you get no benefit. It is the law."

We also found in the other States, I think in regard to the Dock Labourers' Union, that they were absolutely getting a monopoly. Their books were full, and they were absolutely taking no more men into their unions. Therefore I assert that by their own actions they are most arbitrary, and if possible will not allow a non-unionist to live, but will try and force him into those unions. Only a few days ago an old man came to me for employment. He told me he could not earn the minimum wage, therefore I had to refuse him employment by the City Council. He said, and naturally so, that he did not want to be a pauper, and he offered to work for 6s. a day, which he could earn; and he stated clearly that with his children now away from home, 6s. a day to keep himself and his wife was more to him than 8s. or 9s. when he

had a large family around him. Now that poor unfortunate is left to starve owing to this minimum wage. [MEMBER: Wrong.] He is allowed to work if he will go to one of their secretaries for such secretary to give him a permit to work. Is that not a stigma on a country like this, that a poor unfortunate man must go and ask one of you Labour members—for the majority of you have been secretaries—to be allowed to work? I say it is a disgrace. I defy you to contradict me. That man, or any man belonging to a union, before he can get work under the minimum rate of pay, must go to one of your secretaries for a permit to do so. [MEMBER: That is wrong.] I assert that in a free country it is a disgrace for a man if he has to get work to have to go to one of his own class and ask to be allowed to do it. No wonder the party opposite are advocating and agitating for old age pensions. They are forcing people to become paupers against their will. We find there is such a close corporation that practically no man can, in this House, represent the political Labour party unless he is a unionist. During my campaign I stated that I would enter Parliament absolutely to represent the worker as against the political Labour party; and so long as I am in this House I will continue to oppose domination by that party. As an example of their consistency, we find the other day that one of their presidents or vice-presidents, who was pledged to work for a white Australia, went before the Full Court to give reasons why three Chinamen should be admitted to this country. On the one hand that gentleman is pleading for a white Australia, and on the other he is fighting for the admission of Chinamen. [MR. TAYLOR: He is a legal practitioner.] If Labourists were consistent, they would have done something for the agricultural labourer in this State. Have they ever troubled to bring him into their unions? It was an agricultural labourer, Mr. Joseph Arch, who started the first union of agricultural labourers in Britain. We know the great sympathy Labour members have for the worker. Only last session, at the instigation of one of them, a clause was passed to increase the hours of hairdressers in this State by closing the shops at 7-30. We saw also during

the recess some of those same gentlemen trying to form a union of those very workers, without telling them that the Labour party had introduced a clause to increase hairdressers' hours of labour, which clause was carried by 33 votes in this House at all events. [LABOUR MEMBER: How did you vote?] Against the extension of hours. We have seen instances of their generosity to the workers employed by themselves. During the recess we had an instance of that well known Labour organ, the *Democrat*, which I believe is now defunct. We saw the poor unfortunate workmen forced into the law courts to obtain their wages. From whom? The members of the political Labour party. If they come here to advocate political solvency, why not keep their only Labour organ alive, instead of forcing its unfortunate employees into the police court to recover their wages? I will read from one of the leading journals in this State an extract in reference to the *Democrat*:—

In a nutshell, the point is this. The members of the Government wanted to keep the *Democrat* going to suit their own ends. They assisted the worthless thing with Government advertisements, all they dared, but more money was still needed. They dared not make the rag a direct gift of cash from the Treasury; but they suggested this roundabout way of returning a "loan" from the A.M.A. to the *Democrat* by a direct gift from the Treasury for the hall at Fimiston. Has anything more mean, cowardly, and contemptible ever been done by the worst Government ever in power in this State? It is cowardly corruption of the most obnoxious order.

I notice that the name of Mr. Scaddan occurs frequently in that article. Another plank in the Labour platform, to which I am totally opposed, is that of day labour in Government contracts. While members of the political Labour party are protected by minimum wage clauses, it should not matter to them whether they work for a contractor or for the Government. But their masters in the Congress tell them exactly what they have to do. This I think one of the worst features of Labour in politics. Congress proposes that all Government foremen shall be unionists. If that is accomplished, none but members of unions will ever get work on a Government job.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (HON. W. D. JOHNSON): That is absolutely incorrect.

MR. H. BROWN: I say the Congress advocates that the foremen shall be unionists. It is well known also that when Congress tells you to do anything, you have to do it.

MR. BOLTON: The hon. member is incorrect. Congress did not advocate any such thing.

MR. H. BROWN: I say that whatever Congress, which is representative of the political Labour unions of the State, tells its representatives to do in this House, they have to do; because they will know that Congress will not take their word, but makes them sign a pledge, and a resignation to be used if they break the pledge. I was reading only the other day that the Minister for Works (Hon. P. J. Lynch) was against day labour whilst men on the mines were earning 17s. 6d. a day at contract work. To be consistent, he should at once have knocked off those men and forced them to work at a daily wage for the minimum rate. In respect of day labour, one of the greatest object lessons is to be found in the Melbourne railway station—LABOUR MEMBER: Or the Wellington Street drain—supervised by a Government official. A quarter of a-million was voted to complete the Melbourne railway station; the money has been spent, and not a brick is yet showing above the surface. The road in front of these Houses of Parliament was constructed partly by day labour and partly by contract. By contract, the cost of shifting sand was 1s. 6d. a load, the men taking nine loads a day with 1½ yards in each cart. By day labour they took six trips a day with about half a yard. The cost by contract was 1s. 6d. a load, and over 5s. a load by day labour. [MR. HOLMAN: Whence did you get your information?] From the workers. Turning to the Estimates, we perceive what sympathy the Government have had with the worker. I am not referring to the political Laborists, but to the worker. During the year a saving of £5,000 was made in the Education vote; a saving of £1,000 a year in the charities, though things were so bad; a saving of another £1,000 in the Medical vote; and though a great cry went up some few months ago over the state of the unfortunate aborigines of the North, even in the expenditure on them, instead of an

increase, we have a decrease of over £500. Even in the item "Labour," a saving of £40 has been effected; and the only increase amongst those items is one of £700 in the Gaols Department. These savings may represent close economy, but I say every one of these votes affected the worker; and in every one, with the exception of the Gaols, there was a decrease. Members representing the coastal districts must complain of the very unfair treatment the coast has received contrasted with the political sops to the goldfields. Only recently the price of the Goldfields Water Supply has been reduced, in spite of the fact that the scheme shows an annual loss of over £80,000. The water is now sold at 3s. a thousand gallons; yet with all their close administration the Government have been unable to supply water by gravitation to the city of Perth at less than 2s. per thousand. Therefore the citizens of Perth, though burdened with their own local debt, are paying indirectly for the great loss of over £80,000 a year on the Goldfields Water Supply. This is explained by the fact that we have in power what is practically a goldfields Ministry. I now come to a matter affecting the city of Perth itself. We see in the Governor's Speech a reference to the immediate undertaking of a sewerage scheme. The ex-Minister for Works (Hon. W. D. Johnson) assured the citizens that the material would be ordered and a start made as far back as February last; but the department is still proceeding as it did during the past 10 years, making surveys. We are also informed that the work will be carried out by departmental day labour; and so long as I am here I will object entirely to the proposal, and I trust to receive the support of other members representing the city. The Government told us that they are pledged to the septic tank system of disposing of sewage. If the septic tank erected for the use of Parliament House is a sample of what the Works Department propose to give us, I say that Perth, instead of being a healthy city, will be a hotbed of fever. Only recently a deputation representing the city waited on the Minister for Works and strongly objected to the sewerage scheme being carried out departmentally. One great principle of the Labour party is no taxation without representation, and

