

Gladstone a lord of the Treasury at 24; and I think Napoleon commanded the armies of Italy when he was 25 years of age. Whoever occupies these benches will, I hope—and I say it with all humiliation in the presence of the member for Beverley—aspire to brilliancy; and whilst I confess frankly that brilliancy, greatness, or discretion may well be tempered by age or experience, I have yet to learn that young men should surrender their ideal until they are old or tottering with age or imbecility before they attempt to achieve it. The advent of the Labour party, to my mind at least, destroys one of the oldest and one of the most charming associations of public life, and that was that when men went before their constituencies, or the Government appealed, they were tried by their peers; but that is not so now. Under the existing state of things a candidate is branded with the bald phrase “Labour,” and that is taken to be sufficient. The member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) is credited with having said publicly that he and the Labour party had put a barber into Parliament, and if they liked they could have elected his pole also. [Interjections.] I am only repeating what a member of the party said, and I defy him to contradict it. Those old traditions are to my mind trampled underfoot, and with them one of the finest characteristics of public life, and I think it is due to the wanton and slavish adherence to the bald utterances of the Trades Hall Labour party. The Government might have followed the advice, for example, of the member for Hannans (Mr. Nelson) and given promises, or we might have followed Federal precedents and have bargained. We might have allotted different appointments, and by those tactics have clung to office. The ancient Romans were proud to sing of that period when none were for a party and all were for the State; and may I, at a period when the Labour party are perhaps on the verge of entering into office in this country, urge such a precedent? We have certain Independents who, at the moment, call for a Labour Government. Their pretext is to restrict progress; but I think that many of us, irrespective of what side of the House we are sitting on, will live to learn that in every instance our influence, our votes,

and our sympathy will be with progress, vigorous administration, and for a stable Government. This is an age of young men, and to my friends opposite it is a period when they are on the verge of going into power. I would say to them, when they come into office, avoid the Micawber attitude of waiting for things to turn up. I certainly hope they will aspire to that brilliancy which is so strongly deprecated by the member for Beverley. I hope they will sail in and let things hum, and that they will establish an ideal and live up to it; trying as far as is in their power to make for this State a better future, to make it a more prosperous country, and a more fruitful country than they found it. (General applause.)

MR. C. C. KEYSER (Albany): “In such a time as this, it is not meet that every nice offence should bear its comment”; but I am desirous of referring to a few things, and before doing so I would like to compliment, even to congratulate, the James Government on the good work they have done during the last session. The fact that there is an increase of settlers on the land and of the gold output, and that the returns of the railway are satisfactory, surely must appeal to us as being most gratifying, not alone to the James Government, but to every citizen of the State. The Premier the other night, in reply to the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), stated that the Government sought office only at the will of the electors. They appealed to the electors, and after fighting a strenuous battle, having the advantage of the metropolitan Press on their side, the electors, who had a clear issue before them, decided by a large majority that the James Government did not have their confidence. The Premier stated that his party would only retain office so long as they had the confidence of the majority. But he did not resign when he had the clear wish of the electors before him. Shortly afterwards the Premier gave utterance to these words: “The position was this, that as the result of the present vote the Government would either be confirmed in office or thrust from their position, and the country had looked to the speech of Mr. Daglish for a full expression of the views of the Labour party, indicating in



what way the Government forfeited the confidence of the House and justifying the Labour party in ousting them from office." Those two statements appear to me to be perfectly antagonistic. First the Premier appeals to the electors, and when he finds the electors against him, he comes into the House and appeals to the House. Does the Premier mean to infer that he would try to subordinate the wish of the electors generally to the wish of the majority of the House? Was the Premier willing to carry on the Government notwithstanding that the people were against him, if by coercion or the giving of portfolios he could command a majority in this House? That is the effect of his words. I am indeed sorry to hear that the Premier could so stultify himself, politically speaking, as to flout the opinion of the electors, if it were possible for him to command a majority in this House by the giving of portfolios and the acceptance of them, as in the case of the Minister for Works (Mr. Nanson). The Premier, in dealing with the appointment of Mr. Nanson, said he had always claimed the right, and would always do so whilst Premier, to choose his own colleagues. I think the position there taken up by the Premier is impregnable; but what he allows in himself he would deny to others. The electors claim their right to choose their Premier and their representatives, but when the electors have once chosen their representatives the Premier still wants to maintain office and dictate to the country who shall fill the Ministerial chairs. To be consistent, if the Premier claims the right to choose his own colleagues, as he has a perfect right to do, surely the country has a perfect right, when appealed to, to choose its own representatives. The Premier farther said his Ministry had a policy with which their opponents the Labour party agreed; and now the Labour party opposed it, not as partisans, not as men anxious to enforce a policy to which the Government were opponents, but as men aspiring to office. The Premier I think entirely overlooks this fact, that it is not a question of his policy, his platform, appealing to the Labour party, so much as it is a question of the platform, the policy of the Labour party, appealing to the Premier and his Ministry. The Premier states that the

