

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 12th July, 1905.

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

PRAYERS.

PROCEDURE—REGULATIONS UNDER WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. H. Briggs) said: Before I call for Notices of Motion, I wish to refer to the matter respecting the Workers' Compensation Act 1902, which occurred at the last meeting. Our Standing Order 190 states:—

Papers presented pursuant to Statute may be laid on the table without comment at any time when other business is not before the Council.

No other direction being given by the Standing Orders, we resort to the practice of the Commons House of the Imperial Parliament in accordance with Standing Order No. 1. In *May's Parliamentary Practice* we find that "Papers are returned, and either presented by a Minister of the Crown or are forwarded by the department to the Clerk of the Parliaments for presentation. When papers are brought up, they are generally ordered to lie upon the table as a matter of course."

The Regulations in question (under Workers' Compensation Act) were by the Interpretation Act 1898, Section 11, ordered to be laid upon the table of both Houses.

The proper course is that these Regulations be now laid upon the table, and that any hon. member objecting to all or any part thereof give notice of motion that an Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying that the Regulations be disallowed.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Additional Regulations under "The

Workers' Compensation Act 1902." 2, Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into matters pertaining to Great Boulder Perseverance Gold Mining Company Limited, Kalgoorlie. 3, Report of the Royal Commission on the Collie Coalfield. 4, Report of the Royal Commission on the Ventilation and Sanitation of Mines.

REPORTS—STATE SMELTER.

HON. T. F. O. BEIMAGE had given notice to move: "That there be laid upon the table of the House the full report of Mr. Klug on the State smelter, Ravensthorpe, also the report of the State Mining Engineer on the smelting of the first three thousand tons of ore at the above smelter, also the report of the present manager, Mr. Dunstan, on the above smelter."

HON. W. MALEY: In the absence of Mr. Brinage, I beg to move the motion.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT: Is it by his request?

HON. W. MALEY: No; not directly.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have no objection to the motion.

HON. W. MALEY: May I ask if the motion will be accepted by the Chair from me. In support of it I have to say that it will be highly interesting to get the particulars.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT: I may tell the hon. member the Minister has no objection to laying the papers on the table.

Question put and passed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY moved that two months' leave of absence be granted to the Hon. C. Sommers, on the ground of urgent private business. Mr. Sommers had been unavoidably detained in England longer than expected, on account of the serious illness of his wife. Presumably the House would have no objection to granting the leave to the hon. member.

Question passed.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew) moved:—

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House do meet for the despatch of business on

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and sit until 6.30 p.m. if necessary, and if requisite from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

Question passed.

COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION.

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

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—The President, Hon. M. L. Moss, and the mover; with leave to sit during any adjournment, and authority to confer on matters of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Assembly.

HOUSE COMMITTEE.—The President, Hon. W. T. Loton, Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoon, Hon. R. F. Sholl, and the mover; with power to act during the recess and to confer with any similar committee of the Legislative Assembly.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE.—The President, Hon. J. W. Hackett, and the mover; with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.—The President, Hon. Geo. Randell, and the mover.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

THIRD DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous day.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East): After looking carefully through the Address-in-Reply, I think that this case is of an interesting description when we consider the speech made by the present Premier some ten months ago, and the Speech by His Excellency which has been placed before us on the present occasion. In this House some considerable time back there was 'impressed upon the country the great need for carefully nursing the finances of the State, and carrying out what the Premier then termed a mark-time policy. Instead of the mark-time policy being placed before us in His Excellency's Speech, this Speech directs, if all its provisions are to be carried out, that there shall be an enormous inflation of our expenditure, particularly in public works; and altogether it seems to me to be of a very bold description, bold even to recklessness. We could hardly have

thought that the Government announcing ten months ago the necessity for such a careful husbanding of our resources would endorse a Speech of this description from the throne. However, we must take it for granted that the Government are in earnest in the matter, and therefore it rests with this House to very carefully consider, as has been stated in the Speech, how the finances will stand the strain that is likely to be put upon them. At the start of the Speech it is asserted that the finances of the State will require close attention. It is particularly noticeable, when we see the large deficit that has just been published, the exact amount of which, according to this statement of His Excellency, will be reported shortly. I take it that this House will receive a very complete statement with regard to the deficit, and I regret that the method of placing the amount before the House is not altogether on commercial lines; for there is just a possibility that in the exact amount of the deficit placed before us we may not have a complete statement of any outstanding accounts. However, we find in the Press to-day that the deficit is a little under £50,000; and we find there also a statement of the month's transactions, which statement I say undoubtedly tends to disprove the contention of the Government that there is need for new taxation. Most certainly the tremendous leap in the revenue for June points to a turn of the tide, showing that better times are at hand; and if the month of July shows anything like the same result, I feel sure that we must all congratulate ourselves and the country on the improvement which is taking place. Hence I trust that the need for fresh taxation will not require that consideration which the Government suggest it should receive. This State has undoubtedly an enormous revenue; and as the Premier argued in a speech delivered some months ago—an argument with which many will agree—with such a revenue we ought to keep well within bounds, and should not need any of the new taxes that are now proposed. Surely a little more economy in some of the departments will have a much better effect throughout the country than this suggestion of new taxation. The suggested tax on land will have a marked effect on the progress of land settlement. I feel