I say emphatically that if this sewerage scheme is to be constructed for the city, the city or its representative should have some voice as to the manner of its construction. The Minister has Mr. Davies's report before him, wherein it is estimated that the scheme can be carried out at a cost of £112,000; that is, a sewerage scheme for Perth, part of North Perth, and part of Leederville. At present the city of Perth is paying interest and sinking fund for its sanitary service equal to a loan of £200,000. Therefore we can see the huge saving it would be if these figures of Mr. Davies are correct. But the Minister for Works informed us that he would not pledge himself to do the work for the estimate made by Mr. Davies; and the only reply we got from the Minister was that if it were not done for that sum there would be a jolly row. This, at all events, is not reassuring to the ratepayers of the city; because, when the work is done, we have to pay for it whatever the cost of construction may be. What has escaped previous Governments in regard to this particular system of sewerage is the question of storm drainage. This point has been overlooked. In Adelaide and Melbourne they have dual systems which have been working for years and giving the best results. Before the Perth sewerage is undertaken a board should be appointed, schemes should be advertised for, and the best selected. If it be possible to get a dual system, as in Adelaide and Melbourne, there will be only one cost of connections to be borne by the ratepayers. It has been overlooked by the Government altogether that if we have a septic system of sewerage and a storm water system quite distinct, the ratepayers will be put to the expense of double connections. The Perth Markets provide another instance of Government *versus* private enterprise. Possibly I lay myself open to the question: What did the City Council do with the Perth Markets? But when the council took upon themselves the management of these markets some years ago there was not the population here to support them? Since the markets have been taken over by the Government, things down there are absolutely in a state of chaos and the market is going down, while private enterprise has come in, even in the shape of the

member for Canning (Mr. Gordon). In a few months, under the present management the markets will be absolutely tenantless. If the Government require the land for railway purposes, it would be far better to tell the tenants straight away, than allow the markets to go on being mismanaged as at present. [MR. CONNOR: The markets are well managed.] I am open to be told that I am parochial, but another local matter is in reference to the treatment the Perth Park Board received at the hands of the Government during the past year. For years past there has been a grant of £3,000 a year for the Perth Park work; and we received that £3,000 for the first six months of last year; but suddenly after a promise that we should receive the same amount, we were cut down by £500; and in the face of that, we find the Premier wiring from Kalgoorlie to the board not to forget his tea-room at the Subiaco entrance to the park. The reason he has not received his tea-room is the cutting off of that £500. In that Perth Park we have had an instance of the Government monopoly. Owing to the high price of water charged by the Waterworks Board, the Park Board put in an installation of their own at an expense of £400; but we found the Minister for Works attending a meeting of the board one day and stating that he was going to take that installation, and that if we refused to give it up he would knock off our subsidy. Under that pressure the Government subsequently took the installation by which we were obtaining water at 3d. per thousand gallons. Allow me to inform the House of the way this matter was financed. The Government said: "We are not going to give £400 cash for this installation. You are to take it out in water at 6d. per thousand gallons." [THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That was a business proposition.] It shows what business you can do when you are top dog. We were getting water at 3d. a thousand gallons, and the great concession we received was to lose the installation and pay double the price for water. We now pay 6d. per thousand gallons. The Perth Park Board is an honorary board, and the park is not kept up particularly for the residents of Perth. It is one of the beauty spots of the State, and often goldfields gentlemen come down

here and enjoy freely the grand scenery and beautiful walks in the park. [HON. W. C. ANGWIN: They help to pay for it.] Yes; but the Government will not allow the board to do the best with the money placed at its disposal. I am absolutely against the proposed land tax. Last year I advocated a rating on unimproved value of land and on that only; but what support did I get from those gentlemen pledged to tax the land? Not one vote! [MR. BOLTON: How many on that side voted for it?] While we rate land on its unimproved value—and at the present time the majority of the land in this State under roads boards is rated on unimproved land values—there is no room for a tax on land. The member for Bunbury showed very clearly that the present rating on unimproved land was quite enough to burst up any estate. With reference to the exemptions proposed by the Premier, I take it now that Congress has said there must be no exemption, the strings will be pulled and the thing will work, and the Government will come up and wipe out the exemption. Under the roads board with which I am connected there are at present over 3,500 assessments. Under the Premier's proposed exemption, out of this number there would only be 70 assessments that would be taxed, which shows that the Government are not in earnest themselves on the land tax with their exemptions. They talk about "no class legislation;" but this is the worst class legislation, because in every case they tax everyone but themselves. Last year it was suggested to leave salaries of £1,000 exempt, probably to exempt Ministers; but now it is brought down to £200, to exempt members of Parliament. To show the effect of a land tax, there is a property in Perth of about 6,000 acres that last year paid about £500 to the local authority for rates. This year at 1½d., the contribution on that land will be brought up to £750. For local requirements that rate is sufficient to burst up any estate. While on this subject I come to the Midland Railway question. That the sale of this property is being tried to be forced on the present Government, is an instance of what capitalists think of Labour legislation. They are trying to throw two million acres of land on the Government for fear of the land taxation proposed by

the Premier. Even a tax of 1d. on that two and a-half million acres would tax the Midland Railway Company to the extent of over £10,000 a year. In addition to this, we have their local rates, which exceed another £10,000. No wonder they are anxious to throw the land on the Government. They find that if this class legislation, as proposed, be adopted in the near future, they would be made contributors to the revenue of this State of over £20,000 a year. It is no wonder they are prepared to throw the land on the Government for £1,500,000. [HON. W. C. ANGWIN: Will you support the purchase of the railway?] No one has been more leniently treated than the company. In the past, when we have tried to get rates from them, they have turned round and pleaded that the land belonged to the Government. That argument was used to me as representative of a board in Perth. Therefore what is the necessity to buy the land if they use such arguments as this? The sworn platform of the Labour party is the nonalienation of Crown lands. The House will be surprised to hear that there have been no greater sales of Crown lands than during the Labour Administration. The Minister for Lands is one of the greatest supporters of non-alienation, and it will be interesting to watch the advertisements, as we have in the past, every week notifying sales all over the country. [MR. SCADDAN: You will have a long opportunity of watching them, I am afraid.] In 1902-3 the lands revenue represented £145,000; in the next year it was £156,000; and in the following year £176,000; while for the 11 months of the past year it was £168,000. This shows that the alienation of lands is going on more under the Labour Government than in the past. Where is their consistency? As long as it does not affect themselves this cry of nonalienation is a regular parrot cry with Labour members. Only lately we find that they have got their Trades Hall site closer to Parliament House, so that they can be close enough to rule Parliament. There again Crown land has been alienated. I believe the member for Collie (Mr. Henshaw) is one of the trustees of that land. It would be better if he kept to his principles and allowed that land to revert to the Crown.

