

in the Midland concession; and I cannot see any reason, when we have seven times the Midland area of Government land available, why settlers should be compelled to pay an increased rate in order to acquire the Midland Company's land and to satisfy the greed of the shareholders of the Midland Railway Company. At the same time I appreciate the Premier's position. With the option falling due on the 30th June, I can readily understand that, if he had not made some promise with regard to the matter, members of this Chamber would not have had an opportunity of dealing with the matter and settling it for themselves. I appreciate the position in which the Premier has been placed, and I hope that the House will discuss the matter in no party fashion, but upon its merits, and that party prejudices shall not be allowed to come into the question. I believe if this is done that the Midland Company's concession will not be bought, at any rate at the price which has been asked by the company. I cannot see, when we have proposals to deal with the land under a land tax, that this land is likely to lie idle for any great length of time; and if the company sell the land and it becomes available for selectors, and is settled and worked, I do not think we should ask for very much more than that. In conclusion, I say I appreciate the honest efforts Ministers have put forward to carry out legislation, and the ability they have shown in the administration of their various departments. They have done excellent work in the face of many difficulties which have beset them and which I do not think have beset many previous Governments; and I think they have carried on the work very creditably. Whilst I do not agree with all the proposals the Premier has brought forward, yet at the same time I think all sections of the House must give them credit for the way they have administered their departments, in spite of assertions made by certain members in their constituencies very recently who are very prone to interjection to-day. I sincerely trust that in the coming session those measures which have been foreshadowed will receive earnest attention, that much good will result from their consideration by this House, and that they

will be placed on the statute-book of the State, whether by the present Government or by my honourable friends opposite. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion which has been moved.

AMENDMENT TO ADDRESS, NOTICE GIVEN.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate; and following the customary procedure, I give notice to my friends opposite that when the debate is resumed I shall move an amendment to the Address-in-Reply, in terms of which I have given my friend the Premier a copy, to this effect:—

We regret, however, that your present advisers do not enjoy the confidence of a majority of the members of this House.

Motion for adjournment passed; the debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER moved: That the House at its rising do adjourn until 3.30 p.m. on the next Tuesday.

Question passed.

The House adjourned at seven minutes past 4 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 11th July, 1905.

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THE ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. H. Briggs) took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew), leave of absence

for three months granted to the President (Hon. Sir G. Shenton), on the ground of urgent private business.

RETURN—ROYAL COMMISSIONS, COST.

HON. R. F. SHOLL moved that a return be laid on the table, showing—

- 1, The number of Royal Commissions appointed by the State Government since the 30th June, 1904.
- 2, The names of Commissioners appointed thereto.
- 3, The amount of remuneration paid to each Commissioner to date, and balance owing, if any.
- 4, The number of days the Commissioners were engaged at the work, and the number of hours of each sitting.
- 5, The total cost to the State of same.
- 6, What Commissions are still in existence, and how long it is estimated it will take to complete the work for which they were appointed, and at what additional cost. In these times of small majorities, deficits, and the need for economical management, it would be well to have the cost of Royal Commissions placed before the House and the country.

Question passed.

RETURN—MIDLAND RAILWAY AND LANDS PURCHASE.

HON. W. KINGSMILL moved that there be laid upon the table of the House the full report of the gentlemen appointed to act as a board of inquiry into the extent and value of the railway and lands belonging to the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia.

HON. W. T. LOTON seconded.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew) expressed a hope that the mover would not press the motion at the present time. He could not fully enter into the reasons for this delay, but in the opinion of the Government it would not be in the best interests of the country to produce this information at the present stage. Of course members would understand that before the House was asked to consider the purchase of the Midland Railway and lands, all papers relating thereto would be laid on the table. It would be unwise at the present time to give publicity to these reports, and he trusted the motion would be withdrawn or postponed.

HON. W. KINGSMILL could not help feeling regret that the Minister objected

to produce this information. While not intending to press the motion, he would not consent to withdraw it; but if the Minister wished to have it postponed, he or some other member could move to that effect. The sooner this House was seized of all the facts in relation to the proposed expenditure of one and a-half millions of money in the purchase of this property on behalf of the State, the better it would be for all parties concerned; not only for this House, but for the country and the Government in power.

HON. J. W. HACKETT moved that the debate be adjourned for one week.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: All the papers would be laid on the table before the matter came on for discussion.

Motion for adjournment passed, and the debate adjourned.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

Papers formally presented by the COLONIAL SECRETARY were:—

- 1, Regulations under "The Stock Diseases Act, 1895."
- 2, Western Australian Government Railways—By-law No. 33, Parcels Traffic.
- 3, Copies of Orders in Council authorising certain Transfers under "The Audit Act, 1904" (Section 35).
- 4, Regulations under "The Factories Act, 1904."
- 5, Regulations under "The Early Closing Act, 1902."
- 6, Report of the Superintendent of the Government Labour Bureau for the year 1904.
- 7, Report of proceedings of the Conference between the Commonwealth and State Ministers at Hobart, February, 1905.
- 8, Regulations under "The Land Act, 1898"—Timber Tramways, Residential Leases, Kurnalpi State Forest, Mallet Bark, Bridgetown Common, Carnarvon Common By-laws.
- 9, The Cemeteries Act—By-laws of Moorra Public Cemetery.
- 10, Regulations under "The Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, 1896."
- 11, "The Roads Act, 1902," and "Parks and Reserves Act, 1895"—By-laws Forrest Park.
- 12, "The Land Act, 1898," and "The Land Act Amendment Act, 1902"—Permission to construct Timber Tramways to (a.) Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company Limited, (b.) Western Australia Timber and Firewood Company Limited, (c.) Sons of Gwalia Gold Mining Company Limited.
- 13, "The Permanent Reserves Act, 1899"—Alteration of Reserves classified "B."

REGULATIONS UNDER WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT—MOTION TO DISALLOW.

Included in the foregoing batch of papers was a copy of regulations (amendments) made under the Workers' Compensation Act.

