

a ship and sent it to the North-West to bring down cattle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You cannot bring down cattle at this season.

Mr. ALLEN: Is that the reason? By the way the Government were talking during the recent elections I thought that they would have already chartered a ship or two and sent to the North-West coast for cattle. As to the question of water supplies, I hope the Government will take the proper step to provide the metropolitan area with a more up-to-date water supply and now that the sewerage scheme is being connected with the houses more water will be needed. Our present supply is unsatisfactory and inadequate, and I hope the Government will get to work and do something at once. Primary industries have had a great deal of consideration, and properly so. They are in a prosperous condition. I trust our secondary industries will not be overlooked when occasion arises to give them assistance. I trust the opportunity will come when the Government will be able to give some preference to the secondary industries and place orders with them and thus assist them. A great deal of capital has been invested in our secondary industries in Western Australia, and they should be further developed. When we remember that seven million or eight million pounds go out of the State every year for the importation of goods, it will be seen that there is big scope in building up the secondary industries of Western Australia. I would like to express the hope that the Government will deal more generously with the Perth City Council in regard to its subsidy. At the present time the Perth City Council is only getting a maximum of £2,000, but if that council was treated at the rate of 5s. in the pound, they would get £5,060 a year. The Government should recognise the services the municipality have rendered to the Government and in consequence are entitled to greater consideration. If the Perth council were to be allowed to rate Government properties, on an estimate made in the year 1903, the Perth City Council would receive something like £11,000 from the Government.

I have expressed the opinion out of the House, and I express it again, that a great deal of time is often wasted over the Address-in-reply, therefore I do not intend to take up the time further. I should, Mr. Speaker, at the outset have taken the opportunity of congratulating you on the high and honoured position which you occupy. I do not know that I should be right in saying that I hope you may occupy it for a number of years, but I know that you will occupy it to the satisfaction of the House and with credit to yourself.

Mr. DOOLEY (Geraldton): I, like the previous speaker, have opinions about the time taken up on the Address-in-reply, and I think there may be a good deal of time wasted. But it is also very necessary that certain matters should be given voice to and many things referred to which perhaps members would not have an opportunity of doing under other circumstances. I would like, in the first place, to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment, because knowing you as long as I have, I am pleased to think that the choice of the House has been so unanimous. You are a man who at all times has been held in the highest opinion in public life, and for the spirit of justice which has been apparent in all your actions, therefore, I think the appointment is a happy one. In regard to the Ministers, although I offer my congratulations to those gentlemen yet at the same time I have to offer my sympathy to them because I recognise that they have a great task before them, coming as they have done into office when the work of previous administrators had accumulated through, I venture to say, neglect and carelessness in regard to their departments, therefore they have made the work of their successors very arduous indeed. There is an opinion prevalent in the northern districts, particularly at Geraldton, that we in the past have not been given that consideration that we should receive, and I regret to notice that so far as the Address from His Excellency is concerned there is a small matter that indicates that the present Administration have not altogether considered the



northern districts sufficiently. I refer to the fact that in speaking of the prevalent drought they specify the eastern districts only. I do not want to give my district an advertisement in the wrong way, but I want to say this, that there are settlers in the northern districts and particularly in the Geraldton district who are suffering, I venture to say, as severely as the eastern settlers are suffering from the present prevalent drought. But the consoling feature is the fact of the prompt and energetic manner in which the present Administration have dealt with the water problem. I am sorry indeed to say that in spite of all that has been done in the past the question of providing water for settlers has not been satisfactorily considered. Perhaps there is an excuse for that in the fact that Western Australia has been fortunate with regard to its climatic conditions, and we have not up to the present experienced anything in the shape of a drought of any severity, but it behoves us now that we are awakened by the admonitions of Dame Nature in this respect to let her sons represented in the Labour party take notice that this admonition is properly regarded and look well to the future as to water conservation. In regard to this matter I think the Government would do well if in the future in throwing open areas they make sure, before these areas are thrown open for selection, that there shall be no monopoly with regard to water reserves. I think in the past this matter has been entirely neglected. I know areas in the northern districts suffering considerably from want of water and there are water supplies held by private individuals, or private individuals have the ownership of them, and we know that people will not be too generous in times such as we are experiencing at present to allow that water to be used. But I do hope the Government in throwing open areas in the future, before doing so will mark well this point and take precautionary measures to see that before an area is thrown open sufficient water will be made available for the settlers. Not in the good times when water is plentiful, but that we provide for the future when we may have to ex-