[MR. A. J. WILSON : There is nothing of that in the Speech.] That is your platform, and you will get it through if you have a chance. The rents received by the Lands Department last year amounted to £98,000; the timber revenue amounted to £21,000; and sales of land gave a revenue of £49,000. On the other hand the cost of administering the department was £161,000. It appears that for every pound of land that the department sells, it costs another pound to do it. On these figures, to buy the Midland Railway for £1,500,000, to administer it would cost an exactly similar amount; so that the indebtedness of the State would be increased by double the amount; or a similar amount would come out of the revenue each year. We have also heard of the great attempts made to settle people on the land, yet we find one of the ideas of the Government is to reduce the advances to settlers from £1,000 to £500. On the other hand, so as to get money, the Government allow deposits in the Savings Bank to be increased from £500 to £1,000. We have as evidenced by the action of the Minister for Railways a gross waste of money in taking up 1,000,000 sleepers which had only been down five years. This is one of the worst advertisements this country can have. [MR. BOLTON: Thirteen years.] That is a poor advertisement for jarrah when we know that jarrah sleepers will last for over 20 or 30 years, and stand the action of water for that length of time. Another plank in the Labour platform is the nationalisation of monopolies. But what do we find? Whether it is one department fighting against another I do not know, but for many months past the reballasting of the Eastern Railway has been going on and thousands of tons of blue metal have been purchased from local contractors. Even the Corporation of Perth has supplied some blue metal. In spite of that we find that a quarry belonging to the Government and with expensive sidings is being leased to a private individual. I believe the quarry was opened up at great expense originally for the Fremantle Harbour Works, and now we find the Labour Government, who are in favour of the nationalisation of monopolies, leasing this quarry to a private individual. Then we come

to immigration. Australia has practically become a laughing-stock on the question of immigration. On reading a magazine the other day I found that Canada was exposing Australian methods. Canada was referring particularly to that very nauseous subject to unionists, the rejection of the six hatters, and Canada was stating, "Australia does not want you; come to Canada and we will receive you with open arms." [MR. BATH: Canada has done the same thing, and is doing it now.] In the magazine Canada ridiculed the idea of Australian immigration. With reference to the Immigration Commission, we find that the Commission was prolonged as long as it possibly could be. One member has said he could not live on his £200 a year and he had to get a commission of some sort. We find this Commission inquiring into many subjects, from motor-cars to seaports along the south coast. I know on good authority that, in addition to receiving their fees and their travelling allowances, the members sent their bills for food to the Treasury. I ask Mr. Scaddan to deny that. [MR. SCADDAN: You waited until my lips were sealed before you stated that.] I repeat that this Commission sent in a bill for £9 odd for food to the Treasury, and the account was very properly rejected. In the Speech we find that there is to be a referendum on the abolition of the Upper House. I am absolutely against the abolition of the Upper House, or taking a referendum. During the last session of Parliament that was the only safeguard we had in stopping what was attempted in the shape of rabid legislation. Dual Houses of Parliament are good enough for all the States of Australia and for New Zealand. In New South Wales the people have not even the selection of members for the Upper House; it is a nominee body. With republican governments dual houses obtain. We hear the cry, "Let the people have a say." We heard what the people had to say in regard to the Commonwealth, but give them the opportunity of voting again, and we would see them reject federation. We have heard the Premier's challenge. He stated that he only wanted members to vote for him who would vote for his policy. Can the members for Beverley, Kimberley, Gas-

coyne, and Dundas conscientiously vote for a land or an income tax or the abolition of the Upper House? These members are conservatives to the backbone, and can they vote for the preference to unionists? I came here as an independent, and I am as independent as any member.

MR. BOLTON: You are not independent now.

MR. H. BROWN: I am perfectly independent.

MR. BOLTON: But you have changed your seat.

MR. H. BROWN: I came in as an independent. I objected to Mr. James, for he was as rabid as some of the Labour party, but he was forced into the position by the Labour party in the House at the time, and I think it was very foolish of him to have given way so much. Can members on the Government benches candidly support the item in the Governor's Speech for the construction of the Pilbarra Railway by private enterprise? I say on this occasion, let members on the Government benches use the brains that the Creator has given them, instead of following the Labour platform. But members on the Government side have to vote as the political Labour party tells them to do: when the Ministry is in jeopardy they must sink all things, whether right or wrong, and vote for the party.

MR. MORAN: If no other member desires to speak, I should like to move the adjournment of the debate.

[MR. SPEAKER stated the question.]

MR. A. J. WILSON: I beg to move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion put, and negatived on the voices.

MR. F. GILL (Balkatta): I had no intention of speaking, but seeing that a certain amount of modesty is being exhibited, I shall try to do my best for a few minutes, and perhaps during that time some member will make up his mind to continue the debate. It would be a pity if we were to adjourn the debate at this early hour. [MR. A. J. WILSON: Adjourn, have a meeting, and then carry on.] Seeing that we have been sent here to carry on the business, we should bring the debate to a conclusion as early as possible. The adjournment of the debate at this early hour is

unreasonable; there has been so little of importance in the debate so far as it has gone. [MR. BURGESS: We look to you for something good now.] We are not making charges, we are here to rebut charges when they are made, but no charges worthy of being replied to have been made.

MR. BURGESS: I will show you where the honesty of purpose comes in, before the debate is ended.

MR. GILL: We have heard the speech of the leader of the Opposition, and I confess I was disappointed, as I generally look forward with great pleasure to the hon. member's speeches. [MR. RASON: I am so sorry.] You have some grounds for it. The speech the hon. member made in moving the amendment was disappointing, and I am sure it was disappointing to members on the Opposition side more than to members on the Government side. The hon. member did not seem to feel at all comfortable when speaking; and if the leader of the Opposition spoke the truth he would admit that he did not feel comfortable. The leader of the Opposition did not seem to be in his best form; but after hearing the reply of the Premier, I can see the reason for myself. The leader of the Opposition confined his remarks chiefly to the financial position. I am not a financial expert, therefore I do not intend to deal with details of that nature; but having heard the statement of the leader of the Opposition and the reply of the Premier, I am satisfied that any person, be he biased or unbiased, must acknowledge that there was nothing in the charges made or in the indictment put forward. After the reply of the Premier, there is nothing for members on this side to answer.

MR. RASON: Or before.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The Premier admitted the charge.