HON. M. L. MOSS said : Before papers were laid on the table they should be the subject of a motion, and should not be laid on the table of the House without a resolution of the House. In the present instance he desired, under Section 11 of the Interpretation Act, to move that this House of Parliament disallow the new regulations made under the Workers' Compensation Act. Therefore in these circumstances he asked that a formal motion be made in relation to the particular paper, so that he might have opportunity to move an amendment.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY formally moved that the new Regulations under the Workers' Compensation Act be laid on the table.

HON. M. L. MOSS (West) : In accordance with Section 11 of the Interpretation Act, I desire to move an amendment to the effect that the Legislative Council disallow these regulations. In moving the amendment, I shall have no objection to facilitate the Minister in getting an adjournment of the debate, so that he may confer with his colleagues as to the course the Government propose to adopt in regard to this matter. In 1902 an Act was passed known as the Workers' Compensation Act, and it is a statute which has been very largely availed of by workers throughout the State. It cast indeed upon employers of labour a new responsibility. Up to the time of the Workers' Compensation Act becoming law, no person could become answerable for damages for an injury sustained by a worker employed by him unless that injury arose, either through the master employing an incompetent servant or defective machinery, or through the workman conforming to an order given by a person exercising superintendence. In fact, the last responsibility was only conferred by the Employers' Liability Act which came into force in 1894; but in 1902 a great advance was made; for any workman injured in connection with work arising out of, or in the course of, his employment, or any worker whose death

was caused while carrying out his duties, notwithstanding it was impossible to prove negligence against a master and notwithstanding that the injury or death resulted not from the carrying out of an order of a person exercising superintendence, but by a mere accident, compensation was payable, in the case of death of £400, or in the case of total or partial incapacity by a weekly payment so that the aggregate amount awarded under the Act should not exceed £300. In the second schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act a number of conditions were set forth, and they form part of the statute. No. 5 was this :—

Where a worker has given notice of an accident, or is entitled to weekly payments under this Act, he shall, if so required by the employer, or by any person by whom the employer is entitled under this Act to be indemnified, from time to time submit himself for examination by a duly qualified medical practitioner provided and paid by the employer or such person : Provided that if the worker objects to an examination by that medical practitioner, or is dissatisfied with the certificate of such practitioner as to his condition when communicated to him, he may submit himself for examination to one of the medical practitioners appointed by the Governor for the purposes of this Act, and the certificate of that medical practitioner as to the condition of the worker at the time of the examination shall be given to the employer and worker, and shall be conclusive evidence of that condition.

I want to say at once, before informing the House as to the objection I have to these regulations—and I think hon. members will agree with me that they are highly objectionable—that from the passing of this Act to the 3rd of March of this year the power vested in the Governor under this condition I have just read was never sought to be enforced, and it was left in every case to the applicant for compensation to produce his evidence in support of his claim, leaving it to the master to bring evidence of a contrary character if he were able to do so, and it was then left for the magistrate or assessors to decide on the evidence whether there was such an injury as produced total or partial incapacity for work. I find I have given the wrong date. It was not March, but the 16th June; and I really do not object to all of these regulations. It is the regulation of the 16th June to which I object. One of the things that I strongly object to is not

actually appearing in these regulations ; but pursuant to them certain appointments were made—Dr. Anderson in Fremantle, and Dr. Haynes in Perth. These appointments were not for particular districts, but these medical referees had jurisdiction throughout the State, and we have had an experience at Fremantle where one referee was not appealed to as referee but as a private practitioner, and found that the worker was malingering and was not entitled to compensation. This worker afterwards went to Dr. Haynes and got a certificate that there was partial incapacity. Personally I strongly object to appointments of private practitioners to positions of this kind. The provision in this Act is similar to the provision in the English Act, and in England they never would attempt to put into practically a judicial position a person carrying on a private practice. If it were thought necessary to make these regulations, most undoubtedly the Government should have appointed either the president of the Health Board or Dr. Lovegrove, or in Fremantle gentlemen occupying similar positions, and also at Kalgoorlie, instead of appointing private practitioners. It is obvious that we may have these gentlemen giving certificates as conclusive evidence of condition, to their own patients. It seems to be on a par with employing a legal practitioner to give a certificate which should be conclusive in a court of law as to the right of a person to recover ; and in my opinion it is exceedingly bad. I object to that particular portion of these regulations. Under the regulations every medical referee shall be entitled to act as a medical referee in any part of the State. Unfortunately by my amendment, while objecting to these appointments, I cannot deal with them. They are not made by regulations. They are made in the same way as any public appointment, being made by the Executive Council and published in the *Government Gazette*. Therefore to enable me to object to these appointments I am bound to attack these regulations. The part of the regulations that I mostly object to at the present time is that these medical referees are entitled to act as medical referees in any part of the State. In my opinion a wrong policy has been adopted altogether. Quite sufficient burdens are cast upon

employers of labour in this State without the experience such as we had at Fremantle the other day in the case to which I have alluded. I have no desire to give names, but that sort of thing is going to occur elsewhere, we may depend upon it. This Act since 1892 has worked satisfactorily, I think, without the power in Section 5 having been exercised ; and the magistrates and assessors have been called upon to decide cases on the evidence, and not in the method they will be called upon to do under these regulations, which in my opinion press unduly on every employer of labour in the State ; and Parliament should step in and perhaps take the somewhat drastic step I ask them to take in disallowing the regulations. In these regulations there is a good provision to the effect that the Local Court, in exercising jurisdiction under this Workers' Compensation Act, may require an injured worker to submit himself to an examination by a medical referee. I believe this is a good provision, provided the medical referee is not in private practice and is absolutely beyond any chance of the worker having at any time been his patient. I have no desire to make any personal attack upon the gentlemen the Government have sought fit to appoint. I wish to credit the Government with the best intentions with regard to these appointments ; and I have no desire to cast the slightest aspersions against the gentlemen who gave the certificate in the case to which I alluded, where one gentleman said the man was malingering, and on the other hand the other said there was incapacity and that the man could not work. I desire to attack on other grounds. The regulations are entirely unnecessary. If medical referees are to be appointed, the Government have no right to appoint men in private practice. They should appoint men in the Government employ. Captain Laurie will bear me out in what I have said in regard to the instance we had at Fremantle. I take this course with the idea of preventing injustice in the future, and of taking good care that if the employers of labour are to be obliged to pay compensation under this Act they should be only called on to pay it after a fair trial that is subject to open daylight. To go to one of these medical referees who

cannot be subject to any cross-examination, and to procure a certificate which is to be conclusive evidence of condition and probably given by a practitioner who may have attended to the injuries, is manifestly wrong in my opinion; and the policy of appointing persons in private practice is opposed, in my idea, to the best interests of the State. I therefore move an amendment:—