perience another drought similar to the present. I was rather impressed with the remarks of the member for Wagin, when he referred to the methods adopted by the present Government in being so candid in regard to the financial position. He spoke to the effect that by so doing the Government were damaging the State's credit, and as a comparison, or example, of what should be done he quoted the position of a business man. That to me threw a sidelight on the difference between business methods and Government methods. So far as the individual is concerned it is only a matter of his own particular interests, but so far as Governments are concerned, the interests of the whole people are at stake. If the Government wish to retain the confidence of the people, they must give the people the confidence which they expect from them. I must give the Government credit for laying the financial position fully before the country, and I hope that, contrary to what has been done in the past, when financial statements are being dealt with, in future we will not have a repetition of the protests from the Auditor-General with regard to the manner in which the public finances are handled. Every year we notice protests with regard to the system of bookkeeping, and it seems to me that there must be something wrong with the Audit Act when the Auditor-General, whom we have appointed to watch the bookkeeping and the finances of the country, has to make such statements, and while in this Chamber these protests may be treated with the greatest of courtesy outside they are simply laughed at. I hope that if the matter comes before the House again some provision will be inserted in the Act whereby the Auditor-General will have the power to bring the responsible Minister before the Full Court or High Court to give reasons why he has not carried out the instructions or provisions of the Act, which is supposed to safeguard the finances and bookkeeping interests of the community. A good deal has been said during the debate with regard to land settlement, and the disastrous policy which the Government are introducing, particularly in connection with the non-



alienation or Government ownership as against private ownership. I must claim that I have had a somewhat different and exceptional experience with regard to this matter. So far as my district is concerned, I have had many farmers come to me who are anxious to convert their conditional purchases into leaseholds under the scheme put forward by the present Government. Therefore I am heart and soul looking forward to the time when the present Government will bring about a drastic reform in the direction of substituting non-alienation for the present system. While on the land question, I would like to say that, whatever the financial stress of this country may be at an early or distant date, I sincerely trust this Government will not attempt to do what previous administrators have done, and that is, endeavour to hoodwink the farmers and pastoralists by telling them that they are their friends while all the time they are piling up the costs of land administration. The member for Williams-Narrogin has referred to this matter and to the high survey charges. We know that survey charges were trebled by the last Administration, and also that the price of land has gone up; but the member for Williams-Narrogin explained that matter very lucidly to hon. members. The high price of food is a matter that requires to be taken up seriously by the Administration, and as the Minister for Lands stated last night that he was sick and tired of hearing these things mentioned this is essentially a matter that requires the closest attention from an administrative point of view. I come from a town where the price of commodities and house rents have been raised anything from 10 to 20 per cent. during the last few months, and whenever I attempted to investigate the cause I could get no satisfaction. I am now speaking of the ordinary commodities, particularly groceries, and I find that the retailers there are putting up their prices without justification or reason. With regard to the high price of meat, and the difficulties in connection with meat supplies in the North-West, I think that if the Minister for Lands would go thor-

