

be required. At Beagle Bay, some years ago good samples of tobacco were grown by the Trappists who were residing there; and although they did not actually smoke the leaf themselves, they were able to supply the tobacco required by the natives. At the same place there is a fine banana plantation. Cocoanuts have been in full bearing in the North for several years, and there is no doubt that much might be done to cultivate tropical crops if suitable labour could be found and suitable areas provided. It seems to me that some small amount might well be spent in experimental work in the North, to find out what really are suitable crops for the climate. The mineral resources of the North, no doubt, will prove to be of great value; and I think that we are justified in asking the Government to give all possible assistance to prospectors and others who are willing to risk life and capital. I should like to refer to the matter of protection to settlers in the North. We continually hear complaints of trouble with the natives. They spear white men and others; hence the settlers require some consideration. A short time ago a case was heard at Wyndham, in which a native was prosecuted for the murder of a white man. At the preliminary hearing the native was convicted of murder, and a Judge was sent to try the case. Counsel was sent to defend the native, but unfortunately no counsel was sent for the prosecution; and on a question of law this native ultimately got off. The people of East Kimberley feel very keenly that this miscarriage of justice has let loose what to them is an apparent murderer; and they demand that for the future skilled prosecution shall be provided where skilled defence is provided. It is, as a rule, quite as difficult for the settlers to provide skilled prosecution as it is for the native to provide skilled defence. In fact, at the present time it is more difficult, as the Aborigines Board is prepared to provide skilled defence for natives. The settlers only ask for fair play; and I think that those who have to risk their lives in these far-back places are justified in asking for that. I am glad to note that the Government are prepared to adopt a progressive policy, and are not afraid to borrow a certain amount of

money for pushing on the works necessary for the development of the industries of this great State. It is quite possible that, owing to the deficit which has to be faced, it will be necessary for some new form of taxation to be imposed; but at the same time, the natural progress of this great State, combined with the economical working of the various departments, will do much to reduce that deficit, and will probably prevent any very severe increase of taxation. Although perhaps not agreeing with the Government on all the points of their policy, I trust they will receive that amount of support which will enable them to further the best interests of this great State, and to develop the latent wealth contained therein.

On motion of MR. GORDON, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned a 9-55 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 11th July, 1906.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS ARBITRATION AWARD.

MR. H. BROWN: I beg to ask the question standing in my name; but

before doing so I should like to take exception to the interruption—it is bad enough during the debates—of the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) during the asking of my question yesterday. The question is: 1, At whose instigation were proceedings instituted in the Court of Arbitration of Western Australia between the West Australian Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees' Union of Workers and the Commissioner of Railways? 2, Is it correct that the Commissioner of Railways has publicly stated that if the terms of the award were carried out a saving of £40,000 a year would have been effected? 3, If not, what amount? 4, Is it the intention of the present Government to take advantage of the award dated the 21st December, 1905? 5, If not, why not? 6, Is it the intention of the Government to take proceedings against the Commissioner of Railways for disobeying the order of the Court of Arbitration dated the 21st December, 1905?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, At the instigation of the West Australian Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees' Union of Workers. 2, The Government have not heard of any such statement. 3, It is difficult to say, but if the award were strictly put into force with the fettlers, that is to say every man put on the minimum rate of pay, approximately £15,000 per annum would be saved. 4, 5, and 6, The conditions generally, except in regard to rate of pay, are in force. The award also, so far as it relates to new hands, is being enforced, but old employees have not been reduced. For instance, the award gives 7s. per day as a minimum rate for fettlers—this is enforced with new hands until they have proved their capacity for the work they are employed on, when they are paid the additional 1s. per day. The Government accept the responsibility of paying the higher rate.

QUESTION—TIMBERS OF W.A., HOW DISPARAGED.

MR. BATH asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to disparaging remarks anent West Australian timber, appearing in a work entitled "Through Five Republics of South America," by Percy F. Martin, published this year?

2, Will he ascertain to what extent karri timber has been substituted for jarrah for piles, sleepers, etc., exported to South America or elsewhere by timber exporters in this State? 3, Will he take steps to have the true value of jarrah made known through the proper British channels in South America?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Inquiries will be instituted. 3, Yes. This is already being done.

QUESTION—BRIQUETTE MANUFACTURE.

MR. BATH asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has any report been received from the firm of Krupp, Magdeburg, in reference to the experimental manufacture of briquettes, as mentioned in the Collie Coal Commission's Report, page 6? 2, If so, on what date was such report received?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Information has been received to the effect that experiments had been made in manufacturing briquettes by the firm in question, but so far no report has been received.

QUESTION—MINING CONDITIONS, AS TO FORFEITURE.

MR. SCADDAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is the Minister correctly reported in the Press as saying at the Coolgardie meeting on Saturday night last, "He (the speaker) believed that capital and labour should go hand-in-hand. The mining conditions should be made easier for both. At the present time, if a man took up a gold-mining lease, it did not matter how much money or labour he expended on it, if he left it for a single day it was liable to forfeiture." 2, Under what section of the Mining Act or Regulations made thereunder is it specified that such liability to forfeiture occurs? 3, If regulations, when and under whose administration were they framed? 4, How many applications for forfeiture have been made for the offence of one day's noncompliance with the labour covenant, and how many cases have been given against the leaseholder?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes; substantially correct. 2, Sections 79 and 99 "Mining Act, 1904," and Regulation 90. 3, The present

Regulations were put forward by the Hon. Mr. Johnson and approved in Executive Council on the 13th July, 1905, but the provisions in the existing Act and Regulations are similar to those that have been in force since the passing of "The Goldfields Act, 1866." 4, To supply this information it would be necessary to search the records relating to every case of forfeiture that has occurred, but I am not of opinion that many leases have been forfeited for a breach of the labour conditions for one day.

QUESTION—CATTLE-DIPPING, RESULTS.

MR. GORDON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, The price charged per head by the Government for dipping cattle at Fremantle? 2, Which of the various dips used has proved the most effective and least injurious to the stock? 3, What price is paid for McKenzie's dip? 4, What price is paid for the other dips used?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Sixpence per head. 2, The Queensland Government's formula. 3, The price is not to exceed the cost of the Queensland dip. 4, The amount for filling the dip with the Queensland solution is £8.

QUESTION—TIMBER INDUSTRY, HOW ASSISTED.

MR. EWING asked the Premier: What Government assistance has been given to the Timber Industry since the institution of Responsible Government?

THE PREMIER replied: The forest resources of the State have been constantly advertised in various widely-distributed publications; action has been taken by the Agent General from time to time to bring the suitability of our timbers for wood paving and other purposes before the British public. A shipment of jarrah blocks was sent by the Government for paving portion of one of the principal streets of Ontario, Canada; and the suitability of jarrah and other Western Australian timbers for cabinet-making has been advertised by Government exhibits at various exhibitions, museums, etc. The late Mr. Ednie Brown's report on

the "Forests of Western Australia and their Development" was published in 1899, and distributed throughout the world. "Notes re Timbers of Western Australia, suitable for Railways, Engineering Works and Constructive Purposes Generally," have lately been published in pamphlet form, and an elaborate series of tests of the principal timbers of the State is now being completed and will shortly be published.

QUESTION—GOLD STEALING (ALLEGED), PARTICULARS.

MR. BATH asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What steps have been taken regarding the assertions of J. E. Scantlebury re gold stealing at Kalgoorlie mines? 2, Have reports been asked for from the Warden and the police authorities at Kalgoorlie; and if so, when? 3, Have reports been furnished the Minister by those officials; and if so, when? 4, Are the newspaper reports correct that state that the official report discloses much gold leakage which cannot be attributed to the miners? 5, Is it intended to lay upon the table of the House the papers in connection with the inquiry?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1 and 2, Reports have been obtained from the Warden, the Resident Magistrate, and the police officers. 3, Yes, between June 7th and 18th. 4, The opinions expressed in the reports are to the effect that gold stealing is practised not only by miners but by persons in higher positions where facilities are greater. 5, It is not considered desirable at the present time to lay the papers on the table of the House.

QUESTION—PUBLIC BATTERY, MONTAGU RANGE.

MR. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When did Mr. Hastie refuse the erection of a Public Battery at Montagu Range? 2, Will the Minister read to the House a record of such refusal?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, On the 25th April, 1905, by letter sent to Mr. R. W. Harper through Mr. Troy, M.L.A. 2, The refusal reads as follows:—"Although the Minister is not prepared to erect a battery at 50-mile,

he would consider the question of granting a subsidy if the owners of the mill there would be willing to crush on reasonable terms."

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the **TREASURER**: Regulations under Aborigines Act.

By the **PREMIER**: Report of Chief Inspector of Factories. Report of Conference of Commonwealth and State Premiers and Ministers. By-law of municipality of South Perth.

By the **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: Supplementary by-law of Goldfields Water Supply Administration. Regulations and by-laws of Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Board.

FINANCIAL POSITION, TREASURY RESULTS.

THE TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): With your permission, I should like to make a statement to the House with regard to the finances of the State. The books were balanced early this morning, at 2.30 o'clock, and it was then shown that the deficit, including the amount of £46,521 1s. 4d. carried over from last year, is £119,900 2s. 6d., or £12,455 17s. 6d. less than Mr. Rason estimated, and almost the exact amount which was mentioned as a forecast by the Premier in his speech at Bunbury. The estimated revenue for the year was £3,634,887, and the actual revenue received £3,558,938 16s. 1d., a reduction of £75,948 3s. 11d. The estimated expenditure during the year was £3,720,722, and the actual expenditure £3,632,317 17s. 3d., or a difference of £88,404 2s. 9d. When Mr. Rason was estimating the expenditure, he estimated that it would exceed the revenue by £85,835, whereas the actual receipts have been exceeded by the expenditure only to the amount of £73,379.

BILL—POLICE OFFENCES.

Introduced by the **ATTORNEY GENERAL**, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

EIGHTH DAY OF DEBATE.

MR. J. VERYARD (Balkatta): I rise with pleasure to support the motion before the House, and I do so with a good deal of diffidence, as I have to follow

the many eloquent speeches that have been delivered on the Address-in-Reply. I have noticed that most of the long speeches have been caused by members on the other (Opposition) side ventilating their many grievances, and members on this side replying to those real or imaginary grievances. Having no grievance of my own to ventilate, I do not propose to occupy much time. I will not promise, as one member did last night, to occupy not more than 30 minutes and then engage the House for two hours. I do not intend to touch upon many items in His Excellency's Speech, but just a few. The first paragraph I desire to refer to is the one wherein His Excellency is made to speak in this way: "It is my pleasant duty to again assure you that the prosperity of the State continues apace." I am not prepared to say that is not absolutely the case. I believe that in some industries in the State it is the case, especially in regard to land settlement, the cultivation of the soil; but at the present time there are, I believe, thousands of unemployed in our State. Members representing the goldfields have drawn attention to the fact that there are many hundreds, if not thousands, on the fields who are unemployed. Personally, I am not acquainted with the fields to such an extent as to know the correctness or otherwise of their assertion; but I can say that to a great extent what applies on the fields, or has been said to do so, applies to the city and suburbs. I regret to find there are many hundreds of people unemployed, who are not able to take any advantage of the State's prosperity. There are also many landlords and owners of property at the present time who are unable to reap any advantage from the State's prosperity. I regret to find that so many of the unemployed are practically in a state of semi-starvation. I know this of my own personal knowledge, and I regret that it is so. A further feature of this unemployed question is that some of the leading firms in our neighbourhood are taking advantage of the many unemployed to reduce wages, and so there are now leading houses which are selling their goods at cut prices at the expense practically of their assistants. Recently it came under my notice that a very large firm here, noted for its propensity to cut

prices, gave notice to something like 30 of its employees to the effect that their services would not be required after a given date unless they were prepared to take a certain wage. This is the unfortunate outcome of the unemployed question. One member on the opposite side of the House has stated that his constituency has been greatly neglected by some of the Ministers. Personally, I am not in any way interested in what is happening many miles away in that respect, but I do feel, as far as my own constituency is concerned, that we have very little to be thankful for. I am not quite prepared to lay the blame straight away on the Ministers. I think members may be prepared to make considerable allowance for the fact that we have had such frequent changes in the Ministry that it has been practically impossible for Ministers to follow a continuous policy, and this no doubt to some extent has hindered the carrying out of many important works in contemplation. In reply to a question the other day the Minister for Works, referring to the extension of the water service through our district, stated that a distance of two miles had been laid down out of a distance of 13 miles, and in another direction half-a-mile out of 11 miles. The inference from that would be that the work has been progressing, but I would like to point out that nearly the whole of this two miles of water main service has been down for some years, and the probability is that not five chains have been recently laid down for the continuation of the scheme. However, I am pleased to note that the Government or the Works Department are now proceeding with the work.

MR. TAYLOR: You must remember that the pipe line along Oxford Street has not been started.

MR. VERYARD: The pipes will get there directly. But in view of the large number of unemployed in the neighbourhood, and the urgency of this work, I would suggest that the Minister for Works might at least employ an additional staff of men, so that the work might be hurried.

MR. BOLTON: Men from the Eastern States?

MR. VERYARD: No. In some parts of the district the expense of sinking

wells is very great; and knowing that the Government will sooner or later be sending water through the streets, the people do not care to incur that expense. On the other hand, in low-lying districts the water is not of a quality that consumers care to use; hence the need for completing this work at latest before next summer. The Minister has stated that the major portion of the work will be completed by December, thus indicating that the whole of it will not then be completed; and, knowing that there are so many unemployed, I think it would be well if the Minister increased the working staff so as to finish the whole work before the winter is over, and to give the people in that neighbourhood an opportunity of using good water. I wish to refer also to an act of negligence of the ex-Minister for Education (Hon. W. Kingsmill.) I waited on him with a request that was urgent, and, so far as it went, important; and he was so convinced of its importance that he decided to do the work at once. Immediately afterwards I left the State for some three or four months; and on returning I found that the work had not even been commenced, much less completed. However, I am pleased to say that the present Minister for Education (Hon. F. Wilson) is putting the work in hand. I have recently had the pleasure of visiting the railway workshops at Midland Junction, and was surprised at the magnitude of the undertaking, the large workshops, and the immense quantity of up-to-date machinery. I was struck also by the fact that there was so much unused space available, and so much machinery lying idle.

MR. BOLTON: That is bunkum. All the machinery is in use.

MR. VERYARD: Perhaps it is; but I am speaking of my own observation only. I know that when I was there a large portion of the machinery was not in use; and that being so, I would suggest that the Minister for Railways (Hon. H. Gregory) should utilise the whole of the machinery and the available space to give work to the many men outside who are unemployed. I am not particularly anxious for the Government to extend the day-labour system; but while there is so much available space there, and so much machinery idle, I think it would be

much better for the Government to employ men and to use machinery in doing work for the Railway Department. I think that too much rolling-stock has been imported in the past, and every effort should be made to have it constructed in our own State. While speaking on gold-mining, an Opposition member referred to the conditions under which some miners have to work, and characterised those conditions as exceedingly dangerous. I am sure that the Minister for Mines is just as much interested in the welfare of the goldfield workers as are other members who represent them; and I feel certain that the complaint will be inquired into. If justified, I trust that a remedy will be provided, if not under the present Mines Regulations Act, at least in the amending Bill likely to be introduced at an early date. The Loan Bill will have my hearty support. I believe in a loan policy. Personally, I have never yet failed in business, though I have for many years carried on business in this State. During that period I have always been in debt, and possibly always will be as long as I live. My impression is that, individually, people do not prosper in business without the use of borrowed money; and I think that the principle applies to the State as well as to the individual. It is not borrowing but expenditure which causes the trouble.

MR. BOLTON: It is the paying back.

