

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.

	PAGE
Election Return, Ministerial .....	29
Papers presented .....	30
Midland Railway and Lands Purchase, Correspondence .....	30
Questions: Unhealthy Position of Title Deeds Offices .....	30
Victoria Park Trams, Certificate .....	30
Railway Permits for Timber Areas .....	30
Sessional Orders, Sitting-days, etc. ....	31
Committees of the Session .....	31
Statement: Deficit of last year, amount ..	31
Address-in-Reply, debate resumed, Amendment moved .....	31
Adjournment of House, division .....	54

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.