MR. GILL: That is news. There was one matter that the leader of the Opposition did not bring forward, and to me it appeared of some importance, and no doubt the Government will see that the matter receives the attention that its importance demands. I refer to that charge, and it was one of the most serious of the charges why the Ministry should be put out of office, that the member for Hannans had the audacity to champion

the Ministry somewhere or other. This point was put forward in a serious manner and given a place of importance in the indictment against the Government. Farther than that, I fail to see any ground for the charge, and with the member for Ivanhoe, I can only say that the object of the leader of the Opposition in moving the amendment was that he desired to put the Government out of office, not in the interests of the country—but in the interests of themselves. I think that is the plain English of it.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not impute motives.

MR. GILL: I do not wish to impute motives, and if the remark is not strictly in order I will withdraw it. I am only too anxious that—as the leader of the Opposition suggested, and I quite appreciate his opening remarks—this debate should be continued and carried through without any personalities whatever. [**MR. FRANK WILSON:** You are commencing badly.] It was a slip on my part; I had no intention of dealing with personalities. However, I am only too pleased to continue in the way the leader of the Opposition suggested; and I believe that up to the present it has continued in that direction, and that nothing of a very personal nature has been indulged in; in fact the debate has been somewhat dreary, generally speaking. [**MEMBERS:** Hear, hear.] In dealing with the indictment itself, I am really at a loss to find what the charge is against the Government, and I hope the leader of the Opposition will prime those members on his side of the House who are to follow, that he will give them something of a tangible nature that the Ministry can reply to. [**MR. A. J. WILSON:** What do you suggest for priming?] Something the Ministry will have an opportunity of replying to. At any rate, we have the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) who stood up here and gave instructions that we had to clear our decks for action, and intimated that he had done so and was prepared to pour a broadside into the Treasury benches. But what was the result? He anticipated what the Ministry might do for the future, but he was not certain of this even, and that was the sum total of the charges made by the member for Boulder. He is generally

able to fire a pretty heavy gun, but on this occasion he used blank cartridge, having nothing else at his disposal, evidently. With regard to the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown), I would like to say a word or two on some remarks he made. One of his remarks was that the Ministry have come down with a lot of drastic legislation in favour of their own particular friends the trades unionists. That is a most ridiculous statement. Any person can stand up in this House or any place to make a general charge of that description. Why did not the hon. member point out the drastic legislation he was alluding to, and state in what way it was framed or brought forward in the interests of friends, or Ministers or members on this side of the House? Charges of that sort fall to the ground; there is nothing in them; in fact they are not worthy of the notice of members generally; but you do not like to let those statements go forward to the world without contradiction. He also dealt briefly with the day-labour system. That is a matter we expected him to deal with. We know that he is a great opponent to the day-labour system. Whether it is from conviction or not I do not know. But one would have thought that from the experience he has had in the City Council and from the experience of some works carried on by the contract system, he would have been an advocate for some other system so far as giving it a trial is concerned, at any rate to see if improvement could be made; but we find that he is still as great an opponent as ever.

MR. MORAN: I think the principal trouble now is to get work of some kind. That is more important than whether the work is to be done by day labour or contract.

MR. GILL: We have an instance. An hon. member interjected with regard to the Wellington Street drain. That should be an object-lesson to the member for Perth to-night. We are given to understand now that the work having been a failure, it will cost some £2,000 to put it in order again. That is a very serious matter to the residents of Perth. We also find the same state of affairs prevailing in regard to one of the roads in one of the north wards of the city; and this is another instance of his contract system

--a system which I maintain has proved a failure, with regard to such works, at any rate. A statement I heard made in the East some time ago by a foreman on a contract strikes me as carrying a good deal of truth in it. In discussing the question of contract *versus* day labour, he said, "The contractor does not make his greatest profit out of the work he does, but out of the work he shirks." There must be a good deal of truth in that statement, if we judge by the results we see in and around Perth. There was one other matter which the hon. member mentioned. He brought up that old sore, the coast *versus* the goldfields, and that was with reference to the price of water. He stated that the Minister intended reducing the price of water on the goldfields, but that although they are getting the water there for 3s. per thousand gallons, the people of Perth, where there is a gravitation scheme, are paying at the rate of 2s. a thousand; but he failed to mention the fact that the late Minister for Works, who is Minister for Mines at the present time, indicated some few weeks ago that it was his intention, or the intention of the Public Works Department, at a very early date to reduce the price of water for the city of Perth. That is a matter he forgot, conveniently I dare say, for the time. [MEMBER: It has never been attempted before.] It has never been attempted before; but I think that in all fairness he should have mentioned that matter to-night. I do not intend to pay any more attention to the member for Perth; nor do I intend to continue this debate any longer; but I would say I hope that the members of the House will bring the debate to a very early conclusion. Unless we have something of more importance brought forward than we have up to the present there is nothing at present against the Ministry. The Daglish Ministry has been in power for 12 months, and if we judge it by what has been brought against it, we can only say it has been an exceptionally successful Ministry.

MR. GREGORY: That is why you made the change?

MR. GILL: They are too successful.

MR. HEITMANN: That is why you (Opposition) want to make another change.

MR. GILL: If there is nothing more serious that can be brought against the Ministry than has been brought against it by the leader of the Opposition—and I look upon this as the main charge, as he has been undoubtedly for a long time preparing for this, his greatest effort-- [MR. RASON: Oh, no]—well, I am only judging, of course, by the remarks which have fallen from the hon. member at different times. I know that some months ago he indicated at Midland Junction that he intended to take this action as soon as Parliament met, and on different occasions since.

MR. RASON: And months ago you were going to defend; so you have been preparing too.

MR. GILL: I think I am justified in assuming at any rate that the hon. member has been for some time preparing for this his greatest effort; and what has it resulted in? He has not brought a serious charge against the Government—[MR. HEITMANN: Froth]—nothing more substantial than froth. I hope members will follow the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition and vote in the interests of Western Australia. He advised members, or pleaded with members, to do their duty to the country and vote in the interests of the State. If they vote in the interests of Western Australia they will vote to keep the Ministers at present in power for another term. [MR. BURGES: Shocking!] If the member for York or any others have any doubt about going back to their constituencies in the event of voting to keep the Ministry in power, I advise them simply to take the speech of the leader of the Opposition and the reply by the Premier, and that will be ample justification for their supporting the Government.