MR. VERYARD: The paying back is not difficult, provided the borrowed money be properly expended. New railways to open large areas of this country are needed for its development; and for that purpose the borrowed money may well be spent. The finances must, I am sure, give considerable trouble to Ministers, as well as to private members and to people outside Parliament. I am pleased to find that the present estimated deficit is not so very large, seeing that it is within the estimate of the ex-Treasurer (Mr. Rason). The result might have been much worse; nevertheless, I hope that the various Government Departments will carefully watch their expenditure, and see whether there is any possibility of that economy which I think may in some cases be effected. Recently I saw an instance of economy of a sort, in a work undertaken by the Govern-

ment. Three men were engaged, two of whom were doing the work while the overseer had his coat on and his hands in his pockets. It may be that the two workers were earning 14s. a day each to make up for the overseer's idleness; but I think that a business man, finding it necessary to have an overseer on such a job, would give a man perhaps 1s. a day extra, and would expect him to do a day's work like any other employee. To my mind, the most important item in the Speech is the proposal for taxing land values. I am pledged to support an unimproved land tax; but as in the present state of affairs such a tax will not meet our requirements, I am quite prepared to support to its fullest extent the Government proposal. The only exemption I should like to see would be that of the small farmer. Small farmers now on the land, other small farmers who are to arrive, and even those large farmers who will eventually settle on the land, should for some considerable time be exempted. I take it that our land settlement is satisfactory so far as it has gone. The land has been well settled; and we should not by any means do that which is likely to check the progress of settlement. Therefore we should do our level best to be as liberal as possible in facilitating the settlement of our lands. It has been said, and rightly so, that a land tax will fall most heavily on the cities. I have no reason to dispute that at all. I think the owners of property in cities are those who have reaped the whole of the advantage from the prosperity of the State in past years, and they have also participated in the benefits accruing from the reduction of the interstate duties, amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds; and knowing that property has increased in the last few years 200 to 300 per cent., it seems to me only fair and reasonable to expect that those people, having obtained so much advantage in the past from the increase in the value of their property, should be prepared to take a greater share of the burden of the State's finances. The member for Katanning has urged that in lieu of a land tax the subsidies to municipalities should be reduced from £78,000 to £25,000, whilst the member for Gascoyne urged the abolition of the municipal subsidies altogether. Person-

ally, from my own experience of municipal work I think no money that the Government has ever given away could be better spent than that spent in the various municipalities. It has always been well expended, and I should not be inclined to support a reduction or the abolition of the municipal subsidies. My own leanings are towards the land tax system of South Australia, where the tax is a halfpenny in the pound under £5,000 in value, and another halfpenny in the pound for over £5,000 in value. I think that provision should be made in the Act to allow that when an appeal is made by an owner against the valuator's estimate, the Government should have the option of purchasing at the owner's valuation. By that means I think that the State would see that the owners' valuations were not too low for taxing purposes. I should also favour a 50 per cent. increase in the tax on absentee owners. With regard to the reform of the Upper House, I am pledged to support a reduction of the franchise qualification from £25 to £15. Hon. members on the opposite side of the House are not altogether satisfied with that reduction, but I suggest to them that they should accept it if it is only with the hope of getting the qualification wiped out altogether. I think Ministers may be congratulated upon their self-sacrifice in suggesting a reduction in their salaries by £200, but I am not in sympathy personally with that reduction. I believe that if Cabinet Ministers are going to devote the whole of their time and energies to their departments they should be well worth £1,000 a year; but we may take it that the very mention of the proposal is an earnest of their desire to economise. If that is so, then I suggest that we might do as is done in some of the other States, abolish payment of members of the Upper House. It would give a few thousand pounds to spend in another direction. When we were talking about Federation we were all led to believe that economy would be the order of the day, that one Governor would be sufficient for the whole of the States, and that there would be a decrease in the number of members of Parliament. Yet none of these reforms have been carried out so far as this State is concerned; and in that respect I shall be in favour, at the termination of His Excel-

lency's term of office, of the Government making provision to abolish the office altogether. There is one omission, and to my mind rather a serious omission, from the Speech, and that is a Local Option Bill. Many of us were under the impression last year that when the House met again the Government would move in this direction. There has been a change of Government since, but the people in the State, I think, are anxious to have the privilege of veto in their own particular neighbourhoods. For some time past public-house licenses have been granted all over the State, the people having no practical control over licenses; hence they are anxious that a Local Option Bill should be introduced. I hope the Premier will not be too long before he moves in this direction. There is one matter to which I wish to refer outside the Speech, and that is a clause in the last report of the Inspector of Fisheries where he says that during the previous year he had reported the discovery of commerce sponges in our coastal waters; and he speaks of some thousands of miles of water where these sponges may be collected. I suggest to the Minister controlling this department that, seeing we are to have an exhibition in the State at the latter end of this year, instructions should be given for a quantity of the sponges to be collected, sufficient to make a good show at this exhibition, in order to show that we have a large industry lying untouched at our doors. I believe the Government in all departments recognise the importance of encouraging industries. Here is an industry that lies at our doors and has not been touched. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to assist in the development of this industry. In conclusion, I wish to say that personally I have every confidence in the future of this State and am just as anxious for its prosperity as other members. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion now before the House.

MR. F. J. WARE (Hannans): It is not my intention to take up the time of this House at any great length on the Address-in-Reply, but at the outset I wish to enter a protest against the action of the Government in not placing before members of the House the measures they

intend to bring down this session. I consider that it was due to members that they should receive some information as to the measures it was intended to bring down this session. Certainly we have certain measures set out in the Governor's Speech, but then we have it mentioned that Bills will be laid before us during the present session dealing with a number of subjects requiring attention. This is certainly vague, and I think it is due to members that they should have something placed before them so that they could know what the intentions of the Government are during this session. In the forefront of the Speech also, we are told that the prosperity of the State is proceeding apace, or words to that effect. I consider that this is practically an insult to thousands of people in the State at the present time. While we have thousands of people unemployed in this State, the Government issue this to them, "That the prosperity of the State continues apace;" and practically tell these people that they are loafers and do not want employment. I think it would be better on the part of the Government if they would face the real facts of the situation, with a firm determination to try to see what they can possibly do to make the affairs of the State better than they are. Certainly the State has a great future before it with proper government, but that is not to say that the State at present is in a prosperous condition. I have here a cablegram sent by the Premier to the old country on the occasion of the eighth annual West Australian dinner, and it reads as follows:—

Perth, W.A., May 28, 1906.—West Australia extends hearty greeting across the sea to all West Australian residents and friends in England present at the annual reunion to-morrow night, and to the committee's distinguished guests. I appreciate and desire express warm thanks for the honour done to State in attendance of the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies on behalf of Government. Prospects of State are from all points of view brighter and more encouraging than ever. Liberal land settlement scheme attracting continual stream population, and new agricultural railways being constructed. The mining industry steadily strengthens and extends. Gold mines have since 1890 distributed £14,542,456 in dividends, and produced £85,739,016 of gold. The timber and other industries are rapidly extending. Government doing all possible to liberalise State laws and institutions—etc.

The Attorney General has a better

knowledge, or a knowledge that he is prepared to place before the people of the State, with regard to mining. He told the electors at Kalgoorlie that mines were closing down every day and that no new mines were being opened up to take their places. I think the hon. member should be commended for placing the true situation before the people of the State. I think it is the duty of the Government, instead of talking about something which does not exist, to face the full facts and do what they possibly can to employ the people of the State. As evidence of the prosperity of the State, we are told in the Governor's Speech that during last year the State paid dividends to the extent of over two million pounds. I regret to say that it is not evidence that the State in itself is prosperous. These dividends as we know have been brought about by up-to-date machinery and a contract system—well, an alleged contract system. We know that the major portion of the money leaves the State. If the Government could have shown that so many mines had been opened and so many more thousands of men had been employed in mining, that would have shown in itself that the State was prosperous; but the fact that the dividends go out of the State I do not think is any evidence of it. We are also told in the Governor's Speech that it is the intention of the Government to bring down a Loan Bill. In this instance we are not informed to what extent the Government intend to borrow, neither have we any assurance that they intend to expend the money on reproductive works alone. I hope that when the Bill comes down we shall have some assurance that the money is to be spent purely on reproductive works, and that we shall also have some information as to the works on which this money is to be spent. The matter of land settlement will certainly receive the support of members sitting on the Opposition side of the House. Although the majority of members on the Opposition side of the House represent the goldfields of this State, still we are not blind to the necessity of pushing forward the agricultural and pastoral industries to their fullest extent. In dealing with the land question I wish to say something about the residential

blocks on the goldfields. I understand it is the intention of the Government to alter the system prevailing on the goldfields at the present time and to give people on the goldfields an opportunity to secure the freehold title to their blocks in five years. I am sorry that I cannot support the Government in this proposal. While I will admit the system at present in existence on the goldfields is unsatisfactory, in my opinion it has been made unsatisfactory by those who are opposed to the leasehold system. While the system in existence at the present time is unpopular, I can point out in a few words why it is unpopular—it is because of the enormous rents which have been charged people on the fields for the blocks. People on the goldfields are very much over-rated. They have to pay from £2 10s. up to £4 per annum for the right to one of these blocks. I consider that where the people are rated so high, and considering the rate they have to pay for their water from the water scheme, and the high cost of living, these people are unduly taxed. In these circumstances it is no wonder there is dissatisfaction with the present system. It was never intended when this new system came into operation that these high rates should be charged on these blocks. I have a letter in my pocket now from one of my constituents in which he states that he is charged as high as £10 per annum by the Government for the rent of a block on which he has a small store in a back street. And he has to pay this enormous sum of £10 per annum simply because he supplies the neighbours with little necessities which they may happen to run out of. I hope that if the new system does come into operation—and I suppose the Government with their big majority will be able to carry their proposal—that some consideration will be shown to the people on the fields in the direction of making provision so that blocks will not be dummed as in the past. Those who know the fields are aware that in the early days fortunes were made in the buying and selling of blocks of land. People bought blocks and sold them, just as they bought and sold scrip, creating a lamentable state of affairs. Precautions will have to be taken so that a person who has held a

block previously will have to appear before the land board in all subsequent applications, and if it be found that he has been selling as a speculation he should be denied the right to take up a farther block. I have had considerable experience in this matter. I was associated with the Attorney General (Hon. N. Keenan) on the land board at Kalgoorlie, when we had quite a number of people before us applying for blocks. We may have had only half-a-dozen blocks at our disposal to recommend to different people, but I have seen the court crowded with applicants for those blocks. That is another matter which I desire to bring under the notice of the Minister responsible for the control of this department, namely that more of these blocks should be thrown open on the fields. We find that while people are desirous of getting off the leases and taking up blocks as early as possible, there are not sufficient blocks thrown open to enable them to do so. We want more blocks thrown open, and what is more, we want more liberal conditions in connection with them. It has been claimed by the Kalgoorlie Roads Board—I am speaking now more particularly of Kalgoorlie and Boulder—and I agree with them, that the chairman of the roads board is the proper gentleman to occupy the bench on the land board. At the present time we have the mayor of Kalgoorlie and the president of the Trades and Labour Council sitting as a land board. Considering that the majority of these blocks—in fact the whole of those which have been thrown open—are in the roads board area, I think that the chairman of the roads board, and not the mayor of Kalgoorlie should have a seat on the board. We were told by the Premier, in reply to an interjection from his own side, that present holders would not be compelled to come under the new regulations. These holders, knowing the conditions prevailing on the goldfields at the present time, if the conditions are liberalised at all will be only too glad to come under them. With regard to the tax on unimproved land values, I regret that the Government have not shown more sincerity with regard to this matter. We find that while in this House they advocate a tax on unimproved land values they have done their utmost outside to

assist the return of certain gentlemen to another Chamber whom they know to be totally opposed to this proposal. We find also, even in this House, that members sitting on that (Government) side of the House are not agreed among themselves about the proposal. We have the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown) and the member for North Perth (Mr. Brebber), and there are other instances of members sitting on the other side, who are opposed to the proposal. It is rather amusing to find that the member for Perth, representing the city, which has always been spoon-fed and which has had so much of the money of this State for the purpose of building snake-houses and so forth, now that some effort is to be made by the Government for the purpose of raising revenue, is here the first to cry out. I hope the Premier will be firm in this matter, and pass the Bill through this House. With regard to exemptions, I regret that in the opinion of members on the Government side it is necessary to have exemptions. Even in this matter there is disagreement on the other side. I notice that the member for Albany (Mr. Barnett) and others are opposed to exemptions. I believe it is the intention of the Government to endeavour to pass this Bill with exemptions, thinking that hon. members will vote for the measure. While we (the Opposition) are in favour of taxing unimproved land values, we are not in favour of exemptions; and if the exemptions are included it is just possible that members on the Opposition side of the House will have to vote against the Bill. The totalisator tax is another measure to which I wish to refer. This measure, members will remember, was passed last session, and whilst I was in favour of a tax on the totalisator, I regret that it has been found by experience that a good deal of harm has been done to the charitable institutions, on the goldfields particularly, by this tax. While the revenue of the State has not received much benefit from the tax we find that the charitable institutions, on the goldfields in particular, have been robbed of considerable support. I consider it would have been better had the money collected from the tax been spent in the localities where it was collected. I have no fault to find with regard to the goldfield water

supply administration. I believe the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath) had some complaints to make with reference to the cutting off of water and other matters. Regarding my constituency I have had no complaints in this connection. Cases have come under my notice where water has been cut off; but that is only to be expected when people refuse to take notice of the warning given by the water supply administration that their water will be cut off on a certain date. I am utterly opposed to the pooling of the rates; I consider that instead of pooling the rates of these people, we should reduce the price of the water all round. People living in the main streets of Kalgoorlie and Boulder and other places should receive no concession not granted to other people. They are rated according to the value of their properties; so are the people outside those streets, and I consider they should be prepared to pay according to the value of their properties. With regard to the price charged for water to the racecourses on the fields, I regret that the Minister has not seen his way clear to make a reduction in this direction. The racecourses on the fields are practically public reserves, and should receive water at the same rate as is charged to reserves on the goldfields. We find that the mayor of Kalgoorlie held his reception on the Kalgoorlie racecourse recently. The Salvation Army and the various Sunday-schools hold their picnics on the racecourse, and the Eight Hours' Committee and other bodies make use of the courses for their demonstrations; and the courses are really open to the whole of the public. This being so, I regret that the Minister could not see his way clear to bring the price of the water supplied to the racecourses down to that charged for the public reserves. I am pleased that a Mines Regulation Bill is to come down this session. The member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) dealt exhaustively with this matter, and it will be watched with interest by members on this side of the House. The Minister will have an opportunity in this connection of showing whether the reputation that has been given him all over the State is justified or not. We have had the praises of the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) sung by different people at different functions; but, for

my part, the Minister for Mines has yet to prove himself the possessor of administrative ability. The Government are talking of economy—"economy is necessary in all departments." I think I can point out one direction in which economy may be effected, if the Government so desire, and that is in connection with our charitable institutions. I am speaking now particularly of our hospitals. The hospitals on the goldfields are under the control of the Government; they are supported by the Government, and rules and regulations are drawn up by the Government. The Kalgoorlie hospital, I understand, is controlled by two resident doctors, with one or two other medical gentlemen on the honorary medical staff. If these hospitals were placed under medical boards, these boards would be able to conduct the hospitals more satisfactorily than they are conducted at the present time, and also at less expense to the State. The charitable institutions in the Eastern States are conducted in this manner, subscribers having the right to vote for the gentlemen who are to act on the board of management; and if this system obtained on the goldfields I feel sure it would prove a success. If a certain amount were charged for membership as a subscriber to the hospital, such subscribers to have the right to cast a vote annually in the matter of the membership of the board to control the hospital, I consider this would be a step in the right direction. It is only right that any doctor on the fields should have the right to enter the hospital and attend to his patients there if necessary. Cases have occurred where men on the fields who have contributed for years to friendly societies have been taken ill and had to go to a hospital. It was impossible for them to pay the exorbitant fees asked by private hospitals, and their only course was to go into the Government institution, where their own doctor could not attend them. Immediately they enter that hospital they lose the services of their doctor. No matter how much that gentleman may understand their system and the previous ailments they have had, he is denied the right to visit and attend to them; and I consider that the doctors on the fields, outside those already in charge of the hospital, should certainly have the right

to visit there and attend to patients, if they so desire. With regard to the Agricultural Bank, I am pleased with the assurance of the Honorary Minister that this is to be better carried out in the future. A case came under my notice a few weeks ago where a man intended to go on the land. He had limited capital to do so. Just after taking up land a friend of his wrote to him, stating that he had been for some time on the land, and had required assistance from the Agricultural Bank, for which he had applied, but he had not received it; and he strongly advised him not to go on the land. I know that the Honorary Minister has a full knowledge of agriculture, and I hope he will do his utmost to see that the conditions are, as far as possible, liberalised, and that people in need of assistance will receive it from that institution. The next matter I wish to touch upon is in regard to the Factories Act and Early Closing Act. I have before me a report of the Chief Inspector of Factories. I consider this gentleman is to be commended for the report he has placed before the people of this State; but we find that he has been labouring under great difficulties. At the beginning, he started out on this vast State with several Acts under his control, with three inspectors. About six months ago one of these inspectors resigned. No fresh appointment has been made subsequently, and since that time we have had the whole of this State with only two inspectors of factories. This measure was passed through the Parliament of this State, and I consider it was the intention of the Legislature that it should be put into operation. I contend, however, that with only two inspectors of factories it is impossible for this Act to be enforced, and I hope that in the near future some action will be taken so as to increase the number of inspectors in order that these various Acts may be enforced. The report contains the following:—

As previously stated, the earlier part of the period under review was occupied by me in preparing the necessary regulations. Before the completion of these, it was found necessary to amend the Act in respect to Section 27, Subsection 6, dealing with cubic air space. This, as originally provided, was limited to 154 cubic feet per head. A little thought clearly showed how very deficient this amount was, and the Act was amended to prescribe a

minimum of 350 cubic feet. The English standard is 400 cubic feet, which is also the standard in all the States of the Commonwealth, with the exception of South Australia. I regret that it has been thought desirable to cut down the number of cubic feet allowed per head to 350. It has not been done in this State, but we are told that 400 feet are allowed in other States, and, if such be the case, I certainly think the same amount should be allowed in this State.

MR. SCADDAN : Especially on the goldfields.

MR. WARE : Yes; especially on the goldfields, where we have iron dwellings, unlined very often, to work in. Another portion of the report to which I wish to draw attention reads :—

A difficulty was encountered just at the outset of the work in the resentment of factory occupiers at the dual inspection of factories and local board inspectors. The Act provides that where any defect can be better remedied under any Act relating to public health, other than the Factories Act, the factories inspector is to report the same to the local authority, whose duty it shall be to remedy the defect within a reasonable time. For the purpose of this section, the factories inspector may, if he think fit, take a local board inspector into the factory with him. Out of respect for the local authorities which have had control of the sanitation of factories prior to the existence of the Factories Act, I have endeavoured to work through and in conjunction with local boards of health in effecting necessary improvements in matters more directly controlled by the Health Act. To this end I circularised all local boards affected by the Factories Act in the metropolitan area at the commencement of December, 1904, inviting their co-operation, so that occupiers of factories should not be harassed by dual inspection and those differences of opinion that usually follow. Matters in this connection worked smoothly for some time, and I received assurance of support; but when it has taken the local authority six weeks to remedy a common nuisance, nine months to make a start in removing a seriously insanitary condition of affairs, and when five months have been allowed to elapse after service of an order to cleanse certain premises without any visible result being achieved, I think reasonable time has been exceeded, and I feel that it is about time an alteration was made. Of late it has been only by constant reference to the matter in hand, either by personal representation or by frequent letters to the local boards, that they have been induced to make a move of any kind. I have found occupiers of factories willing in most cases to do what is required when they have been shown by practical illustration that an alteration is needed. It has happened that the matter to be remedied

has been previously approved by the local board.