certain that in speaking on this question the Premier could not have been really in earnest; and I hope the proposed Bill will receive much greater consideration from Ministers before they definitely decide to attempt to place it on the statute-book. I feel sure that the taxation based on what are called "unimproved land values" will cost very much more than the revenue resulting. Compared with the cost of collection, that revenue will be so trifling that it will be practically worthless, in view of the deplorable effect on land settlement. The idea is that in taxing "unimproved land values," a great revenue will be derived from town lands. Apparently it is thought that the tax will affect the unimproved town lands much more seriously than the unimproved lands in country districts. I feel certain that the Premier originally intended this to be a tax on unimproved country lands, rather than a tax on the unearned increment. [HON. J. A. THOMSON: I do not think so.] Well, from the report which I read of the Premier's policy speech, that seemed to be the intention. The object, I took it, was to encourage settlement on the land. That was stated. But if a tax on the unearned increment finds a place in the suggested measure, I feel sure it will have a very bad effect on the settlement of our country. Another feature of the measure dealing with the amendment and consolidation of the laws relating to Crown lands, will probably be a proposal to prevent their farther alienation. This seems to me a splitting of straws. I cannot perceive any great difference between granting freeholds and granting perpetual leases. In granting a freehold the Government do not part altogether with the right of taxing the land from time to time, and can if they wish continue to raise revenue from that land. On the other hand, freeholds are much better understood in the outside world than are perpetual leases; and it seems to me that as we need to borrow large sums of money for the development of our lands, we have a much better chance of getting loans if we grant freeholds rather than perpetual leaseholds. The latter will not afford the same opportunity of dealing with large financial institutions. Locally, the one form of tenure may be considered as valuable as the other; or so

it is claimed. However, I trust that in the measure amending the laws relating to Crown lands no suggestion of non-alienation will be found, and that in drafting that measure the Government will give earnest consideration to the great need for large holdings in the far back country. If too many small areas are granted we shall have settled on the land a number of people without much capital; and they will rely on the Agricultural Bank, or on the Government, as their capitalist. To me it seems much better, if possible, to sell the land straight out for cash, somewhat on the system which would be adopted by a commercial house, and that cash transactions would be more profitable to the Crown and would minimise the cost of administration in the Lands Department; whereas the suggestions that I fear may come before us in the amending measure will tend largely to increase the cost of that administration. With regard to the purchase of the Midland Railway, that undoubtedly has been a vexed question for many years past; and I am pleased to be able to follow Mr. McKenzie, who moved the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, in saying that before we give any definite decision we should carefully inspect the valuation made by the officers, in whom I feel sure we have every confidence. I sincerely hope that when we have these valuations and all the information placed before us we shall be able to acquire that railway and its lands. I regret that in speaking to this matter at a previous sitting Mr. Maley took great exception to the purchase because of the fear of settlers being withdrawn from one part of the country to another. [HON. W. MALEY: Oh, no.] I understood numbers of settlers were leaving this State for South Australia; and I think that if these lands were thrown open by the Government there would be a very large influx of settlers along that railway. There is a tremendous stretch of country, I believe of magnificent country, with a very good rainfall indeed; and it is well nigh impossible for private landholders to dispose of their land while the Government are offering land on long terms. The Government being the landholders, people requiring land very much favour them and prefer to deal with them rather than with private individuals.

HON. J. A. THOMSON: In short, the Government offer land at 10s., while the Midland Company want 20s.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY: Even if the company offered their land at 10s. and the Government wanted a pound, I claim that the settlers would acquire the land from the Government in preference, because they would prefer the Government as their landlord.

HON. J. A. THOMSON: Hear, hear. That is the socialistic principle.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, order!

HON. J. A. THOMSON: Am I out of order in making an interjection?

THE ACTING PRESIDENT: The hon. member must not interrupt the member speaking.

HON. J. A. THOMSON: That is all right. Then you call other members to order when they interject.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY: The sum of money stated here, £1,500,000, seems an enormous amount to pay for that railway; and it was suggested that perhaps the Government should build another line of railway for a very much lesser sum, and open up a similar area with a very good rainfall. The unfortunate part of that proceeding would be that every railway we built in that direction would be enhancing the company's land; and on some future occasion, when perhaps we might wish to acquire the railway, instead of securing it at £1,500,000 we would be increasing its value by that other railway; because another line in the direction suggested would undoubtedly serve a great deal of the land that in this paragraph in the Governor's Speech it is proposed to acquire. With regard to the Upper House or the Legislative Council, I some time ago definitely expressed to those good people who elected me that I was opposed to any alteration, and that I was opposed also to the suggestion in this Speech to refer to the electors the alternative question of the franchise of the second Chamber. I do not agree with the suggestion that the franchise should be altered in any way. I feel that the franchise, as it stands at present, is not a very high one; and I feel sure that in this country of high values, and I think of splendid opportunities, it is not a very hard matter for anyone who

wishes to make up his mind that he intends to have a vote for the Legislative Council of this State to secure one. It will not take anyone very long, by putting his shoulder to the wheel and by a little individual effort, to show that he has a perfect faith in this country and become qualified to vote for the Legislative Council. I really feel that the franchise as it stands at present is a very liberal one; and I feel that it is most important that we should have this Legislative Council to look after and carefully revise any decisions that may possibly be come to too hastily. Questions may sometimes pass one Chamber in the hurry of getting into recess, or for various reasons, so that it is wise there should be a second Chamber for such matters to come before. I certainly feel that with all of the measures we have placed before us, more especially in looking at this Speech of His Excellency's, it is more than ever necessary that we should have a house of revision, particularly one that will safeguard the interests of those I spoke of just now, who show their entire faith in this country by that amount of thrift which will very soon enable them to become qualified to vote for the Legislative Council. With regard to the measure for the establishment of an old age pensions scheme, I really cannot see that this is a very pressing question at the present moment. The Federal Parliament has already announced its intention of dealing with the question, and I cannot see that we can do very much good by rushing a measure through that would only anticipate Federal legislation on the question. It would mean that we would probably start new departments and be adding to the increase in our expenditure, and be making farther calls upon the revenue which, we find now, is not sufficient to carry out what we have in hand at present. I think we could very well look upon it as a question that we should be wise in leaving to the Federal Legislature to deal with. I am glad to see that there is an amendment suggested to the law relating to the aborigines; and I hope that with more efficient protection for our aborigines, side by side will be placed more efficient protection for those energetic settlers whom we wish to encourage by every means in our power to go away to the backblocks, and who,