That the Regulations published in the *Government Gazette* on the 16th June, 1905, be disallowed.

On motion by Hon. J. A. THOMSON, debate adjourned until the next Thursday.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.
SECOND DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous Thursday.

HON. W. MALEY (South-East): It has been gleaned by members that I have accepted very heavy responsibility in taking the floor on this occasion. There is no question that, on reading the Speech of His Excellency the Governor carefully, it is somewhat involved in its terms, and the principle underlying the Speech seems to be greatly obscured. We have a declaration that there is a deficit, and this deficit seems to me to be causing the Government some considerable inconvenience: then, in order to secure funds for carrying on the work of this country, it is decided first of all that economy must be practised, as I think it has been practised for a very long time; also that fresh taxation should be imposed. These issues would suggest that the mark-time policy was the policy for the present moment; but we find that the Government do not at present intend to mark time. We find they have a Loan Bill coming forward, and that Loan Bill will provide for the inauguration of certain public works, the particulars of which will no doubt follow, to develop the industries of the State. It is also proposed to purchase the Midland Railway at a cost of £1,500,000, to proceed farther with the extension of the Narrogin Railway, to take steps regarding the construction of the Port Hedland to Nullagine Railway by private enterprise, and to provide for the construction of a sewerage system for Perth. We have in fact the Government on the one hand determined to purchase a railway, and so get rid of private enterprise in that direc-

tion; whilst on the other hand we have them only too ready to farther the construction of a railway from Port Hedland to Nullagine on the private-enterprise principle. I regret very much as regards this question of the purchase of the Midland Railway that some earlier intimation of the intentions of the Government was not placed before the public. I believe the offer has been lying at the office in the hands of the Government for many months. But it is only within the past few weeks that we have had any absolute information that the Government were seriously entertaining the proposal. As members of Parliament, during the recess we might have made excursions into this country and have ascertained for ourselves the character and value of the lands there. But, on the other hand—I am speaking from personal experience—I have been down to the Warren River on the south coast, and to Denmark and other places, where, it appears, the Government have no present intention of constructing any public works. Therefore, I think that I at least have some little grievance, personal grievance, against the Government for having so much of my time taken up in inspecting lands in this State for which it is proposed to do nothing, while I have not had the opportunity of inspecting that great estate between here and Geraldton for which the Government propose to do so much. I would like to compare for a moment the Midland Railway with the Great Southern. On the one hand we have the purchase of a railway made at the psychological moment when the purchase of that railway was not only advisable in the interests of land settlement, but was also necessary in the general interests of mining and of the State. Remember that at that time Albany was practically the only port. Our mails reached there. All the machinery for the Golden Mile was railed from Albany to its destination. There was goods traffic of such a nature that it made the railway pay almost from the start. The railway was practically a losing proposition until the goldfields broke out, and it was the carrying of that traffic which made it pay, not only by the amount of machinery carried over that railway, but the crowds of passengers by the trains gave additional revenue; and in fact gave a filip

not only to the revenue, but to land settlement. I have no doubt that to direct inspection of the land on the way to the goldfields, or the information received from friends who travelled that line, much settlement, indeed the greater portion of the settlement of the Great Southern line, was due. That settlement was due to the immense passenger traffic carried by the railway in those days. And I would say, if there were such a prospect facing us in regard to the Midland Railway, no one in this House would be more ready than myself to see the purchase of the railway at one million and a-half; but I see no such hopes. Only recently we had the fact brought prominently forward that there was a competing factor in respect to this railway. It must be understood, and no doubt it is, that in the case of a railway connecting two ports such as Fremantle and Geraldton, the traffic involved would not be a very great matter. In any case, our ports are feeders to the country, and from the country they carry our products. The railways carry our products to the coast and our imports to the producer in the interior. But this railway, although it serves that purpose to some extent, has, as far as the northern communication is concerned, a decided competitor in the waterway. We have had the "Julia Percy" competing I believe with the Midland Railway, and while we have the "Julia Percy" to-day, I have no doubt that at a later period we shall have such competitors as the "Kyarra" and "Kanowna" plying along that northern coast, and so taking some of the heavier traffic and some of the passenger traffic. With regard to the land settlement, there is no doubt that it is getting somewhat slack in Western Australia. The Minister shakes his head; but if we are to believe a very high authority in the Eastern States, Sir Jenkin Coles, the Speaker in South Australia, the South Australians are not quite satisfied with something in West Australia, and they are returning to South Australia. Although I do not think it has quite come to that pass, I recognise that the Eastern States have already been thoroughly canvassed for settlers. Those States have been exploited to a large extent. We have had a lecturer there; we have done our best to get settlement