I have read this to show that the system in existence at the present time is iniquitous. We find that we have a Chief Inspector of Factories in this State with inspectors under him. They go to a factory and find that factory in an insanitary condition, but they have no power in themselves to order that the factory shall be put into a sanitary state. It is necessary for them to appeal to some local board, and it rests with this board whether the matter is remedied or not. I consider that if we have factory inspectors in this State, they should certainly have the right and power to have control of factories right through. In regard to dual inspection also, we have that in connection with machinery. We find that, if an inspector goes into a factory where machinery is employed he has no control whatever over that machinery. As regards safeguarding employees in the factory, this comes under another department altogether, and another inspector is required to remedy any defect in this direction. I consider that one inspection is quite sufficient in any shop or factory, and that full control should be placed in this department, so that the inspector of factories can attend to the whole of the matters in connection with factory work. We also have a recommendation here from the Chief Inspector that, in regard to all premises built for the purpose of factories, the plans should be submitted to him for approval. This is a valuable suggestion, and should be adopted by the Government when this Act comes up for amendment, as I have no doubt it will, seeing that so many alterations have been suggested by the Chief Inspector of Factories. We are told here in connection with bakehouses that fully 90 per cent. of them are not registered. A person carrying on his business and employing a number of hands is compelled to register under the Act, whereas another man round the corner, for instance, we will say only employing a couple of hands, is not compelled to do so. We have 90 per cent. of the bakehouses and also of the laundries in this State not registered. I think this is a matter which should be remedied as soon as possible. The health of the community should be our first care, and it is

necessary that the people of this State should have some protection, and know that what is placed on the table is certainly healthy, and has not been produced in some backyard surrounded by unhealthy conditions. With regard to the lunch rooms in factories and workshops, I hope that in the near future some steps will be taken so that employees may have some provision made for them whereby they may leave the room or factory and go into another compartment for lunch. At the present time, very often employees sit down in the very place where they are working, and eat their lunch in the midst of fluff and dirt. Seeing that they are in those surroundings for at least eight or nine hours a day, another room, a healthy room, should be provided, so that they could at least go there during lunch hour and enjoy their lunch. Dealing with outdoor work, I fail to understand how the Chief Inspector has come to his decision that outdoor workers receive the same wages as those indoors. My experience has been that those working out of doors do not receive the same wages, and I hope that, if an amending Bill is brought down, all outdoor work will be stopped. Outdoor work is the first step in the direction of sweating. This has been my experience. I have proved it as such, and I hope that whilst the State is young, and before our people are ground down under the yoke of the sweater, some action will be taken to prevent outdoor work. If we prevent outdoor work, we shall put a big spoke in the wheel of the sweater, and I hope this will be done. With regard to the stamping of furniture, we have it from the inspector that this is being evaded—that is, the furniture manufactured by Asiatics—and I trust that more rigid regulations will be inserted in the new Bill. Of course I am saying the new Bill, because I consider that, on the Chief Inspector's report, it will be the duty of this Government to bring down an amending measure. Certainly it is not included in the Governor's Speech, but I hope that it will be amongst some of those measures brought down during the session. The matter of apprenticeship is also dealt with in this report. The Chief Inspector strongly recommends the indenturing of apprentices, and I hope that

a measure will be passed in this State concerning apprentices. This matter is very often brought up in the Arbitration Court. It was mentioned in the case the Court dealt with only recently, and I trust that in the near future we shall have some Act dealing with the subject. We are told by the Chief Inspector that many apprentices start work, and after they have worked one or two years they consider they are full-blown tradesmen, and go in and compete with tradesmen who have served many years in their trade. This is doing a lot of injustice to the several industries in this State, inasmuch as many of our workmen, owing to there not being a proper system of apprenticeship, are not as competent as they should be. It is not my intention to take up the time of the House at any greater length. There are many matters I could deal with that have been touched on, but it is not my intention to go over the ground that has been traversed by other members. This is my maiden speech in the House, and I have refrained from touching on many matters which, if I did so, might be considered personal. This being my first speech, I have eliminated them. But I wish to state that I have not failed to notice certain events which took place during the last recess. However, these matters have been already referred to during this debate; and it is not my intention to speak of them.

MR. T. WALKER (Kanowna) : I presume that although you, sir, have been so often congratulated during the course of this debate, it is not yet too late for me also to join with those who have expressed their joy at seeing you back from your trip to the motherland. I shall not at the commencement of my speech deal with these great shortcomings which in my opinion have been so scandalously exhibited by members of the present Government. I wish first to get rid of a few preliminary details and to some extent minor matters—minor so far as principle is concerned, but still important. First of all, notwithstanding that some members take a sort of pride in not airing the grievances of their own constituencies, I am bound to deal with a few matters concerning mine. And I have to complain that several events are happening in connection with my constituency,

with which events I, though its representative, and through no fault of mine, am not acquainted. I wish to give one particular instance. I do not know the cause of it, but I certainly think that representatives of constituencies should have some consideration shown to them, and should be taken into the confidence of a Government department when any great changes in their constituencies are pending. To-night I was struck by a question which the member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) asked the Minister for Mines, to be answered to-morrow night. I wish that the question had been answered to-night, so that I might know the exact position of affairs. The tenor of the question, at all events, is that a large constituency like Kanowna, with so many varied forms of mining, is to be deprived of an inspector. That is the implication of the question.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Oh, no; not at all.

MR. WALKER: I shall be glad to have the Minister's assurance that it is not.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Not at all.

MR. WALKER: Is there to be, as at present, a mining inspector in that constituency, to attend to its requirements?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

MR. WALKER: I am glad to hear that; because information of such importance, reaching one from outside, would, if true, be a severe reflection upon the sitting member. There is one little matter to which attention should be drawn and of which the Minister will perhaps pardon me for speaking. I refer to the fact that certain mining portions of my constituency have been disconnected from the mining centre—that is, from the business centre at which mining transactions are carried on—and have been attached to Kalgoorlie. The Minister will remember that I am now speaking of Mount Monger and one or two other places which have been taken away from the business centre at Bulong, I believe, and pinned on Kalgoorlie. I shall not for the moment say whether it is convenient for the people living, say, at Mount Monger, to do all their mining business at Kalgoorlie, or to go to Bulong. But what I have to complain of is that I knew nothing about the change until I re-

ceived an intimation of it from Bulong; and when that intimation reached me from Bulong, the change had been gazetted. I submit that this is not fair treatment to a member representing his constituency; and I say it is unfair for this reason. It may or may not be for the benefit of Mount Monger to be, without its knowledge, attached to another place, without having a say in the matter; for so far as I can gather, the people of Mount Monger were not consulted. The act was done without asking them whether it would be convenient for them to be joined to Kalgoorlie, or whether their convenience would be better served at Bulong. As a matter of fact, these people believe it would be better for them to be connected with Bulong than with Kalgoorlie. And since the change has been gazetted, I and the Minister have received a petition from Mount Monger asking that the step taken be retraced if it be not too late, and that they may again be associated in mining business matters with Bulong. Perhaps the thing has gone too far to alter. It may be now that the step taken cannot with dignity or honour be retraced. But whose fault is that? Should not a matter of such importance to those people have had some ventilation? Should not the member for the district have been communicated with? His personal opinion may not be worth much; but the opinions of his constituents may be worth very much. The proposal may concern them very considerably. They, I submit, have not been consulted either through me or through any other channel; and yet this step is taken. I do not wish to be harsh; but it does seem to me that we have too much of this government in the dark; too many steps taken and concluded, deeds signed, sealed, and delivered, as it were before anybody concerned knows about them. That, I submit, is not in the best interests of the country. Certainly, in a case like this, the rights of the people may be taken away in the dark; they may be shorn of their privileges; and the facilities upon which the convenience and the prosperity of the people depend may be taken away, and no one knows about it until too late. I trust that in future there will be no more neglect in giving informa-

tion of such changes to hon. members interested. And again I have to complain that, whilst I take a back seat to no one in my desire to serve the interests of agriculture—for most undoubtedly I desire to see the country develop all its resources, whether these be agricultural, timber, mining, or any other—I am surprised that this Government seems to have gone holus-bolus for agriculture, apparently to the neglect of almost every other industry. Let us take Ministers' statements regarding the Railway Bills which are to be introduced this session. As to the agricultural railways we have a definite statement from the Premier. There is no uncertainty about them. We are to have a railway from Wagin to Wickel-pin, an extension of the Greenbills line, an extension of the Jandakot line—and I believe here too there is a little concealment, for we are not told whether the Jandakot railway is to be extended to Arncliffe; but I take it from a recent *ex-officio* speech on the subject that the line will be extended to Mundijong, that the Government have already decided to take it there, although they have not taken the House into their confidence. Then we are to have a railway from Donnybrook up the valley of the Preston; we are to have a line from Bridgetown to the South-West, and another from Busseton to Lower Blackwood. There is no mistake about these proposals; and these railways are in addition to those to which we pledged ourselves last session. There is perfect security about them. But when the Premier came to speak of the goldfields lines and their possibilities, all was uncertainty. He was not sure. He did not know. The question had not been properly considered; he could tell us nothing. He was as vague as His Excellency's Speech. We do not know what lines we on the goldfields are to have; and the Premier's colleague, the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory), when speaking on this subject, seemed to recognise that this was scarcely just to the goldfields, and he made a sort of apology for the Premier's weakness on the matter. He told us that there were in the Cabinet five Ministers new to office, who had not found time to consider the subject. They had not therefore the means of coming to a definite conclusion about any of the

railway projects affecting the goldfields. But it is remarkable how these five new fledglings suddenly become convinced of the absolute necessity for the particular lines that will materially cement certain supporters to the Government; remarkable how these five young men who have just come from a Sunday-school class are unable to come to any decision as to the goldfields lines. And yet there is not one Minister but knows that certain goldfields railway proposals have been long debated; and if Ministers have not by this time come to any conclusion regarding those proposals, they are utterly incapable of coming to a conclusion about anything—that is, if they have been ordinarily attentive to public affairs, and have read even the floating statements in the public journals. There is, for instance, a proposal for a line to Esperance and to Norseman—particularly to Esperance. And let me say just one word about that Esperance line. It is admitted on all sides that the line is opposed because it is supposed to endanger the coastal interests. Here let me say that for any country to seek to place one spot under detriment in the interest of another spot is altogether wrong. It is the worst kind of policy that can be pursued, to bolster up one part of the State at the expense of another; to prevent one portion of the State growing, in order that another portion may have some particular advantages. What, I venture to ask, is the secret of the growth of New Zealand into a rich State from a State once far less promising than ours is now, but which has grown so as to occupy a commanding position in the Southern Hemisphere? Why did that happen? Because there was none of that mutual jealousy between port and port. It has ever been the policy of New Zealand to make use of every port which a ship could enter; and so that State has not only extensive business in Auckland, but in Dunedin, at the very end of the South Island, and not only there but at Wellington, Nelson, and on the north-west coast of the South Island at Greymouth and Westport. Every port that can be developed there is developed; and from those ports, lines of railway are taken into the heart of the country, and simultaneously the whole of the State develops and the country is

made rich, not by an enormous lopsided big city, but by a vast number of thriving, growing towns. That has been the secret of the success of New Zealand; and in this way not only has commercial development been able to take place in these particular towns, but from these centres a radius of the country has been more fittingly and advantageously cultivated and brought to the service of man and the wealth of the State. Now here, what seems to be the object of our politicians that we have had hitherto ruling in the country? To make a big Perth and a sort of big port at Fremantle—very laudable endeavours; but to make everything else in the State subservient to the growth of these spots, every discouragement is given to enterprise in any other part, and it is admitted that Esperance is not to be made a port. We are to have no railway to that spot because, if it should happen to come about, trade would be taken from Fremantle, property holders here would suffer, property would depreciate and this part of the State would go back. What is the history of the world? But that by emulous imitation, by trade competition, by rivalry of town with town, and by jealousy of growth we have had no injury to the competitors, but instead both have grown. Take the instance of the neighbouring towns of Boulder and Kalgoorlie. There rivalry exists that is astonishing to an outsider, seeing that these places are so closely situated; but Boulder has always been jealous of Kalgoorlie, and Kalgoorlie has always been jealous of Boulder, and what has been the result? They have done all they could to beautify, to extend, and to strengthen in every sense their institutions and buildings and everything that goes to make a town in the two places, and the towns have developed simultaneously, and Boulder is prouder than Kalgoorlie, and *vice versa*. And so it will be if we have the courage to start works and encourage settlement at Esperance and join it by a railway to the fields. Instead of injuring Fremantle it will help Fremantle and strengthen Fremantle. Rivalry in competition may possibly in long years hence spring up, but it will be that competition that will do good. Imagine Liverpool being jealous of London, or London jealous of

Liverpool. It is the fact of having these two great ports that has made Britain a big nation. It is the policy of centralisation that kills a country, makes it a country of big men, an enormous country for sheep and kangaroos. In this Speech there is a sort of promise of a ramshackle tramline to please the member for Norseman. That is about the extent that is reached; and all the fine promises of the Attorney General, when he was a young man ambitious for public life and seeking public approbation, are gone. Esperance is blotted off the map, and the farthest limit of his vision is down through a tramline telescope to Ravenshorpe. Then, have we not had enough discussion about the Pilbarra Railway? Surely there needs no farther argument or debate about that. Even the member for Northam (the Honorary Minister) must have his mind made up on that. Although taken at the last moment into the Ministry, his large mind filled with sheep and roving cattle and the tinkle of money in the till, yet I venture to think, filled as he is with all these ideals and practical facts about these matters, he has a little room in his cranium for facts about Pilbarra; and I am sure that he is not that devoid of experience or intelligence—certainly not, I am assured of that—not to be able to come before this to a conclusion on the matter. That railway, I venture to assert, is an absolute necessity. It has become unpopular because in the past there seemed to have been juggling in connection with it, or, in other words, there were private proposals and private tenders, and those responsible in the State seemed to be hesitating as to whom they should give the contract to. These things smell somewhat of possible corruption. The public seemed to scent something wrong or dangerous in the proposals, and so the real facts were obscured and the necessity for the line was forgotten. Just as I would have, if I could, a railway from Esperance to the fields constructed, so I would have a railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar constructed in the same course of the policy of decentralisation and the development simultaneously of all parts of the State. We have in that part of the country a second State, if we like to create it. We have there an area of country in which Victoria could be

placed, so to speak, all of it rich in some kind of resources, mineral wealth of almost every description. If I am correctly informed by those who are in a position to be able to state the truth, there are perhaps few parts of this State so rich in varying mineral resources as that portion, left untouched, unexploited, no one getting the value of it at the present time; and it may remain like that for we know not how long. There is a good deal of talk at the present moment about immigration. Develop our country and we will get the immigration we want. We need not pay for peoples' passages from England or Scandinavia if we will only make this State a country fit to live in, and if we give the people a chance of developing its resources. But what chance is there of developing that mineral country, isolated as it is? And yet we have all these agricultural lines, as they are called, these spur lines; many of them lines that will require close scrutiny before they are passed by this House. They seem to be more for the purpose of getting outside strength for the Government than for real agricultural development. I say "seem." They are all right; but that enormous wealth which would add to this State a sort of second State if properly developed and opened up, is neglected because there has been a little bit of scandal associated with the Pilbarra line. If we can find the money for these spur lines, we can find the money for that line. Why have not the Government the courage to tell us that they will construct this line? I know there are some who will tell us that it will only serve a few rich capitalists and give their mines a chance; but no. It may do that incidentally, but it will also open up the country to the prospector, to the poor man, and even to the farmer and grazier, to the man who wants to create wealth in every possible way. Railways should not follow the advance of civilisation in settlement; they should precede to help it. In our State now, since Sir John Forrest went out of public life, we seem to have no spirit of enterprise in that direction. Think of the enterprise of joining the Pacific Ocean with the Atlantic, when at the time only in the coastal districts of America had settlement taken place. Think of building a line thousands of

miles through the desert, starting from both sides and meeting half-way. There is enterprise. Think of the enterprise that could conceive that stream of water for Kalgoorlie, or the railway to the goldfields. Where is that enterprise now? We have these spur lines, toy railways, little bits of sops. Give us something that is going to open up new possibilities to the State. Give us a chance of making wealth, where now, so to speak, the wild spinifex grows. That is what we want. That is a policy that would do some good. There is more force in that, more good to the country in a proposal of that kind, than there would be in the Ministers docking themselves £200 a year. [Interjection.] The Treasurer is weary with the sorrows of his colleagues, and the treachery and betrayal to which he was submitted. Should we not have had something definite said upon this Pilbarra Railway by the Government, a line absolutely necessary, and in the building of which by the State as against private enterprise every member of this House, I am sure, will heartily assist the Government? Just a little more concerning this disparity between the treatment of outlying mining centres and big populous centres of the State. It is the little things that tell. Just one illustration out of many I could give. At Bulong, Kanowna, and at a still smaller place called Bardoc, after years of trial they have endeavoured to get little libraries for the information of the miners and prospectors, and as a sort of school for them. I can hardly impress on members too much the benefit that a library is to a small mining township. It is not only a sort of pleasure and meeting place, and an intellectual resort; but it is beneficial in making the people contented with their locality, and in instructing their minds and making them fitter to endure the hardships and trials to which in these outback places they are of necessity subjected. Some of these libraries are getting the small grant of £20 a year. Put that against the thousands spent here in Perth. Put it against the hundreds recently given—I know for what reason—to Kalgoorlie.

MR. BATH: Thousands?

MR. WALKER: Yes.

MR. BATH: Twelve hundred.