oughly into the matter he would find splendid areas close to the centres of population in this State which could be utilised for stock-raising purposes. There are between the Murchison and Gascoyne some fine areas of land which, I daresay, could be leased in areas of from 20,000 to 25,000 acres and utilised for mixed farming or grazing farms. They are too far away from the market for wheat-growing purposes, but stock could be raised in those districts, and we should encourage people to go on them who understand stock-raising. In this way we could create a community of small squatters, or stock-raisers, and this system would go a long way to combat the increased cost of meat at any rate. Much has been said in regard to the mining industry, and this is another matter in regard to which I have a slight grievance against the Government. No reference is made in the Speech to the mining areas in and around Northampton. Most of them are on private property; but I did think the fact would be noted that there is a large area of agricultural country which is also rich in deposits of the baser metal. I know that there is a Mining on Private Property Act which, so far as these areas are concerned, has been flouted in the past. I have known genuine prospectors, working men, who were desirous of exploiting these mineral deposits and who made sure that they were within their rights in asking to go on this land, but the late Minister for Mines, who has been so buttered up by the members who spoke on the Opposition side, absolutely refused them permission. After getting a high legal opinion locally he sent across to the Eastern States and obtained from one of the big constitutional authorities an opinion which was favourable to the applications of these gentlemen to mine on this land, but he then turned round and stated that the British investor had to be considered, and the British investor in this case was an absentee, who was making no use of the land applied for by these people. Another matter I wish to refer to is the coal deposits in the Irwin district. The records show that coal has been found there in fairly workable quantities, and



that it is coal of a high commercial value, equal, if not superior, to the coal at Collie. This is a matter that requires to be gone into, if only for the purpose of satisfying the Government that there is a good proposition here. When we remember the great scarcity of fuel on the Murchison goldfields, and the distance which the wood lines have to go, it can be realised what would be the importance to these fields of an adjacent coal mine. I therefore sincerely hope that the Government will not overlook the fact that, so far as prospecting has gone, we have a good hope of establishing another coal-field. In this respect I trust that the error which was made in the past in allowing the coalfields at Collie to be exploited by private individuals will not be repeated in connection with these coal fields. The railways are extending in the north, slowly I must admit, and when we remember that here is coal which could be worked very economically by virtue of its being so adjacent, and that the Government would be a big consumer, it will be seen how desirable it is that we should keep private enterprise from cutting in and depriving the people of the profits and advantages that rightly belong to them. Another matter I wish to refer to is the question of ports. We have heard a good deal said about Esperance, and about Bunbury and Fremantle, and so far as the commercial importance of those ports is concerned I wish to state a fact which, perhaps, will come as a surprise to many hon. members, that Geraldton is the second port of commercial importance in this State; it ranks next to Fremantle by virtue of the value of the imports and exports. This can be proved at the Customs House, and the complaint we have at Geraldton is that the wharfage rates charged at Fremantle have acted as an absolute bar to the introduction of produce from the northern areas. This is a matter which, if the Government are going to live up to their traditions, and I feel every confidence that they will, they must thoroughly investigate, because we might just as well be in another State with a high protective tariff against the north if we allow it to continue. In con-

nection with this, before justice is done to the northern ports, and particularly to Geraldton, something will have to be done in connection with the railway. The Midland Railway Company certainly are providing slightly better facilities than they did in the past, but nevertheless while that concern is in the hands of the company, the railway will be a menace to the welfare and the proper development and advancement of the northern districts, because at the present time the company are allowed the right to operate differential rates, with the result that to divert the trade over their lines from Geraldton they are carrying produce at a far lower proportionate rate than is done closer to Midland, where of course the produce or the traffic of necessity must go to them. I think this is one of the things that the Government should attend to, and they should do their utmost to bring about the purchase of the railway, which will be an advantage to not only one part of the district but to the country at large, and particularly will it be so if the predictions of some of us work out correctly, and that is that our finances are likely to be not so buoyant in the near future as they have been in the past. I say that a reasonable offer should be made and negotiations started at the earliest moment with that company with regard to the purchase, and if they will not listen to reason, at any rate if they stand by their contract so far as charging differential rates is concerned, I trust that the Government will wake up to their responsibility and protect the people of the north from the operations of these rates to which I have referred, and do what they did some years ago, namely, run a steamer or a line of steamers from Fremantle to Geraldton in opposition to the company. It occurs to me that this is a matter which could be well taken up in connection with certain suggestions made with regard to the subsidising of the shipping service on the North-West coast generally. It is a matter too, that I am not leaving with this discussion this afternoon, and I can promise the Government that in season and out of season I shall peg away in the interests of the northern people, with the