in many instances, are at the mercy of the aborigines in our northern areas. No doubt Parliament last session went into this question, and, I think fairly fully considered a Bill dealing with the matter, which, I regret, did not become law. I feel that we did a great deal in that Bill for the protection of the aborigines, but in waiting for the reports of Dr. Roth, I think I am right in saying, the Bill was allowed to lapse. The reports we read in the Press on matters in this direction undoubtedly call for some drastic steps on the part of the Government. I hope that they have, ere this, sent full reports of the danger that the whites and settlers have been placed in, and of the great risks that are being run by those pioneers in that country to the home papers; because it has been a stain upon the legislation of this country that reports, detrimental to white people here, have been placed before the people of Great Britain and the Eastern States, in fact, throughout the world, while there have been no rebutting statements, so far as I am aware, which put the other side of the case before the people. It is extremely hard for the pioneers of this country to feel that they have all the world against them when they are taking their lives in their hands, in many instances, and when every protection is given to the native. I hope there will be greater safeguards provided for many of those who are at present labouring under great difficulties in the North. I am very pleased that Mr. Patrick made mention, at the previous sitting, of the question of immigration, which I am certain by accident has been overlooked in the Speech of His Excellency. Last session we voted a large sum of money for the encouragement of immigration, with the object of inducing settlement in the State, and it would be interesting to know what has been done up to the present time. Personally I believe that at present, from literature that has been circulated and articles which have appeared in the Press, and from lectures delivered, a number of people have been encouraged to come to this State, and in many instances they have found themselves almost stranded when they arrived. They hardly knew which way to turn. I think steps should be taken by the

Government to have officials appointed who could make provision for receiving these people, and advising them what to do and where to go. One of the most important matters to impress upon such officials would be to advise intending settlers and those who arrive to go straight inland to some area that should be set apart, provided or arranged for, away from the cities and towns. I think it would be of interest to the country if a large area were set apart in one of the districts reasonably close to the city where those people would be shown how to go about their work in this new country. Perhaps immigrants could remain at such a place for three or six months to acquire a knowledge of the local conditions, and to look round the country to see how best to embark. In some instances people have landed here without anything in their pockets, and they did not know where to go. There is no place provided for them, and they simply swell the number of unemployed about the city. That is one of the worst educations they can receive when coming from some of the older lands. I earnestly trust the Minister will be able to announce that funds voted by Parliament have been allotted in that direction. I feel there is any amount of room in this vast State, which has so many million acres of land within the rainfall area, for all those who wish to come here. The great drawback is to get those who understand their work and how to go about it to come here, and I think the Government should give advice to people as soon as they land. I believe some system of the kind is adopted in Canada, and I hope this State will be able to do something in that direction.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM (North): The preceding speakers have dealt fully with so many of the paragraphs of the Speech that I feel it almost unnecessary to say much; but even at the risk of repetition, there are some subjects that require mention. It almost seems to me to be superfluous to discuss the subjects when we know that the very existence of the Government is now in jeopardy; but as I am told they are to emerge from the struggle stronger and in a better condition, it may be useful in the future for the Government to know what are our views in connection with their proposals.

I find myself in a somewhat difficult position. I would like to know if this Speech was written in accordance with the policy of the Labour party, or whether it contains the individual views of the members of the Government; because although not being myself altogether in sympathy with the views of the Labour party, there are several proposals that arise so superior to them that I cannot help congratulating the Government on having risen above what I consider the Labour views. There are some matters in this Speech which deserve criticism, and I hope I shall give that criticism in a friendly way and without taking up much time of the House. The first paragraph I wish to refer to is that which states that the expansion of our agricultural industry in all its divisions has been specially marked. If there is one thing that this Government ought to be congratulated upon—and permit me to extend those congratulations to the Minister in this House particularly—it is the manner in which the Lands Department has been carried on and the facilities which have been extended to all those who wish to earn their living on the land. Every inducement has been held out to bring people to this State. People have been brought here through hearing lectures, and when they have come special arrangements have been made to show them the land and give them the best advice, and try and make them successful, even to the extent of advancing money from the Agricultural Bank. The idea we all have in doing this is to cheapen the cost of production, to make the greatest use we can of our land, and get as much as possible from it, so that the cost of living may be reduced and the development of the industry carried out. My only criticism in regard to the Government in this matter is that if they had only directed the same energy in trying to induce private enterprise and private money to come into this country, it would have been highly desirable. The Government are inducing a number of people to settle on the land, so as to cause competition one with another, and whilst bringing the producers together they do not think it necessary that we should have consumers. It is private interests and foreign money that make consumption. The people who make the factories and go in for industries, who employ lots