MR. WALKER: That £1,200 was recently paid to the Mining Institute at Kalgoorlie. Members have had enough experience to know that in all these large towns there are myriads of sources of enjoyment for the people. There are the theatres running regularly, there are private libraries of all sorts, there are little societies, little libraries connected with these and other institutions, so the public need not go short of reading; and, in addition to all, there is the Free Public Library, which is a sort of addendum or addition to all the unlimited sources of enjoyment and instruction. But in these small townships there is nothing after the day's work is done. Men in their camps have no place unless it be the hotels where they can gather. It should be the policy of the Government to provide means of instruction, so that men may congregate together and enjoy themselves intellectually in these centres, to make life more tolerable or to make life a pleasure to them if possible in these places. But whilst the Government can afford £1,200 for the constituency of the Attorney General, and vote thousands of pounds for the Perth Library, which should be well supported and receive revenue otherwise, not a penny is given for the outback places; in fact even the sort of economy that is cheeseparing the Government are encouraging. I am told it was actually intended to cut off the allowances to the small miners' libraries and mechanics' institutes. That is only an illustration in a small manner of what is being done. I submit that whilst we may pay all the attention we please to the farmer, the miners should not be neglected, for whilst we may hope much in the future from the agriculturists of the State, the State has been built up by the mining industry. The city of Perth owes its greatness, such as it is, to the mining population, and is it very properly appreciated what the mining population is. We who live amongst the luxuries of city life cannot conceive the heroism and the bravery of those men who go out into the wilds to seek for the precious metal, and those who delve deep in the earth and live amongst the foul gases, shortening their lives, risking death at every hour of the day they are working; they are not the ordinary cowardly mortals who should

be neglected by their fellows, they are the men who build nations, if men can build nations. They have gone away from every comfort of life, taking their lives in their hands, and this State is drawing revenue from them, enriching itself through their industry, and yet in their solitude, in their loneliness, deprived of all luxuries, the State begrudges them a few paltry shillings to buy books to entertain themselves on winter nights, to instruct themselves. That is the position we are in, and so we find it in regard to more important matters. It is not the miner who is considered by the Government, but apparently it is the rich man who is seeking to make the miner a slave. The Governor's Speech boasts of the fact that over two millions have been paid in dividends during the last 12 months; almost as much as our revenue. How got? How won? From whom paid? The miner undoubtedly, the worker who is risking accidents, and meeting them frequently, every day he goes down into the bowels of the earth for the gold. What do we get out of that, what does the miner get out of the two millions beyond a mere subsistence of wages, mere bread and butter without a particle of jam on it. What does the State get out of it? These two millions of money are sent away from us: we do not get any benefit at all. The State is poorer, not richer, by every pound of dividends sent out of the country to the foreign speculator. We have deprived ourselves of so much wealth which we shall never get back again; we are robbing the State, not enriching it, by these dividends. But when it comes to the real pioneer settlers, those brave men of whom I have spoken, what do they get? Some years ago, many years ago, there was a place out away from Kanowna called Randell's; men worked there; it was populous, it was strong then. Now they have come down to the reefs; they are hard to work, for it requires a little money to do it. The old settlers who have been there and who are now there, what are they getting? What assistance is rendered to help them? We are to have all kinds of facilities I believe offered to the rich mining leaseholder; companies and syndicates are to have help and consideration; but for these men who have made great centres of

mining, who have discovered them, who have unearthed from their buried depths the wealth, what is for them? And there are other places in like manner. I have endeavoured to get prospecting help for places where there is undoubtedly gold, undoubtedly rich possibilities ahead if the men there had only a little money offered them so that they could live for mere bread and butter, while they are trying to discover wealth that might again give a revival to the mining industry of the State, if a mining revival be needed. These are the inconsistencies I complain of. To me it is not the men of money who have made this country, it is not the British capitalist even with all his wealth who has made this State. What is it? It is these men who are starving almost in the wayback townships that have made the place what it is, and I submit it is these men who should be mostly considered, who should be helped, and if there can be a departure from the usual red-tapeism of the departments, that departure should be made to these old workers, these battlers of the past—old age is overtaking them—to again make the State wealthy, again to bring the State into a finer position. Moreover, I want to draw the attention of the House to show how the rich capitalistic class, I say it not sneeringly as against the poor man, are allowed unlimited opportunities, while the poor man is ever neglected. Before I read this letter, take the instance of the inquiry into the gold stealing in the past. The labourers have been under the imputation for years of being the scoundrels and blameable ruffians. Even in this House in past Parliaments the miner had imputed to him every possible character of rogue and thief who needed guardedly watching and punishing at every turn. What has happened? The investigation, an impartial inquiry, disclosed that it was not the miner, not the working man, the man who toils from morn till night for his mere pittance, although there is an inducement in his starvation wage to make him steal, but it is those who have been getting the big salaries, those who have had no apology for thieving, those who have had luxuries in superabundance—they have been the thieves. Although that is known, what is done to clear the character of the mining men?

They have been allowed to rest under the countenancy. In the same way this extract from the *Kalgoorlie Miner* will show how the wealthy class can act with impunity while the poor man is utterly neglected. This is a letter written from Boulder dated July 6th, and appeared in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. The article says:—

As a small mine-owner, I occasionally have a bar of gold to dispose of, and under existing laws can only sell to the banks. Last week a bar was disposed of, and an assay certificate purporting to be signed by a certain assayer was given to me. Being somewhat dissatisfied with the value, I thought that I would seek out that assayer and consult him as to how the value was not higher. Judge my surprise and indignation when I learnt that, although he had signed the assay certificate, he was not in the country. Now, is it the — hot country. How is it that institutions like the banks, who have the gold-buying entirely in their hands, accept a certificate that has on the face of it been signed in blank weeks previously? Were these alleged certificates signed wholesale prior to the signatory's departure, and left with the banks to be filled up by them at their discretion? How do we, as sellers, know that the gold was assayed at all? If the assayer in question left some person competent to do his work, surely that person is competent to countersign the certificate as a guarantee. These certificates are not even numbered, nor apparently press copied. They appear to be issued anyhow, and the principal party is out of the country. He does not know what is going on. One of three things should be done if the banks are to retain the monopoly of gold buying:—(1.) They should have their own assay office on their premises and be directly responsible for values as per their own tests, and pay the vendor for the full weight of the gold, not for 14wt. short, plus 10s. for assay and 1s. 3d. per ounce commission; or (2.) the assays should be made by an officer of the Mines Department under Government control; or (3.) the Royal Mint should have a receiving office on the fields and receive and buy gold here the same as in Perth. It seems to me nothing short of a scandal that the banks should act on assays alleged to be signed by a man totally ignorant of how his certificates are filled up. The Crown law authorities should look into the matter.

I hope they will. The writer continues:—

Sellers should in future request that their gold be assayed for value by some competent person now present on the fields. Some other vendors should likewise give their ideas to the public.

I draw attention to that because the working men are hemmed in by all kinds of laws, rules, and regulations, and because they cannot do as they like. Here is an instance under notice where a

man who is out of the country signs an assay certificate. An impossibility! We know there is a fraud of some kind, deception in a matter of that kind, yet it is allowed under the present Act. Our miners are not even protected. The whole of the resources of the State are conjured up to nurse and protect the millionaire.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Is the name of the bank or the assayer given?

MR. WALKER: I take that as an illustration. I read it for what it is worth. It is published in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*.

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

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. WALKER (continuing): Before the adjournment, I was dealing with matters connected with my district particularly. I trust the Government will not forget that very large population at present the mainstay of the State, who are developing our wealth on the far-away goldfields. I trust that even in the small fields their requests will be considered, for there can be no question that, considering the hardships they have to undergo, their requests to the Government are very slight. Let me leave that for the present, for on the mining Estimates and the other Estimates, when they come up for discussion, these matters may perhaps be more suitably debated. The chief matter for discussion in a debate of this kind is the Speech of His Excellency. There is scarcely a speaker who has spoken up to date who has not pointed out the vagueness, the want of definiteness, in the Government programme. We have been promised a multiplicity of things, and left to guess what any single one of them might mean ultimately; a bill of fare all promise and glitter, and very little substance, and I venture to think that what little substance there was in it was scanty and meagre, and more appealing to the imagination than reality; because the Ministry at that time—and I question if now it is, decided—was uncertain as to what course it was going to take. Just before this Ministry came into office—in fact when it had its birth—every member of the party was suggesting what the programme should be; and

since then there has been meeting after meeting in order to whip into shape the Government programme. And the astonishing feature to me is that any programme at all can emanate from a combination of such inconsistencies and oppositions. May I say without violating any rule of this House—and I am not desirous of doing that—that the present Ministry is on those benches under false pretences; that it has no right to be there. It is proposing to do something dead against what the country authorised it to do. This Ministry is supposed to be the lineal continuation of the Rason Government. The Rason Government went to the country against everything savouring of a Labour policy; it was supposed to be a dead cut between the Labour party and the National League party. On that hand the representation of wealth, capital, private enterprise; everything that treated the working man as so much machinery—living machinery, it is true—to be used for the accumulation of the wealth of private individuals. At that time we needed no land tax, no income tax, but honest government. That was the cry with which Mr. Rason went to the country only a few months ago. On that cry of honest government, clean administration, purity in our public life, he was returned by the country. Only a few months have elapsed, and we find a complete reversion of that policy, and yet this professes to be the same Government. Where is the warrant that Government has from the country to impose a land tax? Where is its warrant to alter the constitution in the direction it proposes? Mr. Rason went to the country against these proposals, and was returned with a majority against these proposals; and now the Government is undertaking to bring in these things which Ministers had condemned, and by the condemnation of which they were returned to this House. I am not guessing at matters. We have in that Government at the present time an Honorary Minister. Created why? Why was the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) brought into that Ministry? He was not included in the first batch, the first hatchment, in the caucus of the other side. He was omitted then and brought in afterwards. Why? I venture to think he was brought

in because murmurings had escaped from him; because there were rumblings that he would be on that side of the House a thorn in their side; because he was not convinced of the soundness of their land policy; particularly to silence him, it appears to me, he was brought into the Ministry after a long time. Is that clean government? Is that purity in our public life? Is not that buying silence? By what other name can you call it? It is obtaining support by bartering the most sacred offices of the State. That is the position. The hon. member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick) smiles at that; but there were rumours that the hon. member for East Perth had his doubts as to whether he could stick close to the heels of the Government. It is rumoured that he had ambitions, towering ambitions. Great nature filled his bosom and crowned his brain with hopes of the Premiership or something not far from there. But in the whirl he was left out in the cold; and again murmurings were heard, like hidden thunders. Forsooth Mr. Gordon, the member for Canning, with a sudden decline of his great powers of whipship, being unable to attend to the faithful crowd on that side, a whipship was created for the member for East Perth. And it seemed doubtful at times where this sort of thing was going to stop, whether the whole lot on that side were not going to be included in the Ministry or in the whipships. Is that clean government? Is it not bartering, again I say, the responsibilities that are theirs as Ministers of the Crown? Is this the way in which Governments are to live? But we will go a little bit more closely into the composition of the Government, and see if it is altogether clean government. The Premier was little thought of—I will not say little thought of, because in certain quarters he was much thought of—but in the mind of Mr. Rason, the former leader of this House, he was not so much considered as the present Treasurer. Mr. Rason went from that caucus with a kind of passive instruction that he was to advise His Excellency to send for Mr. Moore, but he did not do so. He advised him to send for Mr. Wilson, the present Treasurer. What happened? The Treasurer found that as Premier he could not get support; he could not form a

Ministry. And who were they who refused to support him? Who were they who kept him from that worthy attainment of a great ambition? His colleagues. They who intrigued against him, and told him they could not work with him as their Premier, are now in harness with him. Nay, more; at least one of those now in harness with him went to his constituency and glorified himself on the fact that he had been instrumental in preventing Mr. Wilson, the Treasurer, from becoming Premier of this State. And yet he sits now in the same Cabinet with that honourable Minister. Where is the public conscience gone? What can the Treasurer feel in knowing that these men have tried to blacken his character, tried to publish his unfitness to be trusted as Premier with the reins of this State, discredited him as a politician, and told him plainly that they would not have him—they, in vulgar parlance, gave him the kick-out? [MR. TAYLOR: In the middle of the night.] And yet the hon. the Treasurer is willing to accept, from those who kicked him, a portfolio in a Government not his now. Where is our purity, our clean conscience in public life, with which Mr. Rason went to the country? Juggling may be a harsh word, perhaps an unparliamentary word; but it looks like nothing but juggling for portfolios in the formation of this Ministry. And then, in order to captivate or obtain public confidence, Ministers bring forth a programme in which not one of them, or only few of them, can believe. The Government have taken in a new Minister for Lands. I have said that the Honorary Minister does not believe in this Government, but his mouth is shut by his portfolio, and I am going to prove it. The third Minister for Lands—for now the Lands cannot be run by one Minister, but they must have three or four—made a statement at Jennapullen, which is reported in the *Morning Herald* of the 21st October, 1905. Amongst other things Mr. Mitchell said:—

As he had already pointed out, he thought that with the large revenue which the State earned there should be no need for farther taxation. All that was wanted was good administration.

The parrot cry, "good administration," was going everywhere from the Govern-

ment supporters at the last election. The extract continues :—

According to Mr. Rason, a tax on unimproved land values in Western Australia would only realise in the gross £30,000, which, judging by South Australian experience, he thought was a reasonable estimate.

That is what he thought then, that all he could get out of this vaunted land tax was £30,000. Such was Mr. Mitchell's opinion at Northam. The report goes on :—

Mr. F. F. Wilson, a Labour member for North Perth, had said the land tax would realise two millions a year. No doubt this was what Mr. Watts had in his mind when he expressed himself on the platform in Necker-ing in favour of a good, rousing land tax.

Mr. Mitchell added :—

He pitied the poor farmers if any such proposal became law. They would have to work night and day, in order to earn enough to pay their land tax.

That is the speech by the Honorary Minister who is supporting this land tax at the present time. Where is our honour, our honesty, our conscience in public life? Sold for a portfolio. I can respect a frank and honest opponent; I can respect a man diametrically opposed to me. But a man who pretends to hold my opinion for the sake of alienating support from me, I call a fraud; and I have no other name with which to characterise the present occupants of the Treasury bench. They have no right, behind the backs of the people, to take charge of a policy diametrically opposed to the policy with which Ministers went to the country.

MR. BATH : The Treasurer said the same thing at Busselton, with regard to the land tax.

MR. WALKER : Undoubtedly. We know that it is impossible for the Treasurer to be in sympathy with the member for Fremantle, the Minister for Works. They must be diametrically opposed to each other; and I do not blame the Treasurer more than I blame the other Ministers who sit with him. The member for Fremantle (Hon. J. Price), who professes to be a democrat of the democrats—a clean man to an extreme degree—knows that on these matters of public policy the Treasurer is diametrically opposed to him. He is bound to admit that he has had to fight for what he thinks are unwise proposals, merely because they are in accordance with the

views of the present Government. Where is his conscience, when he sits with those diametrically opposed to him, and pretends that the party is united? But all through, have we not witnessed most scandalous conduct on the part of the Government, not only in this what I cannot help thinking a fraudulent programme, but even in the manner in which they have bought support, silencing men on that side of the House by taking perilous members into the Government, and also by their method of attempting to win support in outside constituencies. The other night the Minister for Works (Mr. Price) was priding himself on the terrible sufferings he had to undergo in that conflict at Fremantle. He made it appear that the Opposition side of the House were a lot of howling wolves, seeking to devour him. The poor, injured innocent could not walk the streets of Fremantle without a bodyguard of police! That was nothing but a piece of acting, imposing on the public; trying to pose as a martyr, a victim of this side of the House. And I venture to say that the Minister, with all his purity of conscience and uprightness of character, was a tittle-tattler and a tale-bearer, without too much truth in his reports to the other members of his Government regarding the treatment he received at Fremantle. Harsh on him? Not at all. Why, his vituperations, his belchings forth at Midland Junction, justify whatever treatment he received from this side of the House. He was gently hauled, fondly treated, and pitied at Fremantle. The worst offence against him was that people publicly stated, in emphatic language, that they were sorry to see a young man of such promise in such company. And he construed those expressions into all kinds of threats and malign vilifications. Now all the wickedness was on the side of those who tried to make capital out of this side's honest criticism. That is where the misrepresentation came from. It came from Ministers, who did not scruple, from their exalted posts, to spread promises wholesale before the people of Fremantle. Ministers had no earthly right to offer for sale the treasury of this State to the voters of Fremantle. If Ministers did intend to do so, they should not have publicly promised

it. There is nothing upon which our British Constitution is more decided than on the subject of bribery at elections. For offences such as were committed at that election by Ministers, by the Minister for Works himself, men have been impeached in the British Parliament.

MR. BATH: Bribery is a penal offence at the present time.

MR. WALKER: It is undoubtedly a penal offence. We have had Acts of Parliament passed against that kind of conduct; yet unblushingly Ministers indulge in it, and are proud of it. This is their purity of government, their clean departmental administration—promising untold wealth to be spent in Fremantle if Fremantle elected the hon. member in preference to another. I have no language in which I can adequately condemn such conduct. And then, after all, after using their power in the State to corrupt electors, after making cheap that high honour which is given them under Responsible Government, they posed as injured individuals, as showmen—that is what I call them—at Fremantle; and that is why I have been traduced by the Minister for Works himself. Ministers went about with their showman dodgers, distributing their photos, from house to house. As if a dock was not enough, they were to have a picture. These are the low-down political tactics to which this country has descended; dodgers distributed from house to house with the candidate's photo. and the Treasury promises upon them—"Behold me, and a dock, and a railway station, all for a vote!" In the course of certain stage plays, there is at the beginning some comedy, then a mixture of comedy and tragedy, or melodrama; then the heavy tragedy; and then the hero is supported off; and that was how the Minister for Works went through the streets of Fremantle, with a member of another Chamber on one side, and some portly supporter on the other; Mr. Price, the Minister for Works, in a fainting condition, with pallid face and twisted nose, being supported through the streets of Fremantle to the strains of "Yankee Doodle," played by a band of policemen. It sounds ridiculous to utter such words, but they portray the ridiculous state to which the Minister brought politics in

Fremantle. And, forsooth, to again lend fire to the imagination, the Minister heard rumours of pistols—it is wonderful that he did not hear of cannon, in that state of high exaltation; and it is this actor whom we now have as Minister for Works. He says, and seems to think, that if he had not had an escort of policemen, he would have been insulted, possibly mobbed. There is no telling; for what is the best manner in which to get a crowd to insult you? I have heard of the governing classes in Russia, who employed men to provoke disturbances of the peace, so that the Government might come down upon the public with the soldiery, and punish the innocent who had been misled by Government agents.

MR. LYNCH: That is an old dodge.