object of consummating the purchase of the Midland railway, and if the company will not listen to reason, then I shall concentrate all my efforts in the direction of devising proposals whereby they will have to be brought to reason, so that justice may be done to the community which they are serving irrespective of the profits of the absentee shareholders. Another very urgent necessity, and a matter from which we have suffered in the north to a considerable extent, is the question of circuit courts. I notice that one portion of the State, at any rate the Eastern Goldfields, have been considered in this matter, while the people in the northern areas have been treated with scant courtesy in the past. This is a matter which is also beginning to become very irksome as far as the northern people are concerned, particularly as the population of the district I represent is increasing, and the importance of the port of Geraldton is increasing, as well also as the different centres on the Murchison, and I trust that the Minister for Justice will do all he can with regard to instituting these circuit courts. Wherever you go you cannot get away from the fact that disputes arise which can only be settled by legal process, and in a matter which has to be dealt with by the Supreme Court it means that litigants are dragged, in some cases, 600 or 700 miles over a very weary road to Perth, when, without much expense, a circuit court in Geraldton, sitting, say, once in every three months, could determine all these matters. This would be a considerable advantage which would be greatly appreciated by those of our people in the districts I have referred to. Another very urgent matter is in connection with the ports. I was very pleased to hear that the Premier had declared himself favourable to going into the matter of proper shipping facilities. We in Western Australia have not been blessed as other parts of the continent with deep water frontages. Our bays wherever we go abound with shallow water and with flat, receding shores, and we have to run jetties out to a very great distance in order to get any depth, and then we find reefs and shoals which,

through the very severe gales that blow, bring about added difficulties to shipping. So far as Geraldton is concerned we are suffering from these difficulties, and I sincerely hope that this matter will also be taken up. I would suggest the advisability of appointing a Commission of experts, say two or three gentlemen who have had considerable experience and who could report on some of these places which are growing in importance, Geraldton in particular, with a view of making suggestions for the provision of something like decent facilities. No matter what development takes place, or how prosperous the northern districts may become, until we are able to give the shipping something like reasonable facilities, there will be a tendency to divert the traffic through other channels. I cannot conclude without referring to the suggested amendment of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. I think we might well make provision in the direction referred to by the member for Leonora when he stated that the question of the high cost of living, or what should constitute a living wage, should be prescribed or set down, if possible, in the Act, so that the Judge of the Supreme Court would have something more than his own personal prejudices or opinions to go on when fixing the basis of wages. I am ready to admit this is a very difficult problem under present conditions. The trouble seems to be that there is only a limited demand for a certain commodity which has to be manufactured and, of course, competitors, so far as the manufacturing element or the capitalistic element is concerned, are allowed to enter in the limited market, with the result that they cut one another's prices, and they regard human energy and flesh and blood just as some commonplace factors in the matter, and they think that the wages of the worker should be cut down without any consideration. I think also that the Act requires explaining with regard to the form of organisation. At the present time, no matter how diversified an industry is with regard to the different classes of work performed in that industry, the Act prescribes that for every little classification a union may or