on the Great Southern, and whether or not we have all the settlers available for some time, I cannot say; but it appears to me we have to exercise great caution before we open up a large tract of country for settlement in another part of the State, for the reason first of all that we have drawn very heavily on the Eastern States, and for another reason that many of the settlers on the Great Southern have their hands full at the present moment. If those settlers who are at a distance from the railway, who have hoped and believed that a railway will be constructed 30 miles east and west of the line, are to be informed that the Midland Railway is to be purchased, and the proposed spur lines east and west of the Great Southern are not to be constructed for some time, it is just a question whether they will not be only too ready to forsake their holdings and either return to the Eastern States or seek some other occupation or some other country to settle in. [HON. J. W. HACKETT: Go to the Midland.] It may be good policy to accept the advice of one or two members, to transfer portion of one part of the State to the other; but for my part, when I see a man who has expended the bulk of his capital and several years of his labour in a given part of the State, I think it cruelty to enter upon any State enterprise that would take from him his livelihood or cause him any serious loss, such as he would have to incur by moving from one part of the State to the other. Then again, I would say that wheat-growing in Western Australia has passed the best of its time as far as the markets on the Eastern Goldfields are concerned. While the Great Southern settlers are able to sell their hay at something like an average of £5 or £6 a ton, I do not see any prospect of settlers on the Midland Railway doing anything of the kind. We are already commencing to export wheat, and although I hope to see the exporting of wheat go ahead by leaps and bounds, still I am not in favour of expending so large a sum as a million and a-half of money in the prosecution of an industry such as growing wheat, of which we are importing very little, while there are other industries languishing in regard to which we are importing to a very large extent, as we are in dairy produce,

of which we import something like three-quarters of a million's worth per annum. I am satisfied, from what I know of the country between Perth and Geraldton, that there is but a comparatively small area suitable for intense cultivation and for dairy farming. [MEMBER: I thought you said it was suitable.] No. I said I had been unable to go over the country; and I will not have thrust down my throat words that I did not utter. I was unable to go through that country during the recess. The hon. member will presently have a chance of speaking. As regards conveniences, we already enjoy all the conveniences which that railway affords; and I consider it very unwise to cripple our borrowing powers by purchasing the line, seeing that its purchase will not afford us any convenience additional to that already possessed by the settlers along the line and the people of Geraldton. I am pleased to see that we now have a Minister for Agriculture (Hon. J. M. Drew); and if, instead of spending this million and a-half on the railway, we were to spend half a million in establishing the dairying industry in this State, we should do a lasting good, and should open up avenues for the employment of an immense amount of labour. And I say, moreover, that something must be done to keep on the land the present settlers along the Great Southern Railway. It may be news to hon. members that, owing to the extremely wet season in the Kojonup district, it has this year been found almost impracticable to place any large area under crop. There is a country admirably suited for dairy farming; and from Kojonup to the coast and along the coast from Albany to Bridgetown are large areas which should be brought into cultivation at the earliest possible moment, yielding as they would enormous supplies of dairy produce, for the want of which this country is at a great disadvantage; and yielding, as they would, huge quantities of timber, for which a ready market could be secured. In purchasing the Midland Railway, if it is to be purchased, I have no belief in options. I always consider that if one buys land or other property, and first gets an option of purchase, one must pay a very high price for the property. I have no objection to pur-

chasing the Midland Railway when the proper time arrives; but with the bumper seasons we have been enjoying and with the prospects ahead, I think this is not the proper time to buy that line. If the railway is to be bought, there are more ways than one of buying it. It is well known that in a company of which the capital is divided into a large number of shares, the share-dealer and the shareholder are the people to be considered. And in considering those gentlemen I say that we should buy as cheaply as possible. To buy direct from the company is to play right into the hands of the share dealers, who know how to manipulate the shares on the London market. If one and a-half millions is to be paid for the Midland Railway, I have no doubt that the purchase will some day be justified; but to-day I cannot approve of the transaction, because in my opinion it is not to be compared with the other projects ahead of us to which we can put our hands; projects which would give an immediate return, and which would employ considerable labour. Not one day's work for any working man will this immense contemplated expenditure of one and a-half millions provide; and as an advocate for the workers of the State, I say it is our bounden duty to employ our capital so that it will absorb the labour of the country and induce immigration. If an immigration policy is to be pursued by the present Government—and we have heard some talk about it for nine months—if such a policy is put before Parliament and it does not involve expenditure on labour so as to take surplus labour off the market, then I say we shall have some trouble with our immigrants. If we spend $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions and send it direct to the London stock-brokers, then I say we are not doing a wise thing for the State; and although I do not condemn the purchase of the Midland Railway at the price, I say emphatically that this is not the time to buy it, and that we should wait for a more favourable opportunity.

HON. W. PATRICK (Central): I have not hitherto trespassed to any extent on the time of the House, and I intend to speak very briefly this afternoon. In the Governor's Speech we are told that—

The development in the mining, agricultural, and pastoral industries has been of a sub-

stantial and gratifying nature, and there is every indication of similar satisfactory progress in the future.

As regards the pastoral, agricultural, and horticultural industries, no doubt very great progress has been and is being made; but I do not at all agree with the statement that satisfactory progress was made during last year in the mining industry, because I presume most members will agree that the mining industry in Western Australia is practically the gold-mining industry. It seems to me that our gold-mining industry reached its highest level in 1903. [HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Let us hope not.] Well, I am judging by the experience of the last 18 months. The year 1904 showed a considerable falling off as compared with 1903; and so far, 1905 shows no sign whatever of recovery. I believe the actual figures of the present year till the end of June show that the gold production of this State was slightly less than for the same period in 1904. I do not consider this at all a satisfactory condition of our gold-mining industry. It is well known to everyone that Western Australia contains probably the greatest gold-mining area in any part of the globe; and the opinion of men who are capable of judging is that we are as yet simply on the threshold of its development. I therefore contend that there must be some reason why this industry is now stagnant. I do not pretend to know the reason; but I think it is the duty of the Government to try to discover why there has not been a greater expansion. So I do not at all agree with the statement in the Speech that the progress of this industry is satisfactory. The main point to me in the Speech of the Governor is the statement that—

The finances of the State will require your close attention. The revenue received, although substantial in amount, has not been sufficient during the year just ended to meet all the demands made upon it.