MR. WALKER: It is an old dodge, and it is a dodge of the member for Fremantle. He wanted an excuse for raving against the savages belonging to the Labour party; and for that purpose, and for stage effect, he called in the police. Pistols? There was no talk of pistols. The Minister was chucking a red rag to the bull, and it would have served him right if he had been gored by the animal. But when are we to lift ourselves to a higher level than this degrading bribery, to a level on which members will depend on their principles? Have Ministers no faith in their programme? Must they go with the Treasury chest into every electorate, in order to buy support? That is what they are doing. Whatever language I may use, I care not. I am telling the absolute truth. Ministers are selling the sacred rights of this country, and degrading the high offices they hold.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You tackled a Price before.

MR. WALKER: What Price?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Reverend Mr. Price.

MR. WALKER: No.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh!

MR. WALKER: That, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister's character. Deep down in that bosom, and under that face, there lies a sink of hypocrisy. He is neither a generous man nor an honourable and upright man.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not use language of that sort in reference to another member.

MR. WALKER: The insinuation of the Minister, sir, justifies me in my language.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not know what he means.

MR. WALKER: No; but he does. I will tell you, sir, what he is alluding to; and you will see the cowardice in his statement.

MR. HOLMAN: He is a foul-mouthed cur.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member (Mr. Holman) must withdraw that statement.

MR. HOLMAN: I shall withdraw it, not out of respect to him—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw unconditionally.

[A pause followed.]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw.

MR. HOLMAN: I shall withdraw it, sir.

MR. WALKER: May I explain to what the Minister for Works alludes? Many years ago, in Sydney —

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, no. I am alluding to the Rev. Mr. Price, of Perth. I am not referring to Sydney.

MR. WALKER: Your allusion is still cowardly.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is only an example of your method of attack.

MR. WALKER: The Minister is alluding to the Bella Hecklar case. In that case I did my duty. In it I gave expression to the opinions of churchwardens of the church in question; and there are people within hearing of my voice, within this building, who can prove the truth of what I am saying. What was then stated came from the strongest possible source. I shall not open up the question; but there is nothing I did then that I am ashamed of; and, what is more, nothing that I regret. But how cowardly is it to throw these charges and these insinuations at me! Is that the Minister's only defence? It proves everything I have said in the course of my speech. It proves that he plays a part; that he is not the real, sound, genuine article. That is what it proves. That is why this country is being degraded, portfolios being offered to silence opponents and the strongest opposites being joined and coalesced to make up a programme, one in which at least two-thirds of that side of the House do not believe. If the

Government were honest they would oppose the proposals they themselves make. They are an unholy alliance, diametrical opposites in union. Why? To keep the Treasury benches, but not to give us this policy. I submit it is transparent that the policy is never intended to be realised. They propose to reform the Upper House by lowering the franchise, but they took good care to stuff the Upper House with opponents to their proposals. [SEVERAL LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] They help those who are diametrically opposed to the proposals they themselves are pretending to champion into the Upper Chamber; and much more, these opponents to their policy were on the platform at Fremantle helping the Minister for Works to obtain his seat. Hypocrisy! Nothing else can define it. Is this clean government? Is this government according to principle? Is this honourable conduct? Why, even the fact that they have taken the programme from this side of the House is proof that they are devoid of conscience. The Treasurer smiles, but it is a fact. Is it not true? When did he show his desire for the policy of the Labour party in the reform of the Upper House or the land tax before now? It was not in the programme of Mr. Rason or of the Government of which the Treasurer was formerly a member. How came it to be his policy now? What is it for? To keep the member for Fremantle quiet? Is that why they swallow principles they do not believe in? Or is it only one of those dodges so often tried of pretending to be ultrademocratic in order to destroy the democratic cause, taking our principles so that they may maul them and prevent them really coming into operation and disgust the people with them? It is an old dodge in history. I was looking the other day at my favourite author, Plutarch, and here is what he says:—

Among the colleagues of Caius Gracchus, there was one named Livius Drusus, a man who in birth and education was not behind any of the Romans, and who in point of eloquence and wealth might vie with the greatest and most powerful men of his time. To him the nobility applied, exhorting him to set himself up against Caius—[The Labour party at that time]—and join them in opposing him; not in the way of force, or in anything that might offend the commons, but in directing all his measures to please them, and granting them things which it would have

been an honour to refuse at the hazard of their utmost resentment. Drusus agreed to list in the service of the senate, and to apply all the power of his office to their views. He therefore proposed laws which had nothing in them either honourable or advantageous to the community. His sole view was to outdo Caius in flattering and pleasing the multitude, and for this purpose he contended with him like a comedian on the stage.

History repeats itself. Every member on that side of the House is a Livius Drusus, pretending to be more democratic and liberal than those on this side; not to help the democratic cause to win, but to destroy, to kill, to disgust the people with it, and to explode it. There is no honesty in it. If they were honest they would not accept the position, for undoubtedly the principles of the platform laid down by the Labour party belong to the Labour party. There is no question about that. Members on the Government benches have been fighting the Labour party. They should stick to their own programme. If a man steals our gold we call him a thief; if a man steals the product of our writings we call him a plagiarist; if a man steals a copy of our inventions we take action against him in civil law; but when he takes holus-bolus our programme, what name can we give him? What name can we give these members? Are they not ashamed to bedeck themselves in borrowed plumes? Have they not brains enough to outline a policy of their own? Must they take our policy to get any credit at all? Are they not ashamed to get their strength and their support in this House by the fact that they have taken the garments of somebody else and clothed themselves in them? It is the old proverb of the wolf in sheep's clothing. They want to appear gentle lambs of democracy, and they have taken their hides from this side of the House. There can be no clean government in that. There can be no honour, no honesty, in that purpose. Are they not in a roundabout way trying to strengthen conservatism? Let me say straight out that I see nothing but the strengthening of the Upper House in a mere reduction of the franchise. The very election tactics of allowing the Upper House to be elected is in itself a strengthening of the other Chamber. The great safety of a second House is its nominee character. In the British Par-

liament repeatedly hostile actions in the House of Lords have been manifested against popular will, but these difficulties have been overcome by the creation of new peers, or, as in one instance, by requesting a large number of lords, including the Duke of Wellington himself in the case of the great Reform Bill, to stay away. In New Zealand, the strength of democratic legislation has been due to the fact that Mr. Seddon had the power over the Upper House by being able to create new members of it whenever any of his measures were in danger. But by giving the Upper House the same strength as we give this Chamber, by letting it be responsible to the people as this House is, by letting it have the same franchise, and by duplicating this Chamber, where is our command over the other Chamber? Where can we touch it? We strengthen it instead of weakening it. We make it capable of defying us. And so has it proved in Victoria, the least democratic of any of the States. It started off by being one of the most democratic, but lagged behind for years, and is only now beginning to recover itself. Why? Because the Upper House was made strong by having a comparatively popular franchise. There is only one reform for this Upper Chamber, and that is to invite it to take up its residence with us, to destroy its separate existence, to give capital, if you like, its due representation, but in this Chamber, to give every man who has an interest separate from what is supposed to be represented in this House the right to be in the deliberative Assembly of his country, but not to stand opposed to it. We have no curb upon the Upper House. It is just as strong as we are. We find fault with that Chamber for not yielding to the popular will. Why, the answer is that they say, "We are just such a creation of the popular will as you are; we have our constituents as you have; they entrust us as they do you; we have as much right to our way of acting as you." They are independent. We cannot touch them. They stand a menace in the way of progress. When we have in the central legislature of the Australian Commonwealth a powerful Senate or Upper House, do we need two institutions here? Is it required? Could we not lessen our expenses and save money in

the direction of retrenchment if we said to those members of the Upper House, "If you like, cut out different constituencies; make them county or shire constituencies as they have in England to represent the upper classes as they are called, and sit with us here and do away with the expense of your Chamber altogether." That is the only way to diminish the evil power of that House; but merely docking off a few pounds from the qualification of the voter does not touch the great question. It is playing with it. The public outside have been fooled too long with this kind of juggling with reform, never achieving anything, everlastingly dabbling with questions concerning the public by Government after Government, election after election, and nothing done. Let us have some courage to drastically deal with reforms of this kind. But there is another reason why the Ministry propose to dabble with the constitution. They are going to take £200 a year from their own salaries. Is not this action that showmanship of which I have spoken? What will happen supposing they do dock this £200 a year each? How long will it take before the Bill altering the Constitutional Act is sent home and comes back with the proper ratification and the actuality of law? Why, they will be out of office by then. At any rate I hope so. There again is a sort of popularity gained at the expense of their successors; and while I do not deny that they have a right to appraise their own value, they have no right to appraise the value of their successors. Their successors may, really be worth more—I believe they will be—than the £200 a year extra to what they propose to give themselves; but what does it tell the country? That they estimate their services at less than any of the four Governments we have had in this country. They tell the country they are not worth any more? Is that not depreciating this State, either advertising its terrible poverty or else advertising the terrible poverty of the intellect of those who are our Ministers? It is one or the other. If they are worthy of the money paid in the past, why not honourably take it? The State will never begrudge it if it receives value for it. This Government having deputed to outside agencies all over the country duties which Ministers could

well undertake, I quite understand their beginning to feel they are not worthy of the money. They have commissioners of all sorts to do work which properly belongs to the Government, and for which they should take the fullest responsibility. They appoint commissions for this, committees for that, boards for that, and do nothing themselves. They may not really be worth more than they propose to give themselves under these circumstances, and it is a point to which I thoroughly object. We are whittling away what our forefathers so valiantly fought for centuries ago, destroying responsible government step by step. Ministers are responsible for nothing. Why? What did we hear the other night? The Minister for Mines, when he was speaking on these undecided railways for the fields, said that the Government propose submitting these things to Parliament. It is a matter of policy, a matter on which the Government should take charge; but no. They have not the courage to take charge. They come here and ask us to pledge ourselves this way or the other. They have not even the courage to appoint a Premier themselves, or a Minister: they have to do it by the party. All these things are delegated to irresponsible bodies that this House cannot touch, from which we can get no redress if wrong is done. Ministers may be worth less on this account, for they are not doing the work that belongs to responsible government. They are whittling our highest privileges away one by one. This is a backward, retrogressive movement in the history of the State. Every effort has been made to malign this (Opposition) side of the House, to depreciate this party. We hear Ministers, if they have done wrong at any time, state "But your Ministry did so and so; it was your Ministry that did this, or did that, or your Ministry did not do this or did not do that," as if they apologised for their own weakness by imitating in every possible way what has been done on the Labour side of the House. If it is a demerit for this side of the House to do a certain thing, surely it is a demerit for that side to follow such example. One member on the Government side, who is opposed to the Government on certain measures and cannot follow them in

certain particulars, I am alluding to the member for North Perth (Mr. Brebber), said he could never be a member of the Labour party because he had a conscience.

MEMBER: It is a pity you have not one.

MR. WALKER: It is a relief to know that the member has one, and granting that he has one, what sort of a conscience is it? A member who talks about sacrificing his conscience tells us he does not agree with the Government, that they are going to do wrong, that their gospels are heretical to him, yet he will support them and stick with them. What sort of political conscience is that? It is very elastic. The member says he has had experience of trade unionism, and that his experience has been bitter. I do not wonder at it. Will the hon. member tell us what they did to him? They told him his conscience was not wanted among them. He was a little bit out of order, in other words he is not with us, not because he does not want to be, but because he cannot help being outside. But the Labour party, however some of its representatives may be unpalatable, however they may fail to come up to the great ideals, has a cause that the Treasury benches are glad to steal from them, glad to take its ideas and make them theirs. It is a cause that is wider than this Chamber. It is a cause that is wider than Western Australia. It is a cause that is touching the human heart in every part of the world. This is the cause that feels with those wretched people that I have read of. In our papers quite recently, in the *Southern Times* of Bunbury on June 30th, and that is not long ago, this is recorded:—

During the week a veteran aged 63 arrived in Collie, having accomplished the journey from Kalgoorlie entirely per boot. He is a victim of the Railway Department policy of retrenchment. The trip took him 10 weeks to complete.

No pity for a man of this kind on the Government side of the House. It is here where the heart is for him. A little while ago the workers on the railway line near Narrogin asked that they should receive payment for holidays in that out-of-the-way place. They were refused, but the men getting big pay—the gangers—were paid for the holiday. The

poor wage man, the helpless man, the man who has to foot it from one part of the country to the other, it is the Labour party that has the feeling for suffering humanity everywhere. There is no hypocrisy about these words. It is a cause, I say, which is wider than this Chamber, wider than this party here, it is a cause that is touching the heart of the whole world. In the aristocratic Chamber of the House of Commons they have put the sons of toil side by side with the aristocrats of England. It is the same cause that is putting the liberal sentiment, this honourable theme, in the utterances in the French Chamber. It is the same cause that in Germany is keeping even the Kaiser in moderation in his utterances. It is the cause that in Russia has stimulated the people throughout the length and breadth of that great empire to revolt against the tyranny of the past. There need be no man ashamed of belonging to a movement that is human, a movement that is world-wide, that has its foundation in the suffering of all the past, that deems no human being too low or lowly to receive the aid, the compassion, or help of those belonging to this party. It is the lifting up from the lowest depths of humanity. That side (Government) is the crushing side, the side that believes in grinding men down. I am not ashamed of my party, and I have sacrificed none of my conscience by belonging to the party. Some members believe that by being in caucus a man sacrifices some of his honour, and some of his dignity. No man is returned to this House who is not pledged to his constituents, honourably bound, some in writing, some verbally, but they are bound. It is nothing more. We hold our meetings which are called caucus, and debate matters: the other side do the same. It is only the name that is different. The great difference between our side and theirs is not in the details of government, but in great principles. We believe by our reforms in loosening the fetters of mankind, of raising from the limbs of mortals the chains that gold has placed on them heartlessly. That is our cause put briefly. There is something to fight for in it. Instead of killing conscience it quickens it. It gives hope for reform. Let me say we shall have to have some of this in the Government in

the future. We need some purity of purpose. Disguise it as we may, this Government is going backward. Our Treasury is being depleted. Our resources are tied up. The land tax and other simple tapplings of resources will not make up for the deficiency that is increasing year by year. We are practically sold to the Eastern States by the bonds of Federation. The member for West Perth (Mr. Illingworth) last night in a very admirable little speech told us we had sort of voluntarily given up the large taxes on us which we are paying ourselves, meaning thereby the inter-State duties. We have remitted none of these taxes. The price of goods that covered that tax is not lessened one iota. The business man, the middleman, the traders in the East have got all the benefits of the remissions. We have got nothing. Whatever taxes we have to pay we shall have to pay in addition. By the remission of these taxes we shall lessen none of the expenses of the citizens. They are simply collared by the merchants on the other side. Not only have we done that, but we have allowed these goods now to come into the country to the detriment of our own citizens, who could, were it not for the keen competition, produce these things here. We have taken the heart out of men, farmers and gardeners, and many of those who might otherwise be engaged in products of manufacture, etcetera. There is nothing to replace it. There is no heart in the Government. What is proposed to save the country? I notice the Honorary Minister (Mr. Mitchell) is in his place now. He doubtless thinks we can add a few pounds to the country's wealth by the lines of railway. But he is a banker, and he is with the Government who propose to borrow money for the State. True the country wants money, but he knows that by borrowing money from the banks we are borrowing from private individuals, and it will benefit them. But why does not the hon. member convert the Government to establishing a State Bank and the issue of paper money, and by that means remove the necessity of borrowing money from abroad? He knows that can be done, for he is a banker. By this means we can do away altogether with our relations with foreign financiers. A vast amount of this country's resources

is already going in interest, and if we keep on borrowing, where have we the resources for our own development and improving the State? It goes to the foreigner. It is paid to the outsider. If the hon. member is a real genuine democrat, and wants to reform the country, to save us from the bondage of the British money-lender, why not make a proposal of that kind instead of tiddly-winking proposals to reduce salaries by £200 a year? Why not take a bold course of that kind? The whole of our financial difficulties can be solved by the establishment of a State bank and our own State currency. There is no question about that. That saved America at a time of financial distress in the Civil War. It saved France at the time of the Revolution, when that country was beset by the armies of Europe. It saved England itself when the Bank of England had to close, and the currency of the Bank had to receive the indorsement of the Government. It is no dream. Properly regulated paper currency will meet all our difficulties. Why not take that course? Why plunge us more and more into the grip of the money lender? True our own people want work, and I would prefer that money should be borrowed than that these people should starve. Hundreds of people are starving and walking about in the streets of Kalgoorlie to-day. You can see them round the mines. They wait there to get the chance of a stray job. Every time there is a change of shift these men are there waiting for the possibility of getting a little work to tide them over the difficulties, and I can scarcely walk down the street any day in the week without being met by from one to half-a-dozen men asking me if I could do anything, and if I heard of anything would I let them know. Some of them have families, and they are men I know to be honest, willing men who would go anywhere to get work in order to keep their wives and families from distress. I would rather borrow money than have such a state of affairs in the country. The place is dead; there is nothing going on; no money circulating; no enterprise; sinking under the weight of our own sorrow and depression. That is the state of the country now. Yet the Ministry propose nothing definite beyond these few spur lines to

relieve the difficulty, and the money we are to borrow is to be spent, not in starting new industries by which the unemployed may be absorbed, but in merely helping their agricultural friends. There is something wrong in this state of affairs. The public, to my mind, are long-suffering indeed when they tolerate that. Our banks are growing rich by the millions being sent out of the country in dividends and the payment of interest on the State debts, money which, if used in the development of the State, would make us one of the finest countries in the world.