of money, make the consumption. If the Government wish to do justice to the country they must, whilst bringing men here to become producers, induce capital to be invested so as to provide the consumption. Therefore I think the Government are to blame for not doing as much for private enterprise as they have done in regard to bringing people to settle on the land. I do not know that this will not become a plank in the Labour platform. The more people brought here cause cheap food, and I am a believer in making food as cheap as possible. One of the greatest principles of any Government should be to cheapen the cost of living, for the reason that once there is cheap and good living, we can have factories, and we may be able to manufacture in such a way as to compete with other places. As long as living is dear and it costs more to live here than in other places, the establishment of factories is hopeless. Therefore some exception may be taken on this occasion to the Government who have done so much for production and so little for consumption. In connection with private enterprise and money coming into the country, not only has nothing been done to invite private enterprise to come here or encourage it, but unfortunately many things have been done, not only to prevent private enterprise, but to drive it away. I refer to much legislation that has been placed on our statute-book. That cannot be charged against the present Government, but against the past Government. The only thing I see for the present Government to do, when they emerge from their present struggle, is to wipe out some of that legislation and they will do well. This brings me to the subject of immigration, which Mr. Patrick referred to in such an excellent way at the previous sitting. Last year when Mr. Walter James was appointed Agent General, we heard a great deal about immigration, and the Premier referred to it in speeches, and there was a great deal of talk about people being induced to settle in this country. I believe the Government are as sincere in what they have been saying as most preceding Governments; that is, they do not intend and never intended to do anything in regard to immigration at all. I do not blame them for this, because there

has not been a Government in Australia that has tried to bring in a comprehensive immigration scheme; for they have not sufficient supporters to allow them to do it whatever their private views may have been. I am confident nothing will be done in this matter until we see a sum of, say, £20,000 or £30,000 on the Estimates to deal with it. I know a little about trying to induce immigration from England. I took a great deal of trouble in the matter, not only in lecturing, but at that time we had two paid lecturers who went about seeing people. Many people were prepared to come out after hearing the inducements and the paradise this country was to the working man. People said they were prepared to come out if the Government would pay their expenses; but the Agent General was not allowed at that time to pay the expenses of any one who had not over £200. I used to assist people with £100. How could we do anything under such circumstances, when we have such competition as exists in regard to Canada, that never allows immigrants to spend a penny, and there is a man looking for them, taking them in hand and paying all their expenses? It is useless talking about immigration from London to Western Australia until we put money on the statute-book to do it, and when I see the Government do that I will believe they are sincere in legislation. With regard to the exhibition of produce from Western Australia, I see a reference to that in the papers as if it were something new. It is stated that the Agent General has been exhibiting excellent specimens of Western Australian produce, and has been sending out to people to show them how good the produce is. That was done five years ago. With the co-operation of Mr. Throssell, 10 or 12 consignments of different samples of fruit were sent home, not with an idea of having anything to do with export, but to enable people who were going in for gardens and orchards to know the class of fruit which would be most acceptable to the markets in England and abroad and the classes which would carry well. Reports were obtained so that any one planting an orchard would know the best kinds. I grieve to say that these reports remained in the archives of the Agricultural offices instead of being sent

abroad every year about planting time. I think the next subject that seems to be important is in connection with the Midland Railway. That is also a question of which I have had some considerable experience, and at all events it is satisfactory to find that the Government have submitted a definite offer. One member here said yesterday that the Midland Railway was offered at one time for £1,000,000. If it were, all I can say is that it has not been within the last eight years. That I know for a fact, and every time there have been any negotiations in connection with this, the company asked one price and the Government would not give more than another. The company would raise its price, and the Government would raise its price in the same proportion. They could never get near each other. I am in a position to say that the railway could have been purchased by the Government some three or four years ago, for, at the very outside, possibly less, £1,250,000, which I consider a fair price. Whatever is done now—and I do not think it was suggested yesterday that we knew exactly what the railway has to offer—I think the company deserves fair play, which, in many instances, it has not had in the past. The company was very enterprising. I remember the time when the company laid that line down, and if it had not been for the company's enterprise and money, Geraldton and Perth would not have been connected by rail for many years. The company carried it on at a loss. I do not believe that one shareholder obtained 6d. out of it, and all for our own good, for the development of the country. We find that the Government have been offering a price, and because the company would not accept that price, the Government have taken means which I think any ordinary business men would have considered it beneath them to do, and these means have, so far, not been successful. I hope, as I say, that whatever the opinion of members is, they will give the company fair consideration. There has been a great deal of agitation that we should acquire this line. Whether it is wise to acquire it or not is a matter receiving a good deal of consideration. The line will make one system in the country, and the Government will be able to work the land

in their own way. When the company is blamed for the way in which it has worked the line, it must not be forgotten that the company paid a certain price for the railway, the company was to be paid for it, and after it was done the Government commenced to sell their land on the liberal principle of 10s. an acre payable in 20 years; which is no price at all, but simply 5 per cent. interest on the capital. Therefore, considering the facts, some allowance must be made. I think that the company instead of trying to make its money out of the land should have made it out of the railway. So far as the line is concerned I think that now you can get as comfortable a trip on that line as anywhere; and without being a professional man, but just having a superficial knowledge, I can only say the road appears to be in just as good condition as, and to compare favourably with, most of the roads on the Government railways. [Hon. M. L. Moss: I think the company has done very well.] Except in its profits. I now come to that paragraph in connection with the aborigines, and some attention has been drawn to this in the past. The paragraph is one which meets with the approval of everybody as it appears here. I will read it:—

Your approval will be sought for the amending of the existing law relating to aborigines, in order to secure more efficient protection for our aborigines, and at the same time to safeguard those of our citizens who pursue their avocations in the northern areas of the State.