MR. H. CARSON (Geraldton): I desire briefly to refer to the public works policy of the Government as enunciated in the Governor's Speech, and also to intimate to the Government how I shall vote, or the attitude I shall take up in respect to some of the legislation foreshadowed, and also let the House know how I shall vote on the Address-in-Reply. Whilst I believe that all the works the Premier has enunciated in that Speech are very necessary for the fullest development of the vast resources of this huge

State, I fail to see where the money is to come from to undertake the whole of them. Those of us who are familiar with the financial state of affairs and also with the state of the money market must realise that it is indeed impossible for any Government, more especially a Labour Government, to carry out more than two of those works for the next couple of years, and I call the works policy of the Government a deceptive works policy. It has struck me as being very strange that the Premier says in that Speech that he intends to construct the Norseman-Coolgardie railway, and also will receive offers from private individuals or companies for the construction of the Port Hedland-Nullagine railway. I notice in his policy speech he referred to two very important works, namely improvements to the Bunbury harbour and also to the Black Range railway; and it struck me as probable that the Coolgardie-Norseman railway and the Port Hedland-Nullagine railway were works of expediency, and I am surprised, seeing that the Labour party outside this House and also the majority of the Labour party in the House are opposed to the construction of the Port Hedland-Nullagine railway by private enterprise. It is very gratifying to learn from the Governor's Speech that all our industries are in a satisfactory state. With reference to the legislation which is foreshadowed in that Speech, I first want to deal briefly with the proposed land tax with exemptions up to £400, and I must at the outset say I am distinctly opposed to such a tax, believing as I do that it will retard to a very great extent settlement in the State. And there is another thing with reference to the land tax. The Labour party say it is not going to affect the small holder, but I must contradict that statement, for I believe it will affect any settler who has agricultural land up to 200 acres, and this will be a very detrimental thing, because we want to have an agricultural community that is contented, and that will be able to carry on successfully. We have also heard, from the evidence taken by the Immigration Commission, that it is impossible for any farmer to carry on successfully who has not 500 acres of good agricultural land. There is another thing in reference to this item. We have a pamphlet issued—I suppose every member

of this House has received one—from the Agent General's office, in which it is stated in very large type, that there is no land tax and no income tax. [MEMBER: That is true.] I think that is not fair, and it is deceiving the public in the old country. The Premier, at any rate, if he attempts to carry out this legislation should have such a statement withdrawn. [MEMBER: The Agent General issued that.] What I myself would like to see is a heavy tax on unimproved land. There is a great quantity of such land in the State, and if we want to burst up those estates it will be fitting, I think, to put a tax on large undeveloped areas of country.

MR. MORAN: Such as the Midland Railway, for instance.

MR. GREGORY: They will buy the railway first.

MR. MORAN: Yes.

MR. CARSON: With regard to liquor law reform, it is the intention of the Government to again introduce a Bill dealing with this subject. I believe it is not possible to carry through both Houses the Bill which was introduced last session, but I hope that the Legislature will pass a local option Bill which will place the control of the traffic in the hands of the people. In regard to old age pensions, I was pleased to learn from the Premier whilst he was speaking, that it is not the intention of the Government to introduce an old age pension scheme, if there is any possibility of the Federal Parliament dealing with that. I think this Parliament will make a great mistake if it deals with the matter until the report of the Commonwealth Royal Commission now investigating the question is available. Coming to the proposal for a referendum as to the abolition of the Legislative Council, we all know that the Labour party desire to abolish that Chamber. If so, why not introduce a Bill to achieve that object? What useful purpose will a referendum serve? It will be very expensive to take, unless, as the Premier suggests, it be taken at the next general election. But at such a time we are not likely to get a true expression of the people's opinion, for they will most likely be biased by party spirit. Why is there such opposition to the Legislative Council? They have passed all liberal measures sent up to them, such as pay-

ment of members, the Arbitration Act, and the Workers' Compensation Act. Why dispose of the Council? I desire briefly to refer to the Midland Railway Company. Members on the other (Government) side have intimated to me that the offer of the company expires on the 31st of the present month, and that if I vote against the Government we shall not have an opportunity of dealing with the question. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that argument is being used. I do not say by the Government, and I do not say they are using it for party purposes, but I feel that there are members on the Government side trying to influence members on this side with respect to the purchase. I am quite satisfied, after reading the correspondence, that it will be possible to get a farther extension of the option if the Government are turned out of office. The question of the proposed purchase of the railway and lands is agitating the minds of the people in the North; but I am satisfied I shall be able to make my position clear, and to vote in what I consider the best interests of the State. I believe it will be in those interests to secure the railway with its land concession. Some people say Geraldton will be greatly benefited by the purchase. I do not go so far as that. I believe that the benefit to Geraldton and the Victoria District will be very slight; but I think the metropolis and goldfields will reap great benefits from it if the Government can secure the property at a reasonable figure. There are those who say we should not have anything to do with the Midland Company; but I hope the House will have an opportunity of deciding the question, and if the expert valuations show a figure approximating to the price required by the company, I hope the property will be secured. The port of Geraldton is in an unfortunate position. It is isolated. People have a through bill of lading on the one hand, and on the other a railway from the metropolis to the Murchison, joining the Government line some miles out of Geraldton; therefore the purchase of the Midland line will not considerably benefit that port. Coming to the no-confidence motion, I think it is already evident to members of the House and electors outside that the Premier has expressed a

want of confidence in some at least of his Ministers; or it may be that he intends to pass round portfolios to some other members of his party, in accordance with socialistic principles, if he is allowed to remain in office. I trust the Minister for Lands will look into one matter. I believe there are people along the Great Southern railway who are taking up land on conditional purchase for the sole purpose of securing mallet bark, and with this object are paying their first year's instalment. Then the department has, I believe, to survey the holdings, and other fees are payable. As the selectors have taken up the land merely to secure the bark, the expenses of the department are thereby increased without any satisfactory result in the way of real settlement. I have nothing else to say, save that I shall vote against the Government.

MR. F. F. WILSON (North Perth): I did not intend to speak on this motion because I consider the debate simply a waste of time. But as the other side have evinced a desire to string out the debate as long as possible, I cannot, in justice to myself and the party with which I am associated, allow the debate to close until I have expressed my opinion and announced my intention as to how I shall vote. I think the Labour party and the Labour Ministry have justified themselves in the eyes of the country; and I know from what I hear outside that the country is satisfied with the administration of the present Government. [MR. BURGESS: Perhaps you are deaf.] My friend must have been very deaf if during the last three or four weeks he has not heard that satisfaction expressed while he was travelling about Perth in trams and about the country in trains. Everywhere we hear that to turn out the Government at present would be a misfortune to the State. The circumstances in which the present Government came into power are well known. The Labour party have always been taunted with the fact that while they aspired to power they were not prepared to take the responsibilities of office. The last general election disclosed that the party were returned 22 strong. The then Government were not returned in sufficient strength to carry on. The Labour party being returned by a majority of votes, the James Government inserted a para-

graph in the policy Speech practically throwing down the gauntlet to the Labour party, and demanding that they should take up the responsibilities of office. The Labour party have taken up those responsibilities, and carried them out as administrators with credit to themselves and to the country. The Government are charged with doing practically nothing during last session. I consider that as Ministers new to office they did much; and I give the Opposition credit for ably and meritoriously assisting the Government to carry out the programme of last session. I am surprised that after assisting the Government as they did, the Opposition should now turn round and say they intend to fire Ministers out. I think that is base ingratitude. If the Government were worth supporting during last session they are much better entitled to support during this. They have had the experience of a parliamentary session, and they are now more capable of carrying out their duties than they were when they began. Then why this no-confidence motion? What is its object? Is it to secure the emoluments of office? When one comes carefully to consider the question, one must conclude that the Opposition have no other object. I am sorry to come to that conclusion. During last session the Government have carried through the House many measures of benefit to the country. One was the Inspection of Machinery Act, which I am sure will be a benefit. They abolished the Metropolitan Waterworks Board which had for a long time been giving trouble. I congratulate the ex-Minister for Works (Hon. W. D. Johnson) on his administration of the work which he took over from that board. The people of North Perth owe a debt of gratitude to him for the concessions he was able to make in respect of water supply since he took over the administration. I think the Government are to be congratulated on the measures they passed last session. As Ministers new to office they have done wonders; and having had twelve months' Ministerial experience, surely the time has not come for turning them out. [MR. CONNOR: Go to the country.] I for one do not want to go to the country. I, like the member for Hannans, believe that opposition to some extent saves