THE TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) : I have listened during the past week or ten days to the different speeches which have been made in this debate on the Address-in-Reply, and I must confess that they seem to me to have been utterly devoid of anything original, anything instructive, anything constructive, anything upon which we can build up a policy of progress and prosperity for the State. We always look for fair criticism from the Opposition. The Government put their policy before the country in a policy speech, which is delivered by the Premier. They then embody that to some extent—at any rate the main portions of it—in what is known as the Governor's Speech, and we expect to get out of the debate which follows and of the criticisms of our opponents something that we can learn from, something possibly that we can answer. But I say with all due respect to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath) and his colleagues that there is absolutely nothing to answer in the charges which they have brought forward during the course of this debate. We have had the irresponsible utterances of the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) ; we have had that deadly earnest speech of my friend the member for Mt. Leonora (Mr. Lynch). Though the speech was in earnest—and I give him credit for all the earnestness of its delivery—yet that speech throughout consisted of inaccurate statements. Then we had the leader himself, the member for Brown Hill, in his puerile efforts to damn the prosperity of the country, and take credit for the progressive policy of the present Government, to say nothing of the bad taste in bringing forward the grievances of several

friends in connection with the goldfields water supply. My friend the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) also gave us one of his splendid oratorical efforts, in which he advised the House that to some extent he was risking his very health, and that it was contrary to the advice of his medical adviser to be speaking. Nevertheless, he had sufficient energy, sufficient vitality, to fulminate for the benefit of the House—if it was a benefit—to the extent of $2\frac{3}{4}$ hours. I am sorry to say that during that speech he seemed to be appealing somewhat to the worst side of humanity and pandering to the sordid appetites of those who are constantly looking for sensational reports in the daily Press. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) spoke with such haste that he tripped himself up in almost every sentence, and was found guilty of making misstatements also.

MR. HOLMAN : Name some of the misstatements, will you ?

THE TREASURER : We had in the speech of the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) some of the most consummate acting I have ever listened to within the walls of this Chamber.

MR. HOLMAN : You ought to be a pretty good judge.

THE TREASURER : I should like here to say that the member for Kanowna charged my colleague the Honorary Minister, Mr. Mitchell, with having been bought by the appointment to the position which that Minister now occupies. It must appeal to all reasonable and right-thinking people that there can be no purchase in a position of that description. The hon. member admitted that he knew the Minister was working without fee or reward. How can there be such an idea, such a thought as the purchase of his silence, when the hon. gentleman is giving days and nights weekly in order to further the interests of the department over which he so ably presides at the present time ? It is not fair. These charges of corruption which have been flung across the Chamber by the hon. member who has just sat down—charges that my friend has been bought—are unfair in the extreme. We may differ from our opponents in political ideas, but for that reason are we to be charged with being corrupt, dishonest, and dishonourable men ? It is true we

may possibly take or do something which our opponents approve of; we may even introduce a land tax which our opponents claim as their own, and which the member for Kanowna wrongfully stated had not been included in the policy of the late Premier, Mr. Rason—[MR. BOLTON: Neither was it]—but for that reason are we to be termed dishonourable and discredited politicians? I trow not. I appeal to my friends opposite to support me in that contention, that no matter whether we differ from them in their opinions, no matter whether we introduce some measure which may receive their support—and I hope we shall have a lot of their support during this session—still they will give us credit for taking action in the direction we think will serve the best interests of the country, a country we are all endeavouring to advance to the best of our ability. Members have interjected that the late Premier, Mr. Rason, opposed land taxation.

MR. BOLTON: Nothing of the sort.

THE TREASURER: The member for Kanowna said quite distinctly that Mr. Rason had opposed a land tax and had opposed the reduction of the franchise in the Upper House. Let me read the remarks of Mr. Rason in delivering his policy speech on the 9th September last.

MR. BOLTON: Read them more correctly than you gave them to the member for Kanowna.

THE TREASURER: If the hon. member will keep quiet I will be able to complete my speech:—

He proposed to reduce the franchise of the Legislative Council from £25 to £15. Then they gave absolutely the most liberal constitution of any of the States of Australasia.

Those are the words of the late Premier in connection with the liberalisation of the franchise for the Legislative Council. We propose to do exactly the same thing, and yet the member for Kanowna asked us what warranty we had for these proposals which we have brought forward in our policy speech. Mr. Rason farther stated that—

He did not propose to introduce land taxation that year, but they could not shut their eyes to the fact that they were dealing with a constantly-diminishing revenue, and that in the near future some increased taxation would be absolutely necessary.

Those are the words copied out of papers that reported the speech; and to say, as

the member for Kanowna said, or at least as I understood him to say—and I venture to say every member on this side of the House also understood him in that way—that the late Premier did not support a land tax and was not going to reduce the franchise of the Upper House, is to misrepresent that hon. gentleman. The member for Kanowna advanced what appears to me to be a very doubtful theory. He accused us here of hypocrisy because we did not support—not exactly these words—Labour candidates for the Upper House, or perhaps to put it the other way, because we opposed Labour members standing for the Upper House. It strikes me as being very laughable, very funny, to have this charge thrown at us. Do members think that we are going to support our opponents?

MR. BOLTON: You did support them.

THE TREASURER: I deny anything of the sort. Certainly when we are fighting this battle out we are going to fight it from our own side.

MR. BATH: You supported the men who opposed your proposals. That is what you did.

THE TREASURER: There was another very startling theory advanced by the hon. member, and I am merely referring to this now in order that I may not forget it. He said it was robbery to send dividends out of this country. He referred to the magnificent dividends which have been paid by our gold-mining industry, the bulk of which go to foreign capitalists, as he called them. He said that was robbery, and it was not the man who has put money into the country, it was not the money of the British capitalists even, that made this country. I grant that, and I do not think anyone yet has suggested that the only cause of the advancement and prosperity of our country up to date has been due to British capital; but I say it was the combined effort of the worker and the man who owns money, the British capitalist, which made this country what it is to-day, and I think it shows very bad form indeed, and it is bad policy, for those hon. members to decry those who have assisted the development of this country in the past and to whom we look to assist in the development of the country in the future. Why not say straight out that where honest capital is invested in

an honest manner in our country we give it all due credit, and where on the other hand we have honest labour combining with it to help forward our industries, we will give that labour due credit also? But to say that the workers only, or that Labour men only, are responsible for the prosperity of the country is on the face of it absurd. It is the combination, as I have said, which makes our country great, and not the single efforts of one or two individual workers or one or two capitalists. I wish, in passing, to refer briefly to the remarks of the member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson). It does seem to me that in the midst of all the speeches we have heard in this debate, it is refreshing to get, at any rate from the Opposition side of the House, the slightest commendation of the acts and the policy of this Government. The hon. member says that the policy foreshadowed in the Premier's speech exhibits the foundation of progress and prosperity for the country; that it embraces all the present requirements of the State; and farther, he said what struck me as being very true—and I hope that members opposite will remember it, because it came from one of their own side—that the Government policy would enable every man to get a living on the land who could not get a living by working for daily wages or in some other manner. That is the free and unsolicited opinion of a member of this House who is fairly conversant with industrial matters in Western Australia.

MR. SCADDAN: He did not say that, last session.

THE TREASURER: He had not the policy last session. Surely, if I claim for the Government that such is their intention in putting their policy before the country, I am not claiming too much; and I call upon all members of this House, I do not care upon which side they sit, to endeavour to pick out the best portions of that policy, and to give us assistance in carrying it out, so that we may secure the desired result. The member for West Perth (Mr. Illingworth), in discussing last night the financial position, gave us some interesting information; and I certainly endorse heartily his statement that the finances of this State are perfectly sound. Of this fact—and I wish members to take it

from me as Treasurer for the time being—there cannot be the slightest doubt; and we need have no fear of borrowing in the open market all the money we require to carry out the developmental works such as are mentioned in the policy speech. Our credit is good in the London market to-day, and it is good in the Australian market; and I for one am not afraid to advocate the borrowing of sufficient money to perform all the progressive works outlined in that speech. At the same time, I wish to point out, with respect to sinking fund and interest on our loans, that this State is in a much sounder position than any other State of the Commonwealth. In respect of every loan which we raise we provide, not only the interest, but a sufficient sinking fund. That sinking fund represents something like 3 per cent. on three millions of our national debt; $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on about $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions of our national debt; and the whole of the balance of our public debt bears a sinking fund of 1 per cent. This, I presume, without having made a calculation, means that we shall repay the whole of our national debt in 40 years if the sinking fund is safely invested at 3 per cent. Then what danger can there be in developing this country? Take the matter referred to last night by the member for West Perth—the percentage of revenue needed to pay the interest and sinking fund on our loans; and we find that we stand in a very good position as compared with other States. The percentage of loan interest and sinking fund to the total revenue is for the States mentioned as follows:—In Western Australia, for the year 1904-5, 21 per cent. of our revenue was needed to pay the interest and the sinking fund on our loans; in Queensland, 43 per cent. of the revenue was needed; in New South Wales, 29 per cent.; in Victoria, 27 per cent.; and in South Australia, 39 per cent. I have said, “to pay the interest and the sinking fund”; but in some of those States there is no sinking fund at all.

MR. TAYLOR: Every one of those States has a surplus, and this State has not.

THE TREASURER: What has that to do with the position? Every one of those States has a surplus! We have not a surplus; because on the one hand our revenue has been over-estimated, and

because on the other our expenditure has been under-estimated. That does not at all affect the credit of the State, but does affect the fundamental principle of borrowing, which is that we must have in our revenue a sufficient margin to provide for interest and sinking fund.

MR. BATH: You said the percentage was 21 per cent. in 1904-5?

THE TREASURER: Yes.

MR. BATH: What was it at the end of last month?

THE TREASURER: I do not know. I have not the figures.

MR. BATH: It was 23 per cent.—a difference of 2 per cent. in one year; and it was 12 per cent. in 1898.

THE TREASURER: Exactly; and when this State started to borrow, it was no percentage at all. The point I wish to make is: we may be perfectly satisfied that we can safely borrow all the money now required to carry out necessary public works. [MR. BATH: Roads and bridges?] Yes; roads and bridges or any other public works. I now wish briefly to refer to a charge made against me personally, I think by the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), regarding the cost of production of Collie coal. I may say at once that I have at the present time no direct connection with the Collie coal industry.

MR. HOLMAN: You had when I mentioned the matter.

THE TREASURER: Yes; I was at that time attorney for the Collie Proprietary Company; but since the end of January of this year, I have had no connection with that company. I have still some shares in it; and they represent the only interest I have in that industry. The hon. member is reported to have said, and I think this is what he did say:—

The fact that the Co-operative Coal Company had supplied coal to the railways at 9s. per ton showed that the statement of Mr. Ewing and the Colonial Treasurer that the lowest rate possible was 11s., was absolutely void of truth.

Now I wish to point out to members that the fact of a person's selling something below cost price does not give the lie to another person's assertion that the coal cannot be produced at that price. But apart from that aspect of the case, let me draw the hon. member's attention to the evidence of the manager of that Co-

operative Coal Co. before the Arbitration Court, when Mr. Bedlington, just about that time, gave his evidence as to costs. This is what took place in court. He said:—

At the present time, I am getting 10s. a ton for coal from the Government at the pit's mouth. Question: Is your company paying its way? Answer: It is making two ends meet without any provision for contingencies. Question: Is it making two ends meet without extra calls? [This he was asked by his representative.] That is what I mean by making the mine pay? Answer: We are just about making two ends meet, without anything for contingencies in any shape or form. Question: You are making your mine pay? Answer: No; I am not making it pay. By Mr. Lobstein: You get 10s. from the Government. Does it take all that to produce the coal? Answer: It does, to produce it, and to pay the charges on the coal. Question: It leaves you no credit balance at all? Answer: No. Question: It pays everything except dividends? Answer: There is no margin for any contingencies in any shape or form, or for depreciation. Question: You receive 1s. a ton less for your coal than the Proprietary or the Cardiff? Answer: Yes. Question: If your company got the same price as the Cardiff and Proprietary, would it be making a profit? Answer: It is very hard to say. We might make a small profit; but it would be very small. It would not be a profit which would provide for contingencies such as happen in coal mines.

I then cross-examined the witness, and said, "Have you made up the cost of production for any particular period?" He put in a statement of the cost for the fortnight ending 11th March, showing a loss of £38. "What did you lose for the next fortnight?" I asked. "For the fortnight ending the 25th March, we lost £33 17s. 10d." "Were you selling coal at 10s. 6d., then?" "Yes." This shows that he was selling at 10s. 6d. a ton—6d. below the price being paid to the other companies; and he put in his cost sheets showing that he was losing £30 to £40 per fortnight. Now what is the use of the hon. member's trying to show this House or to make anyone believe that I, when I told him that the company was losing money at that time, and that if it did not get 11s. a ton it could not pay its way, and when I offered to show him the cost sheets in his office, was telling him an untruth?

MR. HOLMAN: You are selling it for 3s. a ton less.

THE TREASURER: I do not know the present price. At that time the hon. member knew he could have had access to the books of the company, to the balance sheet and the cost sheets, and everything else he might have required. These were offered him. But to come to this House and to put a wrong construction on my statements is on a par with his usual action in public and political matters.

MR. BATH: Were not all those companies working together at that time?

THE TREASURER: No; four of them were.

MR. BATH: Were not they dividing between them the Government coal supply?

THE TREASURER: They were getting a certain percentage from the Government, as they are now.

MR. HOLMAN: They had it arranged.

THE TREASURER: Arranged? What has that to do with it? The Government gave them a proportion in those days, just as it gives them a proportion now—to each mine a certain proportion of the total requirements of the State.

MR. BATH: They were working together to get as high a price as they could.

THE TREASURER: No; they were not.

MR. HOLMAN: The Collie Proprietary got 10s. 9d. and the Collie Cardiff 7s. 9d.

THE TREASURER: That has nothing to do with the statement of the hon. member, that I did not tell the truth in his office. I said that the coal could not be produced under 11s. per ton. That is, simply, the reply I wish to make to the hon. member. Before I pass on, I should like to make a brief reference to the member for Perth's (Mr. H. Brown's) unfortunate manner of putting things, when he referred to the recent Ministerial crisis. It is unnecessary for me to deal at any length with what then took place. I can only say that anyone who has the anxiety and the responsibility of attempting to form or of forming a Ministry will recognise that the two weeks during which I had that responsibility were not weeks of pleasure or of leisure; and I think it incumbent on me to say that not for one moment throughout the whole of that anxious time, throughout the whole of the negotiations between me and the present Premier (Hon. N. J. Moore) and

the present Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory), was there one word of disagreement, one unfriendly word, or one unfriendly act. Our aim and my aim from the inception was that we should keep our party absolutely solid, and that we should have the best Government we could select; and I say at once that when the member for Perth implies that Mr. Rason was approached, it is unworthy of the hon. member.

MR. H. BROWN (in explanation): I said he was approached. The member for Katanning said he did approach Mr. Rason, and I repeat it again.

THE TREASURER: That is just what I object to. There are two ways of approaching a man. You can approach him legitimately, or you can approach him corruptly. When the hon. member says in such a way that the late Premier was approached, it means something worse.

MR. H. BROWN: Your own evil mind suggests that.

THE TREASURER: What did the hon. member say before he went away to the Eastern States? Something more than about being "approached." The evil mind! On what occasion did I or the member for Katanning approach Mr. Rason in anything but a legitimate way? If the member for Katanning approached Mr. Rason in a legitimate way, nothing need have been said about it; but if he approached him in a corrupt manner, other action should have been taken by the member for Perth. That is all I need say on the matter. I regret the incident, and I think it is due to the other members of my party and to my colleagues that it should be known at once that no underhand work went on at all. From the time Mr. Moore, the Premier, the Minister for Mines and myself got together, there was nothing but the most friendly feeling and the one desire that whoever was required by the majority of the party to be Premier of the State was to have the position.

MR. BATH: You took no notice of what was said in the papers?

THE TREASURER: If I took notice of everything said in the papers, I would have nothing else to do.

MR. BATH: What was said by your own colleagues.

THE TREASURER: To say or insinuate that Mr. Rason took nothing but a straight course in that matter is absolutely devoid of truth.

MR. TAYLOR: What rot! We can stand a little, but that is a big dose.

THE TREASURER: Mr. Rason asked the party as to whom they wished to be his successor as leader, and the party left it with Mr. Rason for the time being. They said distinctly that they would not say one way or another; and if members of the party gave an intimation to Mr. Rason that they desired Mr. Moore—[**MR. H. BROWN:** Who was against giving him that direction?—] it did not prove that a majority of the party had decided that way, because the party absolutely refused to give Mr. Rason any instruction.

MR. H. BROWN: The majority were in favour of it.

THE TREASURER: It has been since proved that they were, I admit that; but there was no proof at the time. No numbers were taken and no expressions were made in the meeting, and Mr. Rason acted in accordance with the behest of the party and used his own judgment, without ever being approached to my knowledge, without in any way being approached as the member for Perth says he was approached; and he recommended the Governor to send for me to form a Cabinet. I undertook that duty, as I was bound to do; and as soon as I found that in the opinion of my two colleagues, when we discussed the matter, there was a doubt as to whether a majority of the party wished to see me in that position or Mr. Moore, I said "Let us submit it to the party, and let us have it settled."

MR. BATH: You had no grit.

THE TREASURER: That is the true history of the negotiations, and I defy anybody else to put on them a different construction.

MR. BATH: You have not got as much spirit as I thought you had, to stand what you did.

THE TREASURER: I am not going to be drawn aside by the Leader of the Opposition. Whether I have the grit that he does not possess or not, matters not to me. I recognise that I have sufficient grit to hold my own position and to do what is right and just according to

my own conscience. I have always tried to do that ever since I have been in this country, for a period extending over 15 years; and I defy the hon. member or any member on the other side of the House, or any person, to point the finger of scorn at any of my actions, or to prove any action of mine that has not been straightforward and clean. [Several interjections from Labour Members.] I can reply to one member at a time.

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

THE TREASURER: Surely a man is justified in defending his own honour on the floor of this House. Everyone knows how I have been attacked from time to time in this debate, and now the Leader of the Opposition even casts a scornful interjection that I have no grit. It matters not to me what he thinks. Hon. members can judge on that point themselves. We have the same old cry coming from the Opposition benches as to "what has this Government done?" and we had the charge made by the member for Mount Magnet (**Mr. Troy**) that the Rason Government had stopped works and had broken their promises. I want to say that there was no such thing as any stoppage of works so far as that Government is concerned; and so far as I know, there have been no promises broken. The member for Leonora (**Mr. Lynch**) made a great point that we had spent £164,000, I think the figures were, less on railways, mines, and works in the 11 months than in the corresponding period of 11 months when the Labour Government were in power. So far as the railways were concerned, surely that would be some evidence of economic management; and I find, after turning up the figures, that during the year in which our friends had charge of the railways in this State it took an expenditure of £1,295,395 to earn £1,628,328 in revenue; whereas, during the year just ended, to the 30th June, 1906, we find that the department only expended £1,232,992 to earn a revenue of £1,648,814. [**MR. BATH:** And you put the balance on to loan expenditure.] We actually spent less money to earn a bigger revenue.