The result will be a deficit. Up to the present, although we have, I believe, the exact figures for our portion of the Commonwealth revenue from customs and excise, we have no statement of the gross income and expenditure for the State up to the 30th June. We know that the proportion of the revenue collected by the Commonwealth is certainly

much larger than some of the Ministry, while on tour through the State, told us it would be. I think the Colonial Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew) stated at Moonyoonooka that the amount returned by the Commonwealth this year would be about £200,000 less than it was last year.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; I referred to three years' figures.

HON. W. PATRICK: Well, I understand that the present Government have a right to deal with our finances only for the period in which they have been governing this State. The actual estimate of the revenue they expected to receive from the Commonwealth for the financial year ending the 30th June last was £1,036,000. The actual amount they did receive, according to the statement of the Federal Treasurer, was just £10,000 less than this—a very small difference indeed. And as a matter of fact, though we have not the figures till the 30th June, yet till the end of May, as was pointed out by Mr. McKenzie at our last sitting, the State revenue and the Commonwealth revenue combined were slightly in excess of the revenue for the corresponding period of 1904. So I consider the revenue receipts very satisfactory indeed. Seeing that in a time of supposed depression, when our mining industry is not expanding, and considering that such industries as the agricultural really produce no revenue, I think it is very satisfactory that our revenue should be so large. Whereas last year it was £3,630,000, it is gratifying to know that the amount is probably about the same this year. I suppose there is no other place in the globe—I say this without reservation—where 250,000 people can raise such a revenue as that. In referring to the finances, I should like to draw members' attention to what the Premier said last year when introducing the annual Estimates. On page 1215 of *Hansard*, after quoting the revenue per head in the Australasian States, he said:—

It will be seen from these figures that the actual annual revenue per head in Western Australia amounts to close upon one-fourth of the gross indebtedness per head of the State, whilst of the other States quoted there is not one in which the proportion of revenue per head to debt is more than one-seventh.

Under these circumstances, it seems to

me that instead of talking about increasing taxation there would be more sense in talking of decreasing taxation. Again, on page 1220 of *Hansard*, referring to the small deficit of about £50,000, the Premier said:—

My feelings on the subject are considerably modified by the conviction that this deficit on paper need never become a reality.

In reference to the suggestion that additional taxation might have been proposed, he said farther, as reported on the same page:—

The people of the State are entitled to demand that before farther demands are made upon their pockets, it shall be indisputably demonstrated that the best possible use is made of the revenue already collected.

Assuming that taxation is required, although I do not think it is required, the Treasurer proposes what he calls a small measure of taxation; a tax on the unimproved value of land, and an income tax. It appears that the West Australian Government in London and the West Australian Government in Western Australia speak in different voices. In a very able pamphlet issued by the Agent General, I presume under instructions from the Government, at least with the approval of the Government, as an inducement for settlement in Western Australia, on page 16 it is stated, *inter alia*, that Western Australia has no income tax and no land tax; and on page 18, in giving a summary of the advantages to people emigrating from the old country or anywhere else to Western Australia, the statement is made, and it is put in capital letters so that there can be no mistake whatever made about it, that there is a steadily increasing revenue, and there is no income tax and no land tax.

HON. M. L. MOSS: They will have to publish a second edition of that.

HON. W. PATRICK: I do not know. My colleague (Mr. Thomson) asks, was it not true at the time? It is practically true at the present moment, and I think in all probability it will be true 12 months hence. Here is a document issued by the Agent General of the Government of Western Australia, that is thrown broadcast over Great Britain, and rightly so because it is a splendid little book; but is it not stultifying the Government—it has not been withdrawn—to issue a pamphlet of this kind, and at the same time to

propose taxation which they say is specially exempt in Western Australia. In reference to the purchase of the Midland Railway, I am not altogether at one with Mr. Maley. I do not know the condition of the land along the Great Southern line. Mr. Maley no doubt knows a great deal more about the land there than I do; still I think he has taken too pessimistic a view of the settlers along that line. I do not for one moment think that if the Midland Railway lands were thrown open next week, there is any danger of drawing settlers from along the Great Southern line to take up land along the Midland line. I say without hesitation, it is a calamity for Western Australia that there are several million acres of the best land of the State lying idle because the land is now in the hands of a company.

HON. W. MALEY: The Government have millions of acres of idle land and they are doing nothing with it.

HON. W. PATRICK: The Government, according to the statement of their officers which I do not think can be very well disputed, say that all the available land within a certain distance of the railways has already been taken up.

HON. M. L. MOSS: It is a poor lookout for the State if that is true.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: Let us build more railways then.

HON. W. PATRICK: There is a great deal of valuable land alongside the Midland Railway line.

HON. W. MALEY: The best of it has been sold.

HON. W. PATRICK: Many people cannot buy, and they do not feel very comfortable. In reference to this matter, I do not think any member should make up his mind either for the purchase or against it until he has had the full information placed before him; that is my attitude towards it. Assuming the railway and the land are worth the money proposed to be paid, I shall vote for the purchase of the railway.

HON. W. MALEY: Suppose you can do better with the money?

HON. W. PATRICK: If it is worth the money it should not increase the taxation of the State one sixpence. There are a great many proposals in the Speech, and some of them require more money than I think the State can afford at the

present time; but there are one or two questions of great importance, and one of them is contained in the paragraph which says:—

To ascertain the wishes of the people in regard to the retention, or otherwise, of the bi-cameral system of Legislature, my Ministers will introduce a Bill providing for the reference of this question to the electors, with an alternative question upon the franchise of the Second Chamber if retained.