imposition; and I certainly should not like to see the House composed entirely of Labour members. I believe that a certain amount of opposition is good; therefore I do not wish to go to the country, for I feel sure that on the past performances of the Government the country would unanimously return an all-Labour Parliament. A member says that I should not be returned. Well, I am prepared to stake my chance against his; and if he likes to go to my electorate in the event of a dissolution I am quite prepared to take him on at the polls. The attack of the leader of the Opposition was in my opinion lamentably weak. Firstly, he started to attack the Government for departing from their platform. He said they were returned by the country to carry certain measures, and when they came into power they refused to carry out the country's mandate. I have yet to learn that the Government refused to carry out any plank in the Labour platform. As practically apprentices to Ministerial office, they had to acquire a thorough knowledge of their departments before they initiated new and experimental legislation; and I think they were quite justified in the stand they took during last session. Now, when the Government came forward with a progressive policy, the leader of the Opposition condemns them for that also. It reminds me of One of old who came on earth as a philanthropist, and who was a worker also. When He was rebuked for the good works He had done or was attempting to do, and when certain individuals would have stoned him, He said "Which of these works would ye stone me for?" That is the position of the Government to-day. The Pharisees on the Opposition side wish to stone the Government. The Government are surely justified in asking the country and the Opposition as to which of the progressive works they have embodied in their policy they are to be turned out for. The member for Kimberley wants to know who cast the first stone? I am not in a position to say whether there was any stone cast at all. The persons to whom this question was addressed were so ashamed that they slunk away; and that is the position in reference to this no-confidence debate. I am satisfied it will peter out, and that the success will be

with the Government. The leader of the Opposition condemned the Government for their progressive policy and for the various measures they are attempting to bring forward. Methinks I have heard it said that the leader of the Opposition is favourable to almost every plank in the programme of the Government at present. It has been said that the leader of the Opposition before the last elections was asked certain questions with reference to the attitude he intended to take regarding certain measures. He was asked in reference to the reform of the Legislative Council, and he said that if returned he would pledge himself to the reform of the Legislative Council with a view to rendering it more liberal and amenable to public wishes. We all desire that. We all desire the reform of the Upper House so that it may be made more amenable to the wishes of the public. The hon. member also pledged himself to liberalise the Arbitration Act, and to the tax on unimproved land values, which he said he would support as strongly as he could. I sincerely hope we will have the support of the hon. gentleman when the measure comes before Parliament, and that he will support it in the direction I intend to support it—that of having no exemptions. The hon. member said he would favour the stoppage of the future alienation of Crown lands, and that he was in favour of old age pensions.

MR. RASON: The hon. member, knowingly or unknowingly, is misrepresenting what I said. I said nothing of the kind. If the hon. member quotes at all, let him quote correctly and fully.

MR. F. F. WILSON: If the hon. member says my statements are incorrect, I will withdraw; but I am satisfied I can substantiate the statements I have made. Having in view the fact that the present policy of the Government is so democratic and so progressive and that the leader of the Opposition has expressed himself in favour of certain portions of it, why does the leader of the Opposition want to turn the Government out? The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) also went in for biblical quotations; but unfortunately the quotations were, like his politics, not quite correct. He said in effect that the Labour party have done those things they should not have done, and that there is no

good in them. Now the correct rendering of that quotation is: "They have done those things they should not have done, and they have left undone those things they should have done." I want to know what the Labour party have left undone during the past session that they should have done. There was no mandate to them from the electors to bring in their platform within 6 or 12 months. [**MR. RASON:** Nor 12 years.] The life of Parliament is three years, and members of the Ministry were justified in doing their level best to obtain Ministerial experience; and now that they have shown a desire to bring in some planks of the Labour party's platform and are trying to do what they are pledged to do—and they will do it if the Opposition will only let them—and what they were sent by the country to do, the Opposition are seeking to turn them out. The speech of the member for Boulder put me in mind of a Chinese cracker. First of all there is a fiz and a loud explosion, and afterwards there is a terrible smell. That reminded me forcibly of the hon. member's speech. I thought he would have put up a good fight for the Opposition. Being disappointed in the speech of the leader of the Opposition, I thought, when the member for Boulder got on his feet, that he at least would put forward some justification for turning the Government out; but his speech was something like a Chinese cracker: there was an explosion, and after that died away something was left—we know what. The member for Perth, with his usual versatility, maligned the political Labour party and quoted a very pathetic case with reference to some man who went to him to get a job in the council. I was always under the impression that the city engineer employed men for the council, and I was rather surprised to know that anyone would go to the mayor in particular to get a job. This man represented to the mayor that he was unable to earn the minimum wage, and consequently the mayor informed him that he could not be employed. I am here to state that in reference to corporation labourers there is no arbitration award in existence. So the Mayor of Perth was misrepresenting the case by stating that this man had to get a permit from anybody to get a job under the council. I like things to be put fairly

and squarely and the truth to be told; and when the mayor said that this man could not be engaged by the council at less than a certain rate, I am satisfied, since there is no arbitration award in reference to council employees, the mayor was not stating the case fairly. The member for Perth also made a great to-do about the day-labour system. I think we have a standing illustration as to the contract system in the Wellington Street drain. Ever since I have been in Perth, they have been continually tinkering with this drain; and I know it to be a fact that the drain was carried out by contract, and that there was a certain deal made by certain gentlemen in reference to a lot of damaged cement brought in here and bought at a less rate than good cement can be supplied at. These individuals made a nice little pot out of the deal. The cement was worked in, and consequently the drain has gone to pieces and has been a source of expense and annoyance to the City Council ever since. I am prepared to support day labour every time, for by it we get good material and good workmanship, and the country and men get a fair deal for their labour. We can take Walcott Street, built by a certain contractor. The road went to pieces in 12 months, and had to be re-made. On inquiry by the City Council it was found that not half the material specified to be put in the job was in. At North Perth there is a road made by the Public Works Department; and it is a standing credit to the department for the way in which it has been made. I inspected the road myself. I saw it in course of construction and saw the material used, and that the workmanship was good; and I have the assurance of the Public Works Department that it is being carried out as cheaply as if it were being done by contract. I support the day-labour system; it is the proper system, and we will have it with the Labour Government in power. I am satisfied we will get a far better deal by it than by the contract system. There are three ways in which the contractor can make profits. In the first place he must get more than the job is actually worth before he can make a profit. If he does not do that, then he must get it out of the men; and if he does not get it out of the labour of the