MR. HOLMAN: You put it on to loan expenditure.

THE TREASURER: I think it is proved conclusively that when the mem-

ber for Menzies got charge of the railway system he used more economy than had been applied to the management of the railways during the previous year by our friends opposite. I have it from the Minister for Railways that considerably less was spent last year from loan.

[Several interjections from Labour Members.]

MR. SPEAKER: I must ask hon. members to cease interjecting. There is really too much of it on the Opposition side of the House. It is certainly very bad taste to keep on, not one at a time, but four or five at a time. It is not fair to any speaker.

THE TREASURER: A matter referred to by the Minister for Works when he spoke was as to the works carried over from one Ministry or from one year to another. The ingoing Ministry, whoever they may be, Labour or from our side of the House, must of course be dependent during the first portion of their time pretty largely on the outgoing Government for the works to be completed; and I think that applies pretty generally to the first 12 months of any Cabinet's existence. Let us compare the positions. The liabilities carried forward from 1903-4 to 1904-5 were: revenue £119,420; and loan, £185,138; total, £304,558; meaning the works in hand when the Labour Government took office, handed over to them as a legacy to be completed by them. But when we took office, the liabilities on this score carried over from 1904-5 to 1905-6 amounted only to—revenue £54,342, and loan £74,216, total, £128,558; meaning that there was a difference of £176,000 worth of works between the period that our friends took office and when we took office; and it has been truly said that no work of any magnitude was initiated during the whole term of the present Opposition's term of office, except the reticulation of Guildford and Midland Junction. To put this matter more forcibly to the House, let me just instance for a moment a large ship-building concern. A new manager comes in and he has his order book filled with contracts, say 10 or 12 large vessels to build, and he goes along full swing during his term of managership; but if towards the end of his term he has neglected refilling his order book, when his successor comes on, no matter how

good a man he is, he will have a slack, dull period of depression in that yard for many months, and for the first 12 months he will show a bad record of work performed. We were exactly in the same position as I have just described. When we took charge of the Treasury bench we were like the manager without contracts; and though we had two elections at the back end of that year, and although we did not meet the House until November and get our Estimates through until a day before Christmas, and though nothing of any magnitude could be commenced until some days after the commencement of the new year, yet we were told that we did nothing and that we brought things to a standstill. What did we do? We got works going again which our friends had neglected and brought to a standstill during their period of office. We set to work to get plans and specifications out for large undertakings. We let a contract for the extension of the Bunbury mole to the tune of £60,000. We let a contract for the extension of the jetty for £4,000. We passed through, as hon. members are fully aware and complained about at the time, and which should stand on record, three Railway Bills, and we have these railways started cheaper than other railways have been constructed before in this country and, I might say, in any State of Australia.

MR. HOLMAN: Departmentally.

THE TREASURER: Does it matter whether the work is carried out departmentally or by public tender? Tenders were called, and the tenders of the department were something like £7,000 below the next lowest tenders; and the work will be carried out, I am confident, for the price submitted. But we did more than that. We saw that the steel market was advancing, and we immediately went into the market, even before we got our Bills through, to provide the necessary rails and fastenings to carry out these railways. We have not only got rails and fastenings in the store for these railways, but we have something like 30 miles in hand for the next railway which the House may sanction to be constructed; and we have got that material at such a price that even Mr. Teesdale Smith himself has to express his wonder and surprise that the Government were

able to purchase it so cheaply. In addition to these railways which we have heard so much about, we started the storm-water drainage of Perth and Fremantle. We have already started the Mount Bay storm-water drain, the cost of which is £21,000. We have let a contract for the Claisebrook Treatment Works at £20,000, and in connection with the sewerage scheme of Perth, suburbs, and Fremantle we have let a contract for sewer pipes, which should mean the establishment of another local factory, at £22,000. In addition we have let a contract for the manhole covers and other portions of the drainage work. Not only have we done that, not only have we let all the contracts as quickly as we could get the work out, but we have initiated the sewerage work. The total comes to over half a million of money. We have also taken in hand the completion of the Collic-Narrogin Railway. The rails for the final section of that railway have been ordered, and will be shipped in five or six months' time to Bunbury in order that the work can be successfully carried to completion. In the meantime the sleepers are being hewn for the job, and other preliminary work got in hand. We have let a contract for water pipes totalling £24,000, and by that means we have given extended employment not only to the Fremantle foundry, but also to some private foundries in our midst. We have also established a factory and let a contract for the manufacture of water meters in our midst, which will give farther employment to artisans in that direction. These things seem to me to give at once an emphatic denial and contradiction to the statement that the Government have not had the welfare of the country at heart, that they have been sleeping and done nothing to farther its interests.

MR. BATH: Why not publish the correct records in the official abstract?

THE TREASURER: I have nothing to do with any records. I do not know what the hon. member refers to, neither do I care. I am giving the records of the work undertaken, and the hon. member ought to know that what I am stating are absolute facts. In addition to what I have already stated we have started on the preliminary work of the

farther water supply for the metropolitan area. That great scheme, it is true, has not been finally adopted, but still the preliminary work, which is hard and severe in the extreme, the contour surveys, the estimates of cost, the capacity and strength have all to be worked out, and it takes time to do these things. All this work requires weeks, and months in some instances, of hard graft in the office by the engineers before the work can be put into the hands of the contractor and a proper start made. I venture to think there is not a member of the House but will say that the Government have put up a splendid record as far as their public works policy is concerned in the five short months during which they have had to initiate and commence these works. Shall I say anything about the rabbit-proof fence? This is going on steadily. A large amount of work has been done, about 200 miles—one hears very little about it—have been constructed during our term. The late Government carried on the work, and so have we. All these works have had to receive the necessary attention at the hands of the staff and the Minister. They have to be carefully supervised, and carefully looked into as far as possible. I wish to refer to the criticism which has been going on for months in connection with myself and the departmental officers of the Works Department by the *West Australian* newspaper. Day after day *ad nauseam* leading articles have come out stating that we were extravagant; that we did not grasp the rudiments of cheap construction; that the engineer and his staff could not possibly be expected to do anything cheaply or correctly. That is manifestly unfair. One cannot expect to get true performance of duties from one's officials, one cannot expect to get that loyalty of service that one ought to receive from subordinates and officers, if critics are continually nagging at them, continually telling them publicly that you see no good in them, that they cannot do the work, and that they have no intention of doing it. At any rate as far as the House is concerned—members on both sides—we should see that the public officers, those who cannot go into the Press and protect themselves, shall receive that due measure

of support and praise for the efforts they are putting forth. Until we are satisfied they are incompetent, we should not condemn them, and when we find them incompetent we should get rid of them. That is the only position to take up in regard to this great department. Again I wish to protest at the treatment the officers have received at the hands of the Press, and I want to make it clear that it is the duty of members to give fair play to public officers rather than make political game out of those officers, such as has been done in the past. I have shown that the department have done splendid work in regard to the railways. It is said the railways were rushed through the House with much undue haste. Whether that is so or not does not affect the matter I have referred to. I admit that very little time was given to the consideration of these railways, but very little time was required. At any rate we had not the time to give to them. It was not within our power unless we carried the session into the new year, and the Leader of the Opposition himself did not see the force of that. He was not in favour of sitting in the new year, nor was any other member. Therefore we had to put through the three Railway Bills, I am proud to say, in the short space at our disposal, and I hope the locomotives will reach the termini of these three lines before the end of the year. There is one matter I may be pardoned for referring to, that is the charge made by the member for Magnet with regard to the Cottessloe jetty. I think he said we were constructing the work without due authority, that it was an unauthorised expenditure. I will refer the hon. member to the Estimates. On page 75, item 269, an amount of £900 was provided and passed through the House. It is not right for members of the House and public men to make such charges. They should be careful. If the member had any doubt, all he had to do was to ask me, and I would have given him the information at once. The member for Leonora made a great point that there were only three items in the policy speech, and that these were filched from the Opposition. If the member and his colleagues wish to have that credit we do not begrudge them the reflected glory of these items. All I wish to do is to emphasise the fact that we

intend to carry out our policy as we have put it before the country, and whether members opposite claim the credit or not it matters not to me personally. If the measures are good, then we should join forces to carry them out, but if they are bad and not in the interests of the country, then we should throw them on one side.

MR. BATH : You did not say that when standing for election.

THE TREASURER : The member for Leonora has taken a peculiar idea of the prosperity of the country, and the Leader of the Opposition was most pessimistic. He says the statement in the Governor's Speech that the country is in a prosperous condition is untrue. I think there is nothing more calculated to injure the prospects of our country than statements like those coming from responsible members of the House.

MR. LYNCH : It is a pity you did not take that lesson last year.

THE TREASURER : The member gauges the prosperity of the workers and the country by the average amount standing to the credit of depositors in the Savings Bank. No novice, no school-boy would draw such a foolish conclusion. I deprecate any member of the House trying to advance the interests of his party in such a way at the expense of the State. The first principle of trade unionism, which these members profess to represent so straightforwardly and honestly is or ought to be the more equal distribution of wealth, and yet the member bemoans the fact that we have more depositors in the Savings Bank, and therefore a smaller amount to credit per head than we had 12 months ago ! One would suppose he held that one depositor with £500 to his credit is better than 100 depositors with £5 each to their credit. I take the opposite view. The more depositors we have in the State Savings Bank the better for the State. It shows the savings of the people are more equally distributed, and the great mass of the people are learning thrifty habits and are putting by for a rainy day.

MR. BATH : You forget that the percentage of depositors has increased.

THE TREASURER : Let me give the facts of the position to the House.

In June, 1905, just prior to our taking office, the number of accounts opened was 59,764; in June, 1906, we had 63,614, an increase of 3,850.

MR. BATH: But the population has increased.

THE TREASURER: Seeing that the population had only increased by 7,800 souls, or thereabouts, perhaps a little more, I am not quite sure of the figures, the member will see the increase proportionate to the population was more than he thought it was. The amount to credit of depositors, including interest, on the 30th June, 1905, was £2,207,000, leaving out the odd hundreds. In June, 1906, the amount was £2,325,000, an increase of £118,000. The average amount per depositor, owing to the large increase of customers to the bank, was £36 11s. 3d. at the end of June this year, as against £36 18s. 8d. last year, showing a decrease of 7s. 5d. per head. But we have a large increase in the number of depositors, and taking the average amount as if there were the same number of depositors as last year we find the amount is increased to £38 18s. 4d. per head instead of £36 18s. 8d. This seems to be proof conclusive that the conclusions drawn by the hon. member were wrong, and injurious to the State in the extreme. And if we go farther and take the balances to the credit of the depositors, if the amount were distributed over the whole of the population of the State, we find that in the year 1903-4 the amount would be £8 14s. 9d.; in 1904-5, £8 15s. 9d.; in 1905-6, £8 18s. 4d., an increase of 2s. 7d. per head of our population; showing conclusively that so far as the Savings Bank is concerned, so far as the earnings and savings of our people are concerned, there has been undoubtedly steady progress and prosperity instead of the reverse, which the hon. member wished to impress upon the country and this House. We can pass away from that aspect and look generally. What do we find? We find that our population is increasing. It is true that the increase is not in proportion to the advancement of the early years of 1896, 1897, and 1898.

MR. BATH: It is not the same as last year.

THE TREASURER: It is not quite the same as last year, but still it is an

increase, and for five months ending on the 31st May of this year population had increased by excess of immigration and births by 4,776 souls, and five-twelfths of last year's increase was only 5,205; so there is not much to cavil at so far as that is concerned. There has been a steady increase. Coming then to our exports beyond the Commonwealth we find that these exports for the year 1906 show an increase of £695,000 over the value of the exports for the year 1905. What is there to cavil at in that? Nothing, I think; but it is a sign that the country is advancing, and that there is prosperity in our country. It is true that the gold specie accounts for this extra value in our exports, and that the export of such articles as wool, timber, hides and skins, pearl-shell, sandalwood, etc., has decreased by £44,000 during the same period. But on the other hand we have had an enormous increase in our live stock. Our horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, have increased by 352,000 head during the same period, and I venture to say that this little decrease so far as our wool and timber are concerned, in value only, is very much more than outweighed by the large increase in our herds of horses and cattle. But in addition to that, let me draw the attention of this House and of the people of the country to the fact that our grain crops are increasing considerably, that the area under cultivation has increased by 33,000 acres during the past year. Our yield of wheat, oats and barley has increased by 349,000 bushels. In regard to hay, potatoes, and onions the output was some 26,000 tons more than it was during the year 1905. And although our gold production was some 69,000 ozs. less, yet I venture to say that summing the whole thing up we have an enormous balance on the side of progress, instead of on the side of retrogression and stagnation, which some members wish to impress upon the House.

MR. BATH: We are only going by the unemployed.

THE TREASURER: I am absolutely ashamed of the pessimism of the Opposition. I counsel them to take heart. The country is all right. Let them have some confidence in themselves and the Government, and if they also have some con-

fidence in the people all will be well, and this country will forge ahead and prosper even under the régime of myself and my colleagues.

MR. BATH: You had better say that to the unemployed.

THE TREASURER: We always hear about the unemployed, and as long as we have a country we shall have unemployed in it. In regard to finance I want to say that our deficit has increased somewhat since June, 1905, namely from £46,000 to, in round figures, £120,000; yet the excess of expenditure over revenue has been gradually decreasing, because in the year 1903-4 we commenced with a surplus of £231,000 and ended with a surplus of £83,000, so that the amount by which the expenditure exceeded the receipts in that year was £148,000. Then in 1904-5, when my friends opposite were in office, we commenced with a surplus of £83,000 and ended with a deficit of £46,000. The then expenditure exceeded the receipts by £129,000. The year 1905-6 commenced with a deficit of £46,000, and ended with a deficit of £119,000. That shows that the expenditure exceeded the receipts by £73,000. If we can go on gradually cutting our coat according to our cloth, that is if we can bring our expenditure within the limits and bounds of our revenue and make the two meet by next year, we shall be happy and thoroughly pleased, and that is my aim. And in connection with that let me say that I want to convert the Treasury from being the recording office it has been up to the present pretty well, an office in which we had to wait until we got our return at the end of each month to find out whether we had a deficit during that month of fifty or a hundred thousand pounds, or none at all. I want to change that recording office, as I call it, into an office to control the expenditure, and I hope with the assistance of my colleagues, which I am sure I shall have, to be able to bring this about during the next recess. I have up to the present initiated a scheme of a chart, a return which shows daily to me, as nearly accurately as I can possibly get it, whether our deficit is increasing or decreasing. I have a scheme whereby every morning I can tell almost exactly, without waiting for the end of the month to find out what

has occurred, how the finances are going. But I want to go farther. I want to have a system by which I can control the liabilities of expenditure of each department. I want to have it all focussed in the Treasury so that I can view periodically the liabilities ahead, say fortnightly or weekly, and the expending officers shall know that they must not go beyond those estimates without the sanction of their Ministerial head. When I get that system properly completed and inaugurated I shall have my finger on the pulse of the finances of this country, and with the assistance of my colleagues I shall be able to put a stopper on the expenditure before it has actually occurred instead of recording it after it has gone and must be paid. I want to be able to do what business men do if their revenue does not come in according to their estimates, to be able to curtail the expenditure, stop the outgoings, so that income and expenditure may balance at the end of the financial year, as they ought to do. This is the only sound method of finance that I know of in connection with revenue and expenditure, and in this connection I shall also, I think, ask the House when the Estimates came down to assist me by making in regard to those unknown quantities in our Estimates a maximum amount. I refer to grants in aid, grants to different institutions, grants to different municipalities whereby we vote pound for pound, £8,000 or it may be £80,000 before the year is out—goodness knows what it may be at the end of the financial year. There are grants to institutions such as the Home of Peace, Blind Men's Home, municipal and other institutions, and we are pledged to pay pound for pound; so if someone dies and leaves a legacy of £5,000 or £6,000 to one of these institutions, the Government at once have to provide a like amount out of the public funds. There can be no actual control of our expenditure when we have all these unknown quantities coming in during any month in the year to upset the calculations upon which we have founded our Estimates. If we limit these grants of pound for pound by a maximum amount, then it will be understood that nothing beyond the sum on the Estimates can be given, no matter how much is raised; and I think that is a fair proposition to put in connection

with these votes. I shall not have any satisfaction in the position I occupy in the Treasury until I have been able to inaugurate the system I have briefly and crudely outlined. I hope that when we get that, this period of deficit will be minimised, at any rate that it will be lessened, brought down to a minimum quantity, and that in the next year, at all events, I shall be able to make our expenditure balance with our revenue. I want briefly to refer to some very good work which has been done in the Treasury, and that is in connection with the stamping department. A Bill was passed last year providing for embossed stamps. That necessitated a new department, and it was thought that this department would have to be under the control of the comptroller, as in other States, at some considerable cost. The Under Treasurer, however, and his staff have taken this work in hand and are carrying it out to the satisfaction of those who use that department. The chairman of the Associated Banks took occasion to tell me how pleased they had been with the work of this department, and that they have never heard a complaint. In addition to that, the work of embossing cheques which used to be done by the Government Printing Office is now done within the Treasury, and the work is being done by the Under Treasurer and his staff. £33,000 has been received in stamp revenue during the six months ending 30th June last, and £12,000 has been earned in that embossing office at an expenditure of £53 in salaries. That seems to be a very creditable record so far as the Under Treasurer is concerned, and he deserves commendation. There was a matter which cropped up when the leader of the Opposition was speaking in *re* some 6ft. cast-iron pipes. I was not listening at the time when he made some comment about it. He drew my attention to his remarks. I thought he was referring to the water pipes, and I stated that there were no 6ft. pipes in the contract. I find now I made a mistake. He was referring to the pipes in connection with the Mount Bay storm-water drain; but it does not matter very much, because the reply was perfectly correct with regard to that; that is, there are no 6ft. pipes in the contract. But I have to explain to the hon. member and

to the House that the contract has been altered by the engineers to permit of 6ft. pipes being put in in the place of 12ft. pipes specified in the contract. Atkins and Law are the contractors for the construction of this Mount Bay storm-water drain, and in relation to another contract which includes some 580ft. of 48in. cast-iron pipes in 12ft. lengths Messrs. Hoskins & Company have contracted with Messrs Atkins & Law to supply these pipes. The pipes have machine-drilled flanges and the price was £5 5s. per foot, the total £3,076 delivered, or in other words £16 10s. per ton, including bolts. The total contract includes manhole covers and step irons. The department has sanctioned the pipes being made in 6ft. lengths, but that makes absolutely no difference in the cost so far as the Government are concerned or so far as the city of Perth is concerned. It makes a better job, because as the pipes are laid on an incline the more flanges we have the better is the grip on the ground, and there is less fear of damage or shifting.