This referendum business I do not at all approve of. There is only one country of any importance where the referendum is resorted to, and that is the republic of Switzerland, and in that country it is not used as an expedient on the part of the Government to get rid of their responsibility, but is part of the constitution. It is a most extraordinary constitution, and I venture to think if the members of the Government of Western Australia and their supporters were to study the constitution of the republic of Switzerland, they would have nothing to do with the referendum. There is no parallel at all between Switzerland and Australia. In Switzerland there are Germans, Italians, and French, and various other different races with different languages, different opinions and ideas, who are bound together more for the purpose of defending themselves from the surrounding countries. They have a most complicated system of government in that country. The executive does not resign when it loses the confidence of Parliament; and Parliament does not dissolve when the people reject its measures through the referendum; and when Parliament does dissolve, the electors as a rule send back to Parliament the people whose measures they had previously rejected. In some places members have been returned for 17 or 18 years. [HON. J. A. THOMSON: Are the members paid?] Yes; they pay their members very handsomely; £450 a year. Referring to the bi-cameral system, I would like to know if anyone can point out one civilised country in the world where there is Parliamentary Government as we have it, where there is not the bi-cameral system. There is not one that we treat as a civilised country. [HON. J. A. THOMSON: What about Canada?] In Canada there are a number of provinces that are formed into what is known as the

Dominion of Canada. Some provinces have the bi-cameral system, and some have a single legislature; but you cannot compare the Dominion of Canada with the Commonwealth of Australia. The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia was copied almost entirely, and except that it is more liberal in some particulars, from the Constitution of the United States. Every State in the United States of America has two Chambers. The difference between Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia is that in the Canadian Dominion the central Government practically stands in the same relation to the provincial Government as this House stands to the Lower House. Every measure passed by the provincial legislatures of Canada is liable to be vetoed by the central Government. [HON. M. L. MOSS: They have done it repeatedly. Then the Canadian provinces are not represented as we are by a Governor who is responsible to the Crown. They have what are called Lieutenant-Governors who are responsible to the Governor-General, and every measure passed in the provincial Legislatures is sent to the central Government in Ottawa. According to one of the constitutional lawyers of Canada—Blake I think—the provinces of the Dominion of Canada have merely extended municipal powers; so that we cannot compare the system of government in Canada with the system of government in Australia. Farther, Canada is a warning to Australia. There have been several cases which I might mention. An instance cropped up a few years ago when the Dominion Government refused to pass legislation in regard to the schools that had been passed by the Nova Scotia Government. Supposing the Upper House here were abolished; the same thing would necessarily follow. We would abolish our Governor, we would have no direct representation to the Crown, and to a still greater extent we would be under the heel of the Federal Government. As far as I am concerned, I think the Federal Government have sufficient power already for the destinies of this State; and if there is one duty which presses more than another on the Parliament of Western Australia it is to protect the full measure of liberty we have at the present time, and to fight every proposal

for reducing or curtailing the powers of Western Australia in relation to the Commonwealth Government. Referring next to State hotels, I am opposed to that principle entirely. I think there is sufficient reason, from the result of the experiment made at Gwalia, to prevent any extension in that direction. I have never visited Gwalia, but I believe the State hotel there is a magnificent building, well conducted, and very comfortable. The report of the Auditor General shows that up to the end of the previous financial year the effect of carrying on that experiment at Gwalia was that the profit was barely 6 per cent. on the total outlay, and that no allowance was made for insurance or for depreciation on buildings and furniture. I think that from a commercial point of view this result of the experiment is a sufficient condemnation to prevent any farther extension in State hotels; and I should be sorry for the old men in this State who had to depend for their pensions on the profits received from State hotels. If all business men conduct their business properly and wisely they should make a profit, and if they fail to make a profit there must be something wrong in the management; so I say the result obtained already shows that we have no right to experiment farther in State hotels. But apart from that, I am entirely opposed to the Government engaging in the traffic of selling liquor. It appears to me to be *infra dig.* on the part of a Government to do it. In regard to old age pensions which are mentioned in the Speech, I am in favour of the principle, but I see that the Federal Government have in their programme a proposal to introduce a scheme of old age pensions under Federal management; therefore I think it would be much better that this should be so, than to have an attempt made by the State Government to provide here a system of old age pensions. A State system of pensions would never be satisfactory, seeing that so many people are continually migrating from one State to another. One matter that is entirely ignored in the Speech, and one that appears to me to be the most important that could be dealt with, is that of a proper system of immigration. The question is not mentioned in the Governor's

Speech, yet we know that towards the end of last session one of the subjects which caused perhaps more stir than any other, and gave probably more support to the Government, was a proposal to initiate a system of immigration for bringing people to this State. In my opinion, the Government at that time were saved by their proposal to initiate an energetic system of immigration for increasing our population. An important Royal Commission was appointed to deal with the question of immigration, though I think it was a waste of money. Some progress reports ought to have been received by this time from that Commission, yet no reference is made to the subject in the Speech. It does seem to me to have been a waste of money to appoint a Commission for dealing with such questions as the ideal milk that should be produced and the rainfall in different parts of the State, for I think all such information could have been obtained without the waste of money that has taken place in the inquiry by this Royal Commission. There is no doubt that the question of immigration is the most important question now in front of the people of this State, and in the whole of Australia; for it is absurd to think that this great continent of three million square miles is going to be exploited for all time by a handful of people scattered along the seaboard; and it is preposterous to expect that 975,000 square miles of country is going to be monopolised by 250,000 people in Western Australia, with an increase of only some ten or fifteen thousand people a year. Means must be adopted to bring people to these shores, so that Australia may be in a position before many years to speak with the enemies at her gate. The two things chiefly wanted in Western Australia are men and money, money and men.