I think any law or statute in accordance with that statement will meet with the approbation of everybody. Everybody wishes to see the aborigines properly protected, and, at the same time, the white settlers protected as well. Under existing circumstances, and from what we read in the newspapers, we find that there has been a great deal of trouble lately between the blacks and the white settlers, resulting in the death of several of them. Whatever the reasons may have been, there seems to be an epidemic of revolt amongst them now, and they are showing themselves hostile to a greater extent than they have for a long time previously. I trust there will not be such another mistake in connection with the matter as was made in bringing over Dr.

Roth. His recommendations were certainly crude. Some of them may have been correct, but unfortunately they were contradicted by many witnesses. Even apart from that fact it was most unsatisfactory, because the report related to only a portion of the country. If he had taken the whole State, and gone into the matter thoroughly, one could have understood it better; but why a fragmentary report was required, why he did not visit the stations in other portions as well as what one may call the worst parts, is difficult to understand. At any rate his report was brought in on a part of the country he had seen, and apparently the worst portions were picked out. The report seems very unsatisfactory, and as I said, it is contradicted by many witnesses. The question is one which I think requires to be dealt with without excitement and without sentiment, and I feel confident there are many people in this State who are quite capable of taking the matter in hand and doing justice to all parties concerned. I have only one more remark to make, and that is in connection with the Port Hedland and Nullagine railway, the railway in the North-West, and I think the Government have displayed great consideration, showing they are not hidebound in views about private enterprise, and that they have not a dog-in-the-manger policy. We all know that, as far as this railway is concerned, if it waited till built by Government funds it would probably not be built for a great many years. It is not connected with any other portion of our railway system, and therefore a cheap line could be put up; in fact what I would call a pioneer line would be best, built in a cheap way. That the prospects are good, all accounts are agreed. I have not seen the account of the Government Geologist, but the accounts by those gentlemen who know the locality indicate that it is well worthy of a line. All the superficial results have been excellent, but owing to the want of wood and water, wood both for timbering up and other purposes, it is particularly difficult to carry on, and particularly so with regard to stores. Therefore, if this pioneer line can be built, it can be done cheaply under a guarantee, and if found to be of no use there would be small expense in getting rid of it and nothing more would be

done; whereas, if it were found worth going on with, the railway could be relaid on the lines of the West Australian railways. I can only say I again congratulate the Government on the liberality of their views, in being able to put such a statement in the Governor's Speech. I have no desire to trespass farther on the time of the House, and have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): It is very pleasing to find from the Governor's statement that the mining developments are satisfactory, and the agricultural developments also. Living as I do in an agricultural district, it is no news to me, for I am aware we are progressing so far as the Great Southern Railway is concerned, and in the eastern districts, by leaps and bounds. In fact, our only difficulty just now is, in most of those districts, that we are having a somewhat excessive rainfall; otherwise so far as fresh settlers are concerned there is nothing more to be desired than what is taking place at the present time. Going on in this Speech, referring to the revenue received, it seems to me that it is time we cut our garment according to our cloth. It seems strange that there has not been sufficient revenue during the past year to meet all the demands made upon it. There are three or four words which should be added, and these words are "it should be." There is not the slightest doubt that the revenue should be sufficient for all the purposes required in connection with the management of this State. Reference is made to imposing a tax on unimproved land values and an income tax. I do not intend to support any tax on unimproved land values, if it is wholly and solely for revenue purposes. Some time ago we were told that the Government intended to put on the statute-book an Act of this nature, to induce people to work lands now lying idle. That may have been some reason for such a tax, provided it was not extra heavy; but there does not seem to be any reason why the tax should be imposed for revenue purposes. That proposal smacks of—

"Will you walk into my parlour?"

Said the spider to the fly.

It would penalise the unfortunate agriculturist, who has been invited to plug in

for all be his worth. The Premier said, in his recent policy speech, that there would be certain exemptions; amongst others, that conditional land-holders should not be taxed. That proposal seems to me utterly impossible. I will ask the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. J. M. Drew), recently Minister for Lands, how are we to act if the Government purchase the Midland Railway and lands? Among these lands are large areas held under conditional purchase to all intents and purposes, by people who are buying them from the Midland Company. Those people are "conditional purchase holders" in every sense, although they are buying from a private corporation. If the remaining lands of the Midland Company become Crown lands, they will be sold under conditional purchase; and the Crown tenants will then be exempt from land taxation, while the original tenants of the company will be liable, though both have the same rainfall, the same sunshine, and generally the same natural conditions. The purchaser from the company will be taxed, and the Crown tenants will go free. I think all members will agree that there is no justice in such a proposition. It is impossible for conditional purchase holders of Crown land to be exempted from this tax unless we exempt conditional purchase holders of private lands. This proposal of the Labour party will defeat their own ends, by making it utterly impossible for a large estate to be cut up and sold side by side with Government lands; for purchasers of the latter would enjoy freedom from taxation, while those who purchased the former would be taxed to the fullest extent. That is out of all reason; and the fact is, the time is not yet ripe for imposing this land taxation. We should wait until the country is very well developed; and meanwhile, let the Government continue to buy so-called large estates, and to cut them up themselves. I understand that such estates are available. Let them be bought. This system has been successful in the past; the lands have been profitably disposed of: why not continue to dispose of them? Such estates are payable propositions; they are no burden to the country; and in every instance they have been sold by the Government at a profit. Why not continue that procedure, instead