MR. BATH: Was that specified in the contract when the contract was entered into? Did they know that was going to be done?

THE TREASURER: No one knew about it.

[MR. ILLINGWORTH took the Chair.]

MR. BATH: It would have made £1,500 difference, they claim.

THE TREASURER: No; it would not. It is absolutely wrong, and I want to know where the hon. member got his information about the £1,500. Will he tell me that?

MR. BATH: From the other contractors.

THE TREASURER: Messrs. Monteath, I suppose. So far from the manufacturers saving any money from this alteration, the cost in manufacturing is, owing to the doubling of the number of joints making 12 tons extra weight, costing £16 10s. a ton, £198 more than if they had to put in 12ft. lengths. It is true that if they had manufactured 12ft. lengths they would have had to make some alteration to the building in order to get increased crane room, and it is estimated that to put up additional crane power to lift the full weight which

the double length of pipe would cause and to raise the roof would have cost £500. That is to save alterations in their works. To save that expenditure of £500 they mulct themselves in the extra cost of construction, £198. They saved £300 more on that deal than they would if we had forced them to carry out the original terms of the contract, and make the pipes in 12ft. lengths. Surely even the hon. member will admit that the Government must not, for the sake of making people spend money in altering works, force them to make a certain article when another article will answer the purpose as well or better, as I have shown it will in this case. As far as I can gather, the deal was perfectly fair and straightforward. The contractors tendered for 12ft. pipes, and when the contract had been completed permission was given them to make them in 6ft. lengths, because that did not make one iota of difference to the department. In fact, the officers say that the 6ft. lengths are better than the 12ft. for the required gradient.

MR. LYNCH: Why did you not decide that in the first instance?

THE TREASURER: I cannot understand that question. How can I?

MR. BATH: My objection was that all the contractors were not put on the same footing.

THE TREASURER: Why do engineers make mistakes and overlook things? If the hon. member (Mr. Lynch) had had as much experience as I have had of engineering and manufacturing, he would know that half the boss's time is passed in rectifying errors which will creep into work of that sort, and in providing something which has been overlooked by the engineers.

MR. LYNCH: The cases are not analogous.

THE TREASURER: Perfectly analogous. I wish to refer to a matter which I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, that is the Leader of the Opposition's complaint, which I think was out of place in this House, about three friends of his on the goldfields, in connection with the water supply.

MR. BATH: There are not three, but a dozen.

THE TREASURER: Three you specially referred to. On the 10th May the

department wrote at my instigation to Mr. Bath, asking him to be good enough to call and peruse the reports on this matter. He took no notice of that letter. On the 7th June, my successor, Mr. Price, wrote through the department to Mr. Bath, regretting that he had not availed himself of the opportunity of perusing the papers; and Mr. Price endorsed the decision I had come to, namely that there was no just ground for complaint. I do not want to go into the details of this case, because if I did, it would possibly be injurious to the friends of the hon. member. But I ask him again, instead of bringing complaints of this petty character into this House, to go to the office of the Minister and peruse the papers for himself, and I will guarantee he will be perfectly satisfied that the treatment meted out by the department and by the Minister is justified in the circumstances, and that the hon. member himself would not alter it.

MR. BATH: I wanted the information for those people, not for myself. They wanted to know the reason why such action was taken.

THE TREASURER: They have all had the information. When you consider that the Goldfields Water Scheme is a very big department and has a capital of three millions—it is the biggest trading concern in this country, next to our railway system—and when you also take into consideration that since its inception it has spent a quarter of a million pounds in reticulation and extensions, that its trade is conducted over an area 380 miles in length, that water is sold in 19 towns and municipalities, that there are 13,000 assessments, that there are 10,400 consumers; and when you also hear what I have to say now, that there have been, for the three and a half years the scheme has been working, only a little over a dozen complaints of this nature—complaints of bad treatment on the part of the officials—one must express one's amazement that the scheme has been so successfully handled, and that so little friction has arisen between the supplier and the consumer. I think that, instead of finding fault, members should take the trouble to go to the department and ascertain the facts. And I must remind the House that there are no fewer than 17 members of Parliament representing

the different districts through which and in which the water supply is taken and established. I think it is a wonder that we have not hundreds of complaints where we have had until now only a bare dozen, and such paltry complaints as they are. I ask members to treat the department fairly, and to treat the officers fairly. The officers are doing excellent work; the scheme is being carried on successfully, and is getting larger each day. The hon. member (Mr. Bath) need not fear but that the Government will take into consideration the very lowest price at which the water can be sold, consistent with the financial soundness of the undertaking and its paying its way. I have now only to refer briefly—I am sorry to have to keep the House so late—to the question of the pipe contract to which so much reference has been made during this debate, and prior, in the Press. I wish to refer to the charge of the member for Perth (Mr. Brown)—which, as usual, was very wide of the mark—that the Government paid 25s. or 26s. per ton more to the Fremantle foundry than they would have had to pay to any private firm, and thereby wasted and squandered the funds of the State. I have often stated in this House that when I was doing a “deal” for the State I always endeavoured to get the best results, just as I should for myself. In this case I can quickly prove that the best deal obtainable was made in the interests of the State. The member for Perth also accused me of saying one thing to a deputation and of carrying out another thing in the distribution of this work. He said that I promised to give the lowest tenderer the whole of the contract. Such is not the case. I have turned up the shorthand minutes of the two deputations which waited upon me when I occupied the position of Minister for Works. I find that the deputation from the Chamber of Manufactures waited upon me on the 19th January; and I informed them I was getting prices for scrap-iron and pig-iron, so that the Government foundry might tender, and that it would put in a tender. At the same time, I said I was appointing a commission to ascertain if possible the exact cost of those pipes, and that the result would be placed before Cabinet, when the final decision would be come to. Then I had

a deputation from the Fremantle members and workers in connection with the pipe foundry. With them I went thus far. I said that tenders would be called; and if it were found that there would be a very great saving, the Government would consider whether, in the best interests of the State, we should let private firms make the pipes. I said, farther, that if the Government found that the pipes could be made as cheaply and as well at Fremantle as elsewhere, then the foundry would be kept going; but if they could be purchased cheaper outside, I was inclined to think that the contract would be let outside. I know that statement possibly carries with it the impression that if a lower tender were put in by outsiders it would be accepted; but if you read the statement in conjunction with that immediately preceding it, you will see that there had to be a substantial saving before that promise could be carried into effect. However, let us briefly inquire into the result. I got in the tenders, and found that the gross tenders were as follow: Fremantle Foundry, £24,258—I will leave out the odd shillings; Monteath, £24,096; balance in favour of Monteath, £162. In addition, through the 8-inch pipes being cast in 12ft. lengths, instead of 9ft., thus saving joints, there was a net saving of £16 16s. in a gross saving of £144 16s. On the 800 tons of material required for Subiaco and Leederville the saving in haulage at 2s. per ton amounted to £88. So that the gross saving, if the contract had been given as between Monteath and the Fremantle Foundry, would have been £266 17s. 6d. on the figures, in favour of Monteath; but against that, 2s. per ton, the cost of inspection at Monteath's foundry, was included in the Fremantle Foundry's tender. It is always necessary to have an inspector, and his wages are included in the cost of manufacture. So, if we take off that 2s. per ton, which amounts to £260 on the whole contract, the difference in favour of Monteath is only £6 17s. 6d.

MR. DAGLISH: Who is the inspector at Fremantle?

THE TREASURER: I do not know.

MR. DAGLISH: Does he only inspect, or is he the officer in charge?

THE TREASURER: I believe he has a dual duty; but his time is principally

occupied as inspector. Anyhow, we should have had to put on an inspector at a private foundry, and to pay him to do nothing but inspect. If the pipes only are taken into consideration, we find that the Fremantle Foundry's price was £8 5s. 8d. per ton; Monteath's, £8 2s. 2d. *plus* cost of inspection, 2s., total £8 4s. 2d.—or a difference of 1s. 6d. per ton, not 25s. or 26s., as stated by the member for Perth. But the Government had the right to accept these tenders line by line; and this method, if followed exactly, would have worked out as follows: Fremantle Foundry, £5,531; Monteath, £16,528; Hoskins, £680; Carse, Ellersmith, £452; Wright & Gibb, £72—making a total, with the odd shillings, of £23,266 0s. 10d. That is £830 below the lowest gross tender. But there is another question which I had to consider as a business man, and it was one that embraced also the position of the Government foundry at Fremantle. I considered that to all intents and purposes we owned a foundry at Fremantle, and that we wanted that foundry to be kept going if possible. I found, on calling for a return, that at Fremantle we had a considerable number of pipes made since the tenders were called, and we had a large quantity of pig-iron and scrap-iron. The scrap-iron in hand, with the quantity which had to be purchased to work up with the pig, totalled 590 tons. I said, "The difference in cost is so small that it does not matter much whether the Fremantle Foundry or Monteath do the work; but I wish to be fair to all men, and I am justified, at any rate, in taking all the pipes that were made at the State's expense, and in working up first of all the raw material which we have purchased." Surely, if I had not done that, I should have been open to grave censure by this House. If I had bought some thousands of pounds' worth of pipes from a private maker when I had the pipes and the raw material lying on my hands at Fremantle, and paid for, I should have been considered incapable of controlling that department. So I decided that I must take into consideration the stock in hand at the Fremantle pipe works; that I must once more convert that stock into cash, and utilise it. The first thing I did was to deduct the stock-in-hand, and then divide the rest of

the work on the line-by-line principle, and the result was that I recommended to Cabinet a division as follows: Fremantle Pipe Works, £8,759; Monteath and Clemenger, £13,654; Hoskins, £680; Carse, Ellersmith, and Auld, £452; Wright and Gibb, £72. Now, let us see how that pans out. If I had accepted the lowest gross tender of £24,096, I should have paid £829 more than the lowest line-by-line tender. Divided up as provided in my recommendation to Cabinet, I paid £23,620, the amount of the division, or a difference of £354. But a saving of £144 16s. was made in the jointing in the 8-inch pipes; and I saved £39 6s. 1d. in cartage. And the difference I paid in order to get this equitable distribution was only £170 more than if I had taken the lowest line-by-line tender. Also I worked up my stock of raw material and turned into capital the pipes in hand. Now will any member say that I did not do a fair "deal" in this matter? I made my recommendation to Cabinet, and no matter what pressure was brought to bear, I never altered my recommendation; and that recommendation was carried out. Had I given the whole of the contract to the Fremantle Pipe Works on that tender, I would have paid £822 more than on the system under which I have placed the work out, and I have only paid £170 more than the lowest possible line by line price in order to derive the benefits which I have just enumerated to the House; so that the charge that I have pandered to the Labour party and that I have wasted the country's money, falls to the ground. I want to say before I sit down that not one of those insinuations and charges has an iota of truth in it. Every action of mine and I am persuaded of my colleagues has been what we honestly considered to be in the best interests of the country. And in that respect I defy investigation or inquiry at any hour or at any time. I hope my friends opposite will not continue the cry which they have raised in this House that we are here to crush the Labour party. We recognise that the interests of the Labour party are wrapped up with the interests of those we term capitalists. We recognise that there can be no sound or permanent advancement in this country and its great

industries unless those two great forces move together. It is idle for an hon. member to sneer and laugh. He knows that the labourer will be of no earthly use without the employer. He knows that he cannot develop the mines of this country, or the timber industry, or the great North-West without the assistance of the capital he professes to despise and in which he is so anxious to become a part-owner. Each man's ambition is to get the best he possibly can for the labour of his hands or brains. Even the members opposite owe their positions to the fact that they have utilised their brains which an all-wise Providence has given them to better advantage than some of their fellow men, and they are reaping that advantage to-day. And why should they throw scorn on others who have perhaps done better than they have in that respect? Our whole aim is one of honest endeavour; and if we are not going to depend on the effort of the individual, I say God help our country, because we cannot expect to get that progress and result which we all wish for this country of Western Australia.

EXPLANATIONS—COAL SUPPLY AND PRICES.

MR. HOLMAN (in explanation): The Treasurer has stated that I made a misstatement to this House. I deny that, and I will explain exactly what I meant to convey to the Chamber. When I was speaking in regard to the Collie coal question, I stated that the Treasurer had made remarks in my office when I was Minister for Railways that were devoid of truth; but that was not parliamentary, and I withdrew the remark. I want to explain that the information given to me in my office was incorrect. Mr. Wilson, who was then attorney for the Collie Proprietary Company and is now the Treasurer, and Mr. Ewing, who was part owner of the Collie-Cardiff mine and is now the member for Collie, interviewed me at my office. Tenders had been called for the supply of coal for the railways, and tenders were put in by those two companies.

THE TREASURER (on a point of order): I submit this has nothing to do with the statement which is in print that my statements were devoid of truth. I asked the hon. member to withdraw that

which was in print, and I have just been trying to show that he had no right to make the statement. Anything I stated to him was absolutely true. It has nothing to do with any prices that we put in at all.

[The SPEAKER resumed the Chair.]

MR. HOLMAN: The Treasurer informed the House that I made a misstatement, and I am explaining that I did no such thing, and am endeavouring to make an explanation. There was a combination of the two companies at Collie to supply coal at 12s. 9d. providing it was of a certain calorific value, and 11s. 6d. if they were allowed to supply any kind of coal they thought fit. At the time I informed them that I did not think the information they gave me was correct. I made inquiries afterwards, and we were able to get coal supplied at 10s. a ton, and the gentleman whom the Treasurer mentioned to-night as having supplied at 10s. a ton and having said that it did not pay, supplied coal to the Government at 9s. a ton at his own request, and we doubled the order. The information given by the Treasurer was incorrect, that they could not supply coal at less than the price put in. To show that what I said was perfectly true and that I did not make a statement to the House which was incorrect, a few months afterwards tenders were again called for coal, and 7s. 9d. a ton was the price put in by the Collie-Cardiff Co. and 8s. 6d. or 8s. 9d. by the Proprietary mine, showing that the statement I made was perfectly true.

THE TREASURER: I submit with all due respect that the statement made to this House was absolutely without foundation and was incorrect. The member for Murchison said that I had gone to his office and made a statement that we could not supply coal under 11s. a ton and make a profit. I did make that statement, and offered to produce the books of the company to show exactly what we were doing; but the Minister never availed himself of that opportunity. I say that at that time coal could not be supplied at 11s. a ton to leave any margin of profit, or to cover costs. The member for Murchison has said nothing to the contrary. He said that my statement in that respect was untrue, and he seeks to prove it by showing that the

companies later on quoted a lower price. The hon. member does not seem to understand the first principles of business. Companies can always afford to produce coal cheaper if they have the whole contract, and the tenders were put in on the basis of getting the whole supply of the Government's requirements at 8s. 6d. or 7s. 9d. or whatever the price was. Furthermore the tenders were based on an award of the Arbitration Court which had been got in the meantime, making a reduction of something like 10s. or 15s. in the wages all round. That is the position, and I submit that the statement I made in the hon. member's office was absolutely true, and I am prepared to substantiate it even now.

MR. EWING (in explanation): I do not know whether I am in order, but during my absence from this House—

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member rise in explanation?

MR. EWING: Yes. I have read in the newspapers an attack made on the Colonial Treasurer and myself in regard to a particular matter mentioned by the member for Murchison. I can only endorse what the Treasurer has said, and add that the member for Murchison has not the slightest idea of commerce at all. He cannot understand why the coal was offered to him at that time at a certain price, and why it is at a lower price to-day. My explanation is that it is at a lower price to-day, not that there was a great profit previously to those engaged in the industry, but simply because of the advance in coal-cutting machines. As a member of this House I might answer personalities—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot make a speech.

MR. EWING: I have no intention whatever of doing so, but later on in this House, when I am speaking in connection with the industry, I will take an opportunity of answering the statement made by the member for Murchison. I simply wished to make an explanation, and I thank you, sir, for the opportunity.

[MR. HOLMAN rose once more.]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must surely respect the statement of the Minister.

MR. HOLMAN: I am going to draw attention to the statement of the Treas-

urer. I stated at the time that coal could be supplied at less than 11s. a ton, and to prove that fact other companies came forward and supplied even a better class of coal at 9s. a ton.

THE TREASURER: That is no proof.

MR. EWING: What did they lose by it?

On motion by MR. DAGLISH, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 12th July, 1906.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—MINISTERIAL SUPPORTERS, RIVAL CLAIMS.

MR. LYNCH asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government, in the interest of public convenience, to allot the duty of adjudicating on the rival claims of Ministerial supporters to one Minister having the least public duties to perform? 2, If so, will the Government consider the advisability of creating an electioneering department with a Minister of the Crown as Arbitrator General in control?

THE PREMIER replied: No.

QUESTION—HOLIDAYS OF WORKERS AT FREMANTLE.

MR. LYNCH asked the Minister for Works: 1, Have the holidays been cut off in the case of the wages staffs of the