Labour party's platform is practically his platform, and that their policy to all intents and purposes is identical with his policy. It seems strange, in face of this utterance, that when the Labour party's platform was placed before the electors at the general election the Premier stated that the Labour party's platform was comprised of 75 per cent. of "birdlime"; and that when the Labour party come back into power, when they have the votes on their side, he states that their platform, their policy, is practically identical with his own. It would seem that the Premier and his Ministry are willing to assimilate 75 per cent. of "birdlime" provided they are kept in office; but the Labour party, seeing that they have a majority and that the country has spoken in their favour, are not willing to allow the James Government to carry on, and they intend themselves to carry on the work with which they have been entrusted. Why should the Labour party let the James Government continue in office to carry out their platform, their policy, when the James Government are in a minority? The Labour party have not placed themselves in a majority. They placed their platform before the people and appealed to their intelligence; and the people responded, and in that response we have our justification for taking office. The Minister for Lands, in his speech the other evening, said he understood the Labour party considered an increase in the population undesirable, and that immigration should not be encouraged because there was no work. He was rather at a loss to understand any sensible member of the community trotting out such a statement which could be so easily exploded. Continuing, he said he knew of no sadder sight than that of a strong man seeking unsuccessfully the privilege of work. The privilege of work! A strong man seeking a privilege! Has it come to this, that work is looked upon as a privilege—the right to work? The fact that a man is born surely carries with it that a man has the right to work, that he has the right that employment should be given him. But the Minister for Lands considers it a privilege. A privilege! Continuing, the Minister for Lands quoted from Mr. Jeff Dodd, "The older men had been shoved to one side, and it was only the strongest



and most vigorous that could find a place in the mines to-day." The Minister, facing the Labour party, then said: "And what have our friends on the Opposition side done to alleviate the condition of men being pushed to one side?" What could the Labour party have done—a party consisting of seven members—what could they do to alleviate the industrial distress on the goldfields at that time? Surely the accusation rebounded back. What did the Government do? They had the reins of office; they were in power; they knew the distress, and that the number of unemployed was increasing. What did they do? Now the present industrial system, with its keen competition, assures the employment of the vigorous and competent, and the refusal of the old and feeble. To employ or keep in employment a man who may be replaced by someone else able to do twice his work is not a sound business proposition. We could not expect a business man to employ an aged and feeble man when he could employ a young, vigorous, and competent man at the same wage. It would seem, then, that the fruit of the present competitive system, expressed in low wages, sweating, the huge unemployed list, and the non-employment of the old people, bespeaks its rottenness, its baseness, and its weakness. This is the point I want to get at. To hold out inducements to immigrants to settle in this State other than those willing and competent to settle on the land, is an act either of a criminal or a madman. Let me draw attention to a probable rupture in the building trade of this State. An attempt is being made to lower wages in Perth in the carpentering line, and the reason advanced for doing so is that there is an overplus of carpenters, and that the time is thus ripe for a reduction in wages. Does the Minister think, in view of this probable reduction in wages because of an overplus in carpenters, that the Government are justified in inducing other carpenters to come into the city of Perth? Surely his reasoning the other night gives colour to that deduction. He said, "We have a large area of country; we have many resources; our population is extravagantly small." Well, in face of the fact that wages in Perth are about to be reduced