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD (Metropolitan-Suburban): I should like to congratulate this House on the honour it has done itself in electing Mr. Briggs to the position of Acting President; and I am sure that in this capacity he will be as impartial as he has been in the office of Chairman of Committees. He is always ready to assist new members with his advice while they are gaining parliamentary experience. The pro-

gramme set forth in His Excellency's Speech is somewhat daring; and just at this juncture it is difficult to say how much of that programme will be proceeded with during the coming months, or whether any of it will be dealt with, or whether the whole programme will be set aside and a completely new programme submitted for our consideration. The ship of State, as has been said, is at present in dock: I am not quite certain whether it is a graving dock or a floating dock, but probably the next few days will determine that. The programme consists of many railway proposals. We have the proposed purchase of the Midland Railway and lands; we have the proposed construction of a railway from Port Hedland to Nullagine; we have the proposed extension of the Narrogin and Jandakot railways; and we have the proposed railway extension from Coolgardie to Norseman. These are projects of the first importance, and there are many other measures of prime importance mentioned in the Speech. While the expenditure is proposed to be maintained, we are reminded more than once in the Governor's Speech that the revenue is diminishing; so that at first sight one can hardly understand how all these schemes for expenditure are to be financed in view of the diminishing revenue. In regard to the developments which are taking place in the agricultural portions of the State, I should like to say how much I appreciate the hard work which the leader of this House has put into his department during the 12 months he has been in office. The lectures which have been arranged by his department for delivery in this State have been of great interest to the people; and I am only sorry that one of these lectures which was announced to be given in Perth under the auspices of the Lands Department did not come off. I remember that a few months ago Perth was placarded with the announcement that a lecture was to be given in the Queen's Hall by the lecturer of the department, and the then Minister for Lands was to take the chair. The placard stated that there were millions of acres lying ready for settlement and for purchase. But on the day that the lecture was to be given a farther announcement was made that,

owing to the illness of the lecturer, it could not be given; and I regret to say that the lecture has not been given since. I had an idea that the Minister might himself have stepped into the breach and given a lecture on a subject in regard to which the people were anxious to hear anything new that could be said, for the hon. gentleman should be well qualified to let us know more about the agricultural resources of this great State. We have been reminded in the Speech of the deficiency in the revenue; and it has been suggested that we ought to have known by this date, 11th July, what is the extent of the deficiency for the past financial year. I do not know whether it is customary to hold back the figures at the close of the year, but the returns for previous months were made public within a day or two after the month closed. It may be that a little latitude is required to present the result for the whole year after it has closed; but I think that even so, we should by this time have had information to show where the leakage is and why the deficiency has arisen. I do not propose to deal with the whole of the items in the programme, but there are one or two others I must refer to. The proposal to have a referendum of the people is one which needs grave consideration. It seems to me to look like an invitation to this Chamber and to the Assembly Chamber to shift the responsibility of government off Parliament on to the people; for if we are to take a referendum on one question as to the continuance of two Houses of Parliament, why not take a referendum on several other questions which might be mentioned. Why not, for instance, take a referendum on the number of members who shall compose the Legislature, or on the question of how much salary members should receive, or how many Ministers should form a Government? There are hundreds of other subjects on which a referendum might be taken, if we are to admit the principle of a referendum at all. It seems to me to be an invitation to get rid of a responsibility, a responsibility we ought to take in these Houses of Parliament. Outside these walls there seems to be a number—I do not know whether it is a very big number or not, but often these people speak with a loud voice, and we may sometimes be misled to think that

the voice may be taken for a very large number—who are crying out for the destruction of the Legislative Council; but there are men of sound judgment that we meet every day who regard the Legislative Council as the sheet anchor of Legislature in Western Australia. Before we can pass a Bill sending this measure to the people, it must merit from this House very grave and earnest consideration. While thinking of that aspect of the question I notice a phrase is used in the Speech—

With an alternative question upon the franchise of the second Chamber if retained.

I have looked carefully through the Constitution Acts of this State, and I can find no reference to a second Chamber at all. Now in this Speech I think we should have a proper term applied to the Legislative Council. There is a tendency to speak in other than proper terms in regard to this Chamber, and I resent it. In the Governor's Speech I think we should have a proper term applied to this Legislative Council. I agree with Mr. Patrick that it would be better to wait until the Commission appointed by the Federal Government, and which is sitting, on the old age pensions has reported; but it is a matter which must commend itself to our judgment that those who work in the State for a long term of years, no matter in what capacity, should have some claim in their declining years, if it is necessary, on the State for their maintenance. I hope that when this is introduced it will not be looked upon in any sense as a charity. If we give this assistance to the old people it must be given as some kind of reward for the services which they have rendered in some degree or another to the State; but I cannot overlook the fact that every system of this kind diminishes the old-fashioned feeling which used to obtain in many places, and which I believe obtains in many families to-day, that the fathers and mothers should look after the boys and girls while they are young, and that if necessary, when the old people are unable to work, the boys and girls who have grown up then should look after and provide for them. Any system of State compensation must to some extent lessen that old and kindly feeling. I have nothing farther to say. I beg to

support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (South): I regret with other members that our President, while he was away on his holidays, has become indisposed, and I trust his health will be soon restored. I likewise wish to congratulate you, Mr. Acting President, on the position you have received at the hands of the Council. I cannot help thinking that the Government are somewhat indiscreet in starting the Speech with plain facts regarding the finances of the State, and stating that these will require our close attention. I think it is unwise to advertise the fact that we are spending more than we are receiving. We do not do ourselves any good. If the Government have been extravagant and have not managed the State properly so as to run it within bounds, I do not think it is wise to advertise it in the Governor's Speech, as has been done. I do not intend to speak to each item in the Governor's Speech, but will go straight on to mining, as it is to my mind one of the greatest industries in this State. I can only say that I am surprised nothing has been put in the Speech with regard to the cheapening of the water supply on the goldfields, or the nationalisation of that scheme. Ever since the scheme was introduced to Parliament, and since its administration, I have always felt that the goldfields have been unduly taxed in having the scheme practically debited to the Eastern Goldfields. I think a work of this kind should be nationalised. [HON. J. W. HACKETT: So it is.] It is not. We are taxed too heavily for that; we are taxed to the highest possible limit, so high that we cannot be taxed any higher because we could not pay it. Had it been a national matter I feel sure that the scheme would have done the good service to the country that it has done, and that the cheaper rate at which the water could have been sold to the people on the Eastern Goldfields would have necessitated the using of a greater supply. There is one great fear we have to look at on the goldfields—a number of mines in the backblocks are only being worked to water level. This is serious; because miners out there work out the reefs to water level and have not the funds to proceed below that level. I notice that the