of imposing what is to all intents and purposes class taxation? Many reasons may be given why a tax on unimproved land values should not now be imposed, especially for revenue purposes. If it is desirable to impose it—and that I do not admit—it should be imposed for one reason only, namely to secure the development of vacant areas. I purpose dealing more fully with this matter when the Bill comes before this House, if it should ever come. For the present I will content myself with these few remarks; and I trust that every member will look closely into the subject before giving any such measure his support. As to the tax on incomes, I understand it has been for many years a bone of contention in South Australia; and there it is most strongly objected to. It is one of the most objectionable taxes that can be imposed. Only yesterday I was reading an article dealing with the United States of America, written by a man who evidently knew his subject; and I was surprised to learn that there is neither an income tax nor a land tax in the States. At one time they had both; but for many years they have had nothing of the kind. Most of us look to America as one of the leading countries of the world; and if the United States can manage to develop as they are developing without a land or an income tax, why should not we do likewise? It all comes practically to “cutting the coat according to the cloth,” not taking the other fellow’s cloth and cutting a piece out of it as well. Let us cut according to the size of our own cloth, and proceed reasonably. The proposal for the purchase of the Midland Railway has my strong support. To my mind the problem has now been boiled down to a question of price. If it is shown, and I believe it can be shown, that the State will, by purchasing, get value for its money, then by all means let us buy the property, even if in other respects development should for a little while stand still. The railway is in such a position that from a railway point of view its possession by the State is absolutely necessary. Everyone admits that though some of the company’s best lands have been sold, there are large areas still unalienated; and there is no way of throwing these open to settlement other than buying them fairly and

squarely. Let us have no more “Julia Percy” schemes, and similar contemptible moves. In reply to a question I asked the Minister, I was assured that the “Julia Percy” was not subsidised to compete with the Midland Railway Company. [THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I was not that Minister.] He was probably your predecessor; and though he gave me the assurance, it now turns out that the steamer was subsidised with that intention. Let us have done with such projects. Let us look back to the days when we were glad of the advent of that Midland Company; when we rejoiced for weeks and months after we learnt that it was decided to build the railway. I myself have spent nine days in a voyage from Champion Bay to Fremantle, and after making considerable progress have been driven back by contrary winds as far as the Abrolhos Islands. Look back to that period in our history, and contrast our disabilities then with the conveniences which followed the construction of the railway, and the blessings which it conferred on the State. Do not look on the company with jealous eyes, nor be influenced by the wild statements of an irresponsible few, or rather an irresponsible many, who complain of the large areas of land locked up. They are men who have not any responsibility, and in whose newspaper statements we read everything about the present and nothing about the past. The Midland Company are entitled to our warmest consideration. The landed property is valuable, and there is a fine railway which, though it shows signs of wear and tear, is indispensable to the State. I trust that when the matter comes before the House it will receive the most favourable consideration, and that the result will be the purchase of the railway and lands. Now I come to that portion of the Speech which states that the Government wish to gauge the feeling of the people in regard to the existence of this Chamber. I decidedly object to this question going before the people, for the simple reason that not one out of three who would vote carries any responsibility in connection with our State. We have a big floating population in this country; yet those composing it have the same voice as responsible people who will have to carry the public burden,

come what may. I take it that this House will not be so foolish as to commit suicide in this manner. To my mind that paragraph is of such a nature that we should not approve of His Excellency's Speech; for our doing so will be in a sense agreeing to have ourselves hanged. If we approve of the Speech, we shall appear to approve of this paragraph, though, as we all know, it has not our approval. To my mind, it should not have been inserted. The irresponsible persons to whom it is proposed to refer the question are not the persons to whom I shall listen; and I shall certainly oppose any referendum to the people. The speech refers twice to old age pensions. I have been acquiring information in connection with these. In England, we know there is no provision for old age pensions; but I was surprised to learn that England spends over 30 millions a year in providing food, etcetera, for poor people; and of that sum 13 millions is raised by direct taxation, while the remainder, according to an article I have read, is the result of what is therein described as "the magnificent charity of the British people." Now the moment we provide old age pensions we shall kill all charity. The wealthy will say, "Why should we trouble? We are taxed in one way with the object of relieving distress. Why should we contribute privately? The poor are under the care of the State." It is not desirable to cultivate that feeling. Well-to-do people will say, "All necessary charity will be extended to the poor by the Government, who in their turn have wrung the means from us." It will be an evil day for Australia when the need for private charity disappears. The article to which I refer states that the British navy costs 30 millions a year for upkeep, while charitable grants, direct and indirect—through the Government and by private people—reach something like 32 millions, or two or three millions more than the cost of the navy. Anyhow, that shows what an enormous sum is given in charity by the British people; for it works out at about 8s. per head of the entire population. Possibly there may be some reason for the introduction of an Old Age Pensions Bill, and I shall not commit myself. I shall keep my mind as open as possible, to learn what is to be said in support of