because there are too many carpenters, would that justify the Ministry in inducing other carpenters to come here? In face of the fact that at the present time there are 1,500 miners out of work on the goldfields, is that an argument to justify the Ministry in holding out attractions and inducements for other miners to come into this State? That is what the Minister for Lands urges us to do. Does the Minister think that a nation is best governed and most financially sound whose citizens are paying the lowest possible wage? It would seem so, seeing that he has held out every inducement for people to come into this State, knowing the keen industrial crisis that at the present time exists here. I should like to refer to Legislative Council reform. The Minister for Lands, in his speech this afternoon, tried to mislead members as regards the Labour party's views in connection with the Legislative Council. The Labour party have never advocated the abolition of the Legislative Council. We shall find on their printed platform that the first plank is this: "The Labour party desire a referendum to be taken as to whether the Legislative Council should be abolished or not." The Labour party have never expressed an opinion one way or another, except that they want the question to be put to the people and, when the people have spoken, to act upon their verdict. To show that the Legislative Council is in need of reform, especially as regards the qualification for votership, let me quote two instances. We shall take A, who receives £150 a year. He has only his wife to keep, and can afford to pay £25 per year in rental. That is the minimum amount to be paid to qualify a person to vote for the Upper House. On the other hand we shall take B, who receives £150 a year—the same salary as A. He, in addition to having a wife to maintain, has five children, that is seven in all instead of two, to keep on £150; and in consequence B is unable to pay as much as A for rent. He must be content with a less pretentious house, and the consequence is that, while A is entitled to vote for the Upper House, B, who is helping to reduce the debt per head and to populate the State, and who is practically a permanent resident of the State, is actually denied the voting privileges that



A has. Surely this must appear to any reasonable thinking man as being unjust. The Government practically penalise the man for raising a family. They tell us they want to induce people to come here and to have as large families as possible; but when a man does raise a family and increase his expenses, and is unable to have the luxury of a large house, they penalise him and refuse him the voting privilege that they give to the other man. I do not intend, at this particular time, to speak at any great length to deal with the administrative work of the present Government. I simply confine myself to this one straight-out issue. The James Government have appealed to the people, and the people have told them that they desired them to leave the chairs of office; and because the people have placed the Labour party in a majority, we intend to take up the seals of office, feeling certain that, when we have public opinion with us, when we desire to place upon the statute-book legislation that appeals to our righteous judgment, when we only desire the State's good and are not moved by selfish motives, when the time does come for us to take up office, we shall be able to carry it out successfully.

MR. T. F. QUINLAN (Toodyay); I have but few words to say on the subject of his Excellency's Speech. I desire to express my difference in opinion from what the last speaker has stated when he ventured to suggest that the Premier's duty to this House was to have tendered his resignation without the usual opening Speech from the Governor, and without producing any policy which the Government might propose to carry out. At first sight that was my view, for like the hon. member I thought that was the proper course to adopt; but on consideration I realise, as I hope the hon. member will, that with 18 or 19 members on the Government side and 22 members on the Labour benches, also a certain number of Independent members, if the Premier had not met Parliament with a policy speech, he would have been giving up office to a minority in this House. The Government or the Ministerial supporters were not able to know what position the Independent members would take when Parliament met. The Independent members have now considered the matter,

and we are given to understand that they intend to vote with the Labour party; hence that party will, on that vote, be in a majority. I hold that the Labour party are equally entitled to occupy these Government benches as are the present Ministry. The Labour members have been returned in a large proportion to this House, and seeing that they are able to command a majority of votes with the aid of the Independent section, the Labour party are justified in trying to take the position now occupied by the Government. My sympathies, as I have always said, are with labour people, my sympathies are particularly with the moderates, or those who believe in moderation; but I am sorry to say that amongst the Labour party are some extremists; therefore as I had a choice of sitting on this or that side of the House, and as I sat on the Opposition cross-benches last session, I have now changed my position and come to the Government side, because I do not see much choice between the platform of the Labour party and the platform of the Government. I have removed my seat to the Government cross-benches because I hold that Ministers who have been so long in office and have done so much good work in administering the affairs of the country are entitled to support. I contend that the James Government have done exceedingly good work, that they have been economical as they promised to be, and that they have administered the various departments as best they could in the circumstances. They have retrenched in some directions; and although a Royal Commission has examined the several departments of the Civil Service and made recommendations in the direction of economy, and although the Government have carried out such of those recommendations as they believed to be really suitable, I am not satisfied now that those members of the commission were really competent to deal with the subject. However, the James Government are about to meet their doom, and this is an occasion which requires at least a few words to thank them for their good administration of the affairs of this State during their time of office. I realise that a change is about to take place, and I hope that whoever occupy the Government benches will be as honest and faith-