Government are going in for a scheme of financing prospectors, and I trust that they will look seriously into the matter and assist prospectors to go below water level. It is all very well to go in for State batteries and for machinery for treating the ore, but the Government will have to go a little farther if they wish to make this State a great mining country and enable us to maintain our output. As I say, miners outback are not wealthy enough to go below water level; and those connected with mining know that the expense only starts when water level is reached. I congratulate the Government that they are going in for financing prospectors. I think it will be the means of opening up mines and fixing the industry as one of the great industries of the State, which it is. The mine managers on the fields have put in an application to pay lower wages. If wages are lowered on the fields it means farther distress there than we have at present. I certainly think the wages the men are getting there are only just sufficient to live on. If wages are lowered, then railway rates must come down, and water rates. I trust there will be no trouble in the matter. I do not fear any trouble. I think that the Arbitration Act will solve the matter. I must say that the Eastern Goldfields have suffered considerably from the differential rates on the railways. I have not had time to peruse the new rate-book that the Commissioner has issued; but I trust he has lowered the rates considerably on the necessities of life. If wages are to be lowered, there is no doubt miners will find it very difficult to live. Mr. McKenzie, in moving the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, mentioned about our local papers not advertising mining sufficiently. I must congratulate one paper in Perth for having taken up this matter lately. I think the mining industry in this State being such an important one, it would not be out of place if the Government considered the reasonableness of subsidising the local papers. I do not know very much about the Press, but as we are spending a considerable amount of money in advertising land and agriculture and that sort of thing, a few judicious pounds spent on advertising mining would do a considerable amount

of good. There are plenty of people in Perth who know nothing about the Eastern Goldfields, and I think that is to be regretted. Certainly one of the papers here is now giving a special sheet to mining. It has a reporter on the fields and is going to a considerable amount of trouble in getting data to Perth. I think that since this has occurred the financial papers at home, particularly the mining papers, are taking this up, and copying the records given in the Perth paper. I now come to the Midland Railway, and I regret that the amount has been put in the Governor's Speech. They might have omitted that for the present. Without reading the reports on the matter, I say offhand I am not prepared to support the purchase of the Midland Railway for £1,500,000. I was one of the members appointed by this House on the select committee to look into the Midland Railway, and the essence of that committee's report was that the railway was in a very bad condition. We had evidence that the sleepers were ant-eaten, that the rail couplings were not properly bolted, that the dog spikes were all loose, that there were many other defects, that the engines were out of repair, and in fact that the railway was run more like a contractor's train than an ordinary railway doing business in the State. [HON. J. W. HACKETT: When did that committee report?] The committee sat in 1901. We also took evidence at that time about the sanitary condition of the stations, and it was shown that the stations along the route were not by any means in good condition. There has been great talk about the very valuable land along the line. If that land is valuable, and the company does not use it, it cannot carry those acres away to India or South Africa and grow potatoes or wheat. The land must be still in the country, and I do not think the company is going to leave it there for ever without either selling it or cultivating it. The company may do so, but even if it does, I do not see that there is going to be any great loss to the country while we have so many acres open for cultivation at the present time. Furthermore, the Cue goldfields are growing considerably. There is a new field opened at Black Range, and a great many centres are opening out that way. There is little doubt that the Government

will have to build a line sooner or later, and for the purpose of these goldfields I think it would be a wise thing to connect Goomalling and Yalgoo by rail. Then the Government would open up their own lands; and I have it on the evidence of men who know, there are gentlemen in this House who know, that there are good lands between Goomalling and Yalgoo. The cost of that line—I went into these figures, too, with a contractor in this town—would be something like £600,000. [HON. J. W. HACKETT: What is the rainfall?] From 12 to 20 inches. I have it on the evidence of people who live there, and who have been through the district. Anyhow, it is better to build that line and thoroughly equip it than to spend £1,500,000 on the Midland Railway. It would turn the Goomalling line into a payable one, and I do not think it pays at the present time, although it is a very necessary line. Either that or the Newcastle line—I do not mind from which end it starts; but I say it would be better in the interests of this country to construct a new line than to buy this old worn-out business of the Midland Railway. I notice in the papers a lot of letters advocating the purchase of this line, and of course there are a few not approving of it; but I know that the Government were offered that line in 1901 for £1,000,000. [THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Through whom?] Through Mr. R. S. Haynes, of Perth, and I was with him at the time. He was a member of this Chamber. Mr. Rotherham also was present. I know that what I am stating is a fact. I was, I repeat, with Mr. Haynes at the time; and if the line could be offered for that price at that time, I do not see why we should pay £1,500,000 now. To-day I was with a gentleman in town who stated that he could have purchased it for £1,280,000. That gentleman is Mr. Illingworth. Yet to-day we are asked to pay £1,500,000. No doubt the land of the Midland Railway is rising in price very quickly, while the line is bearing up; but I cannot see anything to justify the Government in paying £1,500,000. I may be startled by the facts that they intend to give us, but I do not think so. Anyhow, as a member of Parliament and one who represents the people, I think the money can be better expended elsewhere. I

would prefer to see it put into the Agricultural Bank. The price is too big for the value to be received. I have nothing farther to say on the matter. I trust we will not be kept in ignorance long regarding this. I think that members of Parliament out of session are kept too much in the dark as to what the Government are doing, and that when they inquire of Ministers, some idea should be given them of what is going on. I knew certain things about the Midland Company and I wanted to find out what was doing, but, like all people outside the four or five Ministers, I was kept in the dark. Anyhow, I say here that the line was offered in 1901 for £1,000,000, and I have as witness a K.C. in this town, and there is another witness that it was offered for £1,280,000.

On motion by HON. V. HAMERSLEY, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6 23 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly, Tuesday, 11th July, 1905.

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

PRAYERS.

ELECTION RETURN, MINISTERIAL.

The CLERK reported the return of writ for the Leonora electorate, the Hon. P. J.