men, he must slum the work or rob the party he is working for by stinting the material, which is, unfortunately, often the case. As long as I am a member of Parliament and can lift my voice as a public man, I will support the day labour system. The member for Perth said that no one but a unionist could represent the Labour party in Parliament. I give that a denial. We have men in this House who have never been unionists. The political Labour party does not stipulate that men shall be unionists. The ranks are open to anyone who will go into them and carry out the principles. [MR. BURGESS: What about the pledge?] Of course members on this side of the House and members of the Labour party are required to subscribe to certain principles. If they are prepared to do that, they become members of the Labour party. [OPPOSITION MEMBER: They will not take your word.] We have had too much experience of that sort of thing. We get a man to put his name to certain principles; and if he goes back on them we know how to deal with him. We have done it in the past, and will do it in the future. The member for Perth claims that we desire the foremen of public works to be unionists. I am even prepared to advocate that principle. Our public works should be carried on with a view to utility. They are not for to-day or to-morrow, but are to stand the test of time; and I know that the best mechanics are in the unions. If the Public Works Department selected their foremen out of the unions, then the unions would be responsible for the men they suggested should be appointed; and they are quite prepared to take the responsibility of the ability of such men. If such men be appointed I am quite satisfied the country will get a far better deal than in the past. I can go to the Supreme Court and can pick flaws in the work there. An official of the court called my attention to places where pieces of wood had been thrust under the window-sills and puttied over. Is that workmanlike, or giving the country a fair deal? If men were picked from the ranks of the unionists and recommended to the Minister by the unionists to supervise these works, we would not have to complain of the scamping of work that is carried on at present. I for one am in favour of the Minister

for Works asking the unions to recommend men who shall be the leading hands on the different jobs, and I am satisfied that the workers and the country will then get a fair deal. Only to-day I was informed by a member of a union that certain works were going on at Claremont. A large dam is being constructed in the constituency represented by the hon. member, Mr. Foulkes. I was told that the work was carried out by unskilled labour. Some plastering work had to be done inside the dam, and the first and second coats have been put on by unskilled labour. That work has had to be chipped over, and I am told that it will cost the country £10 or £15 extra. This work will now have to be done by skilled labour. If good mechanics recommended by unions as leading hands had been employed, good work would have been done.

MR. H. BROWN: Your unions made some remarks about the Old Men's Depôt, which were refuted by sworn declarations.

MR. F. F. WILSON: A great deal has been said about the action of the Government in reference to preference to unionists. I claim that unionists, under the Arbitration Act, have given away the only weapon they possessed, which was the strike. If men were not satisfied with the conditions under which they were labouring, or with the wages they received, they had the alternative of laying down their tools and saying that they would not work. The unionists have given away all the privileges they possessed for the Arbitration Act, which states that there is a court created, and workmen and employers have an opportunity of bringing their grievances before that court to have them redressed. What is the position of the unionist under the Arbitration Act? While he surrenders all his privileges and the right to the only weapon which he had, that of throwing down his tools and creating a strike, which brought misery and destitution to hundreds and thousands, and penalised people who had no part or parcel in the dispute that took place, what has he got in return? As a unionist he is penalised, and becomes a marked man. I can illustrate two cases which took place in Perth in which a large firm of

ironmongers employed two men as carters who were officers of unions. They had been employed by the firm for several years; one became president of a union, and he was then told that he was wanted no longer, that the firm were going to put his cart off. The man was dismissed, but the next week a nonunionist was put on in the first man's place. In the other case the workman was president of a union, and he was forced out of his employment and had to go into the back country looking for work. These are only two instances out of hundreds that have taken place since the unions gave up their weapon, that of the strike, and have taken the Arbitration Act. Seeing that unionists are victimised in hundreds of instances, the workers of the country are justified in asking that there shall be some protection for the men who have brought the Labour movement to its present position; who have brought about industrial reform and the privileges which working men now enjoy. The men are justified in asking that some protection should be meted out to them. It is not preference that we ask for but protection. We ask that the unionist shall stand on the same ground as the nonunionist. I know hundreds of men who are nonunionists to-day, and why are they nonunionists? We are taunted with the fact that the unions are composed of only a small proportion of the men working in the industries. Why is that so? Because the men know that as soon as they become unionists, they become a target for the employers. I have had to suffer. I would not be in Western Australia to-day but for the prominent position I took in union matters on the other side. I was a marked man as a prominent trades unionist in another State, and I was forced to quit Victoria to come to Western Australia so as to earn a living. Hundreds of men have not been as fortunate as I have; they have been reduced to starvation and beggary because of the side they took in the uplifting of the masses. We, as trades unionists, are justified in asking that we shall stand on the same ground and on the same basis as nonunionists, therefore we are asking for protection not for preference, that the unionist who has sacrificed all the benefits which he

enjoyed outside his union shall stand on the same footing as the nonunionist. I am not surprised that the trades unionists of England, time after time, have rejected Judge-made law. They would sooner, having in view the experience of the Arbitration Courts in Australia, and having in view the treatment that trades unionists are subject to under the Arbitration Act, stick to the old method whereby they can throw down their tools and create a strike. Bad and all as it is, that seems to be better than to have Judge-made laws and Arbitration Courts. As trades unionists, we have surrendered all our privileges for the sake of allowing an independent board to redress our difficulties. I consider unionists are justified in now asking for some consideration in the shape of protection to unionists. It has been said that trades unionists debar nonunionists from joining unions. That is a ridiculous statement. No trades unionist would debar a man from going into a union. The New South Wales Court has held that no man shall be debarred from becoming a member of a union.

MR. H. BROWN: But you cannot let him out once he is in. "Britons never shall be slaves."

MR. F. F. WILSON: The hon. member says we will not let him out. There is only one operation of the Act that prevents a man from going out of a union. He cannot get out while a dispute is before the Court, and I do not see why he should. But when there is no dispute before the Court a man has always the option of giving three months' notice, paying up three months' subscriptions, and then he can cease to become a member. But my experience is that if a man—and I have had 15 or 20 years' experience—gets into a union, and sees the benefits that unionism gives to him and to his fellow workers, he is content to remain a unionist. Therefore I consider that we, as trades unionists, have a legitimate argument and a right to ask that preference shall be granted to trades unionists. I was glad that Mr. Justice Parker, who has had so much criticism showered upon him by trades unionists, admitted the other day that the Trades Union Act empowered a Judge to give preference to trades unionists, and

I hope the Judge will carry that out when preference is asked for. [MEMBER: A forlorn hope.] I do not think that Mr. Justice Parker is as black as he is painted. Mr. Justice Parker is one of the greatest patriots we have in West Australia at the present time. I believe that Mr. Justice Parker has been unfortunate sometimes in the decisions he has given, but I believe it is his patriotic nature that has impelled him to give these decisions. He has taken into consideration an industry as it stands at present and the outside competition, and he weighs these facts in his mind.