the proposal. As to the evils of the liquor traffic, and the State ownership of hotels, the only institutions I know of to which the Government would be justified in applying the principle of State ownership are the abominable railway refreshment rooms at some of our stations. If the Government would take over these, and would see that the people got even a good cup of tea, some benefit would result. The conduct of hotels should be left entirely to private persons. Only in railway refreshment rooms would the State be justified in carrying on such a business; for these could be managed much better by the Railway Department than by private lessees. Every railway officer would then be a supervisor over refreshment rooms, and the travelling public would enjoy comforts which they are at present denied. In amending the Conciliation and Arbitration Act the Government might include something to protect employers. It is about time that we took steps to deal with the misrepresentations of men who go about the country seeking work. Only recently, some of these people came under my observation; and as a consequence I am out of pocket. Four men represented themselves as capable of doing certain work in connection with chaff-cutting. They were getting their 8s. a day, though they had never seen a fork. One turned out to be a tailor; the others turned out to be nothing. They took the work. They said, "Oh, yes, we can do it; we have done it all our lives." As a matter of fact they threw up the work, the tailor and the three others, while it was proceeding; and I managed to get boys to take their places and complete the work. Why should not men like these be punished? In the meantime men who could do the work had to pass along. I trust that the Colonial Secretary will see that the Government do something to protect employers. We have just had enough of this rubbish. I may give another instance of what took place two or three days previously. I make up my mind not to take men on, but they catch me in a weak moment and say, "Can't you give us a job?" I gave a man work in my garden, and he carelessly drove over a beautiful orange tree that I had been nursing for eight years. When spoken

to he said, "Your horse, your horse." I said, "Must I find reins for the horse and yourself also?" Next morning he got a splinter in his hand. I asked him how he got it, and he said, "Off the shaft; the horse stepped forward just as I was fixing the traces." He had his hand in a poultice. I had given him a week's notice, and he stayed on the farm for two days doing nothing. Then I was told that he was drinking in the town, with no poultice on his hand. I sent for him, and told him that as his week was nearly up he had better go. He asked me for pay, and said, "You are responsible. The Act says you must give it. You had better get the splinters off your shaft. I will make you pay for it." There was a verandah post near with a splinter on it. I said to the man, "There is a splinter waiting for you and for men of your stamp." [HON. W. KINGSMILL: You should have prosecuted him for taking the splinter.] There is a lot of wasters about. We could not keep going if it were not that there is a lot of good workers about, men who become strong conservatives and do not trust their fellow workers. In fact two or three of them told me the other day that it was just about time the Government went out. They said, "They stop all the money coming into the State." The promised Lands Act Amendment Bill will be a very necessary measure. I trust it will make provision to stop the Lands Department from legislating on its own. Under the cover of regulations the officers of the department have been franing laws and carrying them into effect, such as this House would not dare to do. I see the Colonial Secretary is making a note of this matter. It is just about time. I promise him a lively time when the Bill comes in, if I am able to move about or speak on it. There should be no more power under the regulations to alter prices or to withdraw lands from sale simply because the department cannot keep pace with the demand for land. I welcome this Bill. I am only sorry the representative of the Government in this Chamber is not Minister for Lands. As Colonial Secretary he is certainly relieved from great responsibility. It is just about time we stopped any irresponsible boy in the Lands Depart-

ment—because in the matter of age the comparison is correct—from foisting suggestions on the Minister of the day and having them carried out. Mr. Hopkins told me himself that he had constantly to put his foot down on suggestions; otherwise people on the land would find themselves in great difficulties. We want to make the Act so that officers of the Lands Department cannot interfere with the wishes and intentions of Parliament. I hope the Bill will be brought in soon, and I trust it will be one that will lead to the successful settlement of land without all these little heart-burnings, some of them big, caused through the regulations. [THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: What regulations?] The withdrawal of second and third class lands from sale; the bar to the transfer of homestead blocks. Never was a more scandalous thing passed. I can understand it being done in connection with future selections, but I cannot understand a regulation being made retrospective. A man is handicapped through these regulations, and the State cannot get the £80 which it would otherwise receive if the man were allowed to change his homestead block into a conditional purchase area. This sort of thing is a blow to the original settlers. To make it apply to future homestead holders would be all right. People would then apply with their eyes open.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Who was responsible for the regulation?

HON. C. A. PLESSE: Who carries it on? The present Minister. It does not matter who was responsible for it. If it is objectionable why carry it on?

HON. W. KINGSMILL: That has been mentioned before.

HON. C. A. PLESSE: I do not object to the principle. I think it is a very good thing; but to apply it as they now apply it is wrong. I trust the Government will see the need of looking farther into the question of settling our southern lands, especially the lands between Bridgetown and Albany, and the land to the east of the Albany Road towards Ravenshorpe. As I stated before, there are many hundreds of thousands of acres of good wheat land there, and it is just about time a report was made of this land. A few years ago the Lands Department promised me to send an officer

down there to make a report, but to the present nothing has been done. I have a letter in which it is stated that an officer would be sent down to inspect this land. We find that at Ravensthorpe there are growing fine crops of hay; and if it is possible to do it there, I do not see why we could not grow them in the country between Ravensthorpe and Albany. Again, taking the southern portion of the country, it seems a shame to see its uncultivated state. It is altogether different country from that in the Eastern Districts and along the Great Southern Railway; and it is country that will lend itself to close settlement. I do not blame the present Government in connection with its undeveloped state. I have represented the province covering the greater portion of that area for eleven years, and it is in the same state to-day as it was eleven years ago. To my mind the least that could be done to develop it would be to put roads through it. That would lead to a certain amount of settlement, and people would go through it to seek land; and, even if they did not become settlers, they could tell others what they passed through. It has a plentiful rainfall and beautiful timber, and I suppose the climate would be really difficult to surpass in any part of the world; but it is given over to isolation. I have not been through all the country, but have been through a portion of it, and I must say that what I have seen will lend itself to certain settlement, to small holdings; and then people will go afterwards and cut the valuable timber to send it to the world's markets, so as to get a valuable return. I would be glad to see some mention made of those spur lines asked for in different places along the Great Southern Railway, and of the extension of the Goomalling railway. There is no doubt these lines are necessary, provided they can be built and worked cheaply. I must refer to a nice little pamphlet, excellent in many respects, issued by the Agent General in England. I saw exactly the same style of thing in connection with Canada, when on a trip three years ago. I noticed similar pamphlets lying everywhere advertising the land of Canada. Mr. Patrick has drawn attention to the prominent manner in which Mr. James, or whoever was responsible for the pamphlet, has