MR. RASON: On a point of order, is it open to any member to criticise the conduct of a Supreme Court Judge?

MR. SPEAKER: I was considering that point myself; but I understand that the hon. member has referred to the Judge in his capacity as President of the Arbitration Court; therefore I shall allow the member to go on. But I think it will be wise if members refrain from mentioning, either in praise or blame, members of the Arbitration Court who are members also of the Supreme Court Bench.

MR. F. F. WILSON: My excuse for mentioning the name was that, as President of the Arbitration Court, Mr. Justice Parker has given decisions; and I was attempting to justify the decisions given; I was attempting to show that the President of the Court had given certain decisions because of his patriotism to the State of Western Australia. But I will not labour the point farther. I believe certain decisions of the Arbitration Court have been given because the Court was of opinion that unless certain rates of wages were paid, certain industries could not exist. But my opinion in reference to that matter is that if industries cannot be made to pay a living wage, it is far better for these industries to cease than for men to work for starvation wages. The member for Canning, in his able and eloquent speech, alluded to the cost of living, and stated that the Labour Government had done nothing for the unemployed. The cost of living to a great extent is determined by the rent which the workers and shopkeepers have to pay. I believe that if the Labour Government bring in a Bill for a tax on unimproved land values without exemptions, and if

that Bill is put through the House and placed on the statute-book of Western Australia, the measure will have a great effect in reducing the rents which have to be paid at the present time. A lot of members and people outside Parliament hold the opinion that the tax will be added to the rents at present existing; but my opinion is that a tax on unimproved land values will cause a lot of the land at present lying idle for speculative purposes to be put to some use. I believe it will compel the sale of a lot of land which is at present being held for speculative purposes. The workers and others will have a better opportunity of getting a piece of land on which to build and make a home, and it will also have a tendency to reduce the rents at present existing, because it will not pay a shop-keeper to keep a shop empty for any length of time. He will naturally be forced to get a tenant of some kind or other in order that the shop or land shall become rent-producing so that it will pay the tax placed upon it. I sincerely hope that when the Government bring down the measure they propose to this House for taxing unimproved land values it will be carried without exemptions, because the Labour party have always been accused that they always wish to tax the other fellow, to tax the capitalist. I, as a member of the Labour party, was returned to this House on the pledge that I was in favour of a tax on unimproved land values without exemptions, and that is what I intend to support. If the Government bring down a measure with exemptions up to £400, I am going to fight that measure for all I am worth. If the Government carry it with the aid of the Opposition, I say good luck to them, but I repeat that I am going to oppose it for all I am worth, and I sincerely hope that the exemptions will be knocked out altogether. There is the question of the Pilbarra Railway. That is a question which has caused a good deal of discussion. I do not intend to support the proposal. I think that we in Western Australia have had too much of that already, and I intend to oppose the construction of the Pilbarra Railway by private enterprise. [MR. CONNOR: Two planks are broken already.] I do not think private-enterprise railways are a plank in the Labour platform; but I realise that the position of the Govern-

ment is this, that during the term of the previous Government a resolution was carried in favour of the Pilbarra Railway being built, and that if the Government were not prepared to build it, offers should be invited from outside people; and if the House be not prepared to adopt the building of this railway by the country, the Government, I presume, in carrying out the mandate of the House, are going to invite private enterprise to build this railway. I recognise that the Labour party in this House number 22 members, and if there is a majority against us we are entitled to bow to the will of the majority as representatives of the country. A great deal has been said in reference to the finance and the administration of the present Government. We found that the James Government, at the termination of the year ending June 30th 1903, had a surplus of £231,659 12s. 8d. On June 30th 1904 they left a surplus of £83,364, testifying that the James Government spent £148,295 12s. 8d. more than they received in revenue. Now members criticise the present Government for their bad financial arrangements, for bringing down a deficit to this House. What is the position? When the present Government came into office there was a surplus of £83,364. At the end of the financial year June 1905 there was a deficit of £46,520, showing that the present Government spent £129,885 more than they received in revenue. That £129,000 has to be placed against £148,000, and these figures prove that although the present Government have administered the affairs of the country well and desirably in the interests of the country, yet they were more economical to the extent of the difference between £148,000 and £129,000. [MR. BURGESS: How do you prove it?] The hon. member must be very dense if he cannot understand those figures. Surely the hon. member can understand the difference between 148 and 129. It is only a simple sum. If he cannot manage it, and will allow me the opportunity when I have concluded, I will be pleased to show him. A great deal has been said against the present Government. I admit that they are not the acme of perfection, but I am forced to this conclusion, that they are far better in their present position than

the Opposition would be; and with Shakespeare I say we would

... rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of.

I shall vote against the no-confidence motion, and support the present Government.

On motion by Mr. BURGESS, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 19th July, 1905.

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THE ACTING PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4-30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

REGULATIONS UNDER WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT, TO DISALLOW.

On motion by Hon. M. L. MOSS, ordered that the resolution passed at the last sitting, relating to the disallowance of regulations made under the Workers' Compensation Act, be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly and their concurrence desired therein.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PASSENGER RATES, ANOMALIES.

HON. M. L. MOSS asked the Colonial Secretary: In the new Rate Book, have the anomalies in the passenger rates from Fremantle been removed, in accordance with the Minister's promise made in reply to my question on the point asked last session?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The new Rate Book only deals with goods and merchandise. The passenger book is now under consideration and revision.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Report on the Ravensthorpe Smelter, by G. O. Klug. 2, Report on the Progress of the Phillips River Goldfield and State Smelting Works, by the State Mining Engineer. 3, The Mining Act, 1904—Regulations. 4, By-laws of the Municipalities of Fremantle and North Perth. 5, Copies of Orders in Council authorising certain transfers under "The Audit Act, 1904" (Section 35). 6, Report of the Education Department for the year 1904. 7, Goldfields Water Supply Administration By-laws. 8, Statement of Receipts and Expenditure of the Fire Brigades Board for year ended 31st December, 1904. 9, Return of the number of Royal Commissions appointed by the State Government since 30th June, 1904, etc.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY explained that the return asked for by Mr. Sholl was not exactly complete information, but it was as complete as he could get it that afternoon. Some additional information was required, which he would supply if ample time were given.

MIDLAND RAILWAY AND LANDS PURCHASE, REPORTS.

HON. J. W. HACKETT moved that the adjourned debate on the motion by the Hon. W. Kingsmill, for production of the full report of the board of inquiry into the extent and value of the Midland Railway and lands, be farther adjourned for one week.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Certain information had been promised in the Governor's Speech in relation to the proposed purchase of the Midland Railway and lands, and that information should have been laid before members of this House at the earliest possible date. The option in regard to purchase would expire at the end of the month, and therefore the matter must be decided within that time under the option. Many days had elapsed since that promise was made in the Governor's Speech, and only