stated that there is no income tax or land tax here. I indorse all that Mr. Patrick has said in connection with that matter; but I want to draw attention to another statement made here, and again and again I have referred to it. It is in connection with loans to farmers. In the past we were led to believe that farmers could get loans when they took up land; but the present Minister took a lot of trouble to do away with any wrong impressions that might be given. He showed in a recent publication that the farmers had to do certain improvements first. In this pamphlet we find the Agent General saying:—

These loans are made for the purpose of assisting settlers to make permanent improvements, and may be advanced on land acquired from the Government on which no part of the purchase price may have been paid.

It is utter nonsense for a responsible man to publish a statement like that. It is difficult for me to explain how such a statement should get into a pamphlet. It is the same sort of irresponsible, or at least untruthful, statement as has been made in the past until the late Minister for Lands corrected it. I hope some steps will be taken to put it right. There are references to free surveys. It is recognised that something will have to be done in connection with these surveys. I do not wish to saddle the selector with unnecessary expense, but if our second and third class land can carry half the cost of survey, then the first class land can carry the whole cost. The pamphlet states that there are free surveys. I say any legislation brought in on this subject should embody a condition whereby the selector should pay for the survey of the land. We must face this matter. There is one other question to which I wish to refer. The pamphlet gives the cost of clearing land, and this statement has gone on year in and year out, so I think it is time it was corrected. It says, speaking of the lighter class of lands, those mostly taken up for cereal growing can be cleared at a cost varying from 15s. to £2 per acre. As a matter of fact these lands cannot be cleared under £3 10s. to £4 per acre. Immigrants are brought here to find that the timber has to be dried before it can be cleared at the price mentioned. I trust this matter will be considered by the Minister, who I do

not think has lost interest in the Lands Department, although he has changed his portfolio. Then there is the conclusion to the pamphlet, although it is not a conclusion. It says: "Free lands, free institutions, free education, no income tax, no land tax, no poor rate, no tithes." That requires correcting, because we have as a leading feature in the Government programme a proposal to have a land and income tax. It is simply a misstatement. The land is taxed higher here by the local taxes than in New Zealand. We are paying in my district 1½d., which is as high as the tax in New Zealand, but in addition we have a wheel tax, which they have not in New Zealand. In that case again the intending settler is misled, although there is a statement about this matter in another part of the pamphlet. It does not show the responsibility that an intending selector has to carry. I am sorry to have taken up the time of the House so long, but I thought these matters should be referred to, and I have the question of land settlement at heart. I hope, in connection with this matter, the Bill the Government contemplate bringing in will set at rest any difficulties that may exist, and that we shall have successful settlement on the lands. With the exception of the clause dealing with the wiping out of the Council, I have great pleasure in agreeing to the Speech of His Excellency.

ADJOURNMENT OF DEBATE.

HON. M. L. MOSS: I move that the debate be adjourned till this day week, as I want to get the return which I have asked for before I deal with the Address-in-Reply; and I understand other members wish for the adjournment till that date.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: This adjournment will be most inconvenient to members coming from a distance.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I must object to this motion. I have informed the hon. member that I intend to secure the adjournment after to-morrow until next Tuesday week. I do not see why we should adjourn now for a week. Before the Midland Company's matter comes on for discussion ample time will be given to peruse the documents. I hope the House will adjourn until to-morrow afternoon, when I will

move the adjournment until next Tuesday week.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	14
Noes	5

Majority for ... 9

AYES.
 Hon. E. M. Clarke
 Hon. J. D. Connolly
 Hon. C. E. Dempster
 Hon. V. Hamersley
 Hon. W. Kingsmill
 Hon. B. Laurie
 Hon. W. T. Loton
 Hon. E. McLarty
 Hon. M. L. Moss
 Hon. W. Oats
 Hon. W. Patrick
 Hon. E. F. Sholl
 Hon. J. W. Wright
 Hon. Z. Lane (Teller).

NOES.
 Hon. J. M. Drew
 Hon. J. W. Hackett
 Hon. W. Maley
 Hon. C. A. Piesse
 Hon. J. W. Langsford
 (Teller).

Question thus passed; the debate adjourned until the next Wednesday.

ADJOURNMENT—REMARKS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, in moving the adjournment of the House, asked members to attend to-morrow, as he understood a Supply Bill would come from the Assembly, and it was hoped that the House would pass it through its several stages at the sitting.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Members should be called together before the 30th June, which was the end of the financial year, so that supply could be granted for the current year. Inasmuch as no money would be required until the end of the month, was it necessary that members should meet to-morrow? This was only thrown out as a suggestion.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: As a member of the House for five years, this was his first experience of such an objection being raised, and he was surprised that it was raised now. His instructions from the Premier were to endeavour to get the Supply Bill through to-morrow. It was for the House to say whether members would extend that courtesy to the Government or not.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: When the Supply Bill came down, he would probably move an amendment that the measure should only take effect in regard to expenditure incurred since the end of the financial year.

Question passed.

The House adjourned at 6:30 o'clock until the next day.