shall be organised before it can appear before the court. I know from experience that a general union of workers that may be called into existence, and which may represent more than one particular industry, are debarred from going before the Arbitration Court; in fact, they are debarred from registration under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act. I do not think that it is in the best interests of the community, either of the workers themselves or of the people generally, and it certainly does not tend to industrial peace. If we broadened that Act by a provision to reduce the number of unions to, perhaps, one union of all workers in any one industry, we would be making an advanced step in the right direction, and concentrating the issue between the two main forces, labour and capital, and so tending to reduce friction. A good deal has been said with regard to civil service reform. I do not wish to say any more on that except to heartily endorse everything the member for Narrogin-Williams has said. He is competent to speak on this matter, and as far as my observations have gone in moving along my daily life amongst civil servants, I think the whole gist of the trouble lies in the fact that we have at the head of affairs, in the person of Mr. Jull, an officer who is not competent to deal with men of highly trained intellect. As far as I can gather, what they are asking for is a very small matter, merely justice; that is to say, that when they consider they have not been treated fairly their cases shall be heard on lines similar to those obtaining in every court or board of justice. I would refer to the question of municipal reform. At the present time we get complaints on all hands, from both municipal councils and roads boards, with regard to the subsidies. As far as municipal councils are concerned I venture to say that if the Act were amended to provide for the rating assessment on the unimproved value instead of, as at present, on the rental value, we would get twice the revenue at about one-fourth the cost to the resident ratepayers. More particularly would this be so if we were allowed to rate Government property. According to the present

Act Government property is free from rating, and as far as Geraldton is concerned, and I think this applies to Perth as well, the best and most valuable blocks are occupied by Government buildings. If the right to assess the rates on the unimproved value were introduced you would hear very little complaint from any municipality.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Only a few of the blocks are carrying Government buildings.

Mr. DOOLEY: Even apart from the Government buildings, surely when you come to consider the conveniences that are afforded—you must not forget that, so far as Government buildings are concerned, the Government insist upon the best municipal work in regard to the maintenance of footpaths and public service generally—and remember that we get little or nothing for them, it will be conceded that it is only fair that we should be allowed to raise our rates on these properties. Another important matter in connection with the Act is the question of providing for the better security of tenure in respect to our municipal officers. I have known municipal officers to be highly trained gentlemen in their respective classes of work; but there is generally a difficulty in keeping these gentlemen, because of the fact that a municipality has the power of discharging them almost at a moment's notice, and this does not tend to encourage them to take the same interest in their work as they otherwise might do. Further than that, we should extend the borrowing powers of municipalities. Of the many assets a municipality has, the safest and most productive is proper housing, and it seems to me that we ought to give a municipality power to borrow money for building purposes. If the Act were amended in that direction Ministers would not have to worry in regard to the question of subsidies. I sincerely hope the Government will endeavour to give consideration to the Northern districts, and remember that although their predecessors have concentrated all their attention on one part of the State there are greater potentialities



ties in the North than those revealed in the Southern or Eastern areas.

[*Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. LEWIS (Canning): I rise to support the adoption of the Address-in-reply in accordance with the usual modesty that characterises our party in the hour of victory, whilst in the hour of defeat we can be equally brave. The most pleasing feature of the recent election was the circumstance that such a large percentage of electors exercised their privilege. While the people take so keen an interest in the government of the State we can rest assured that the Government will carry out faithfully the task entrusted to them. It is also satisfactory to note that the electors have returned a party that preaches nationalism. One factor that helped to return the Labour party and defeat the Liberal party was the recognition by the people of the splendid record put up by the same party in the national Parliament. Both from an administrative and a legislative point of view that party have put up a record of which the people of Australia are proud. Further than that, education has been the means of enabling the people of Australia to return from the ranks of the workers practical men who realise the difficulties the people have to suffer under and who can take control of the legislation and administration of the State and do more effective work in a short period than their predecessors have ever done before. During the short time the present national Government have been in power they have achieved more effective work than had previously been done in the history of the Commonwealth. Many reasons have been stated for the marvellous overthrow of the Liberal party at the recent elections. I realise that the most important factors in that were education and adult suffrage. People are beginning to realise that the party who in the past have controlled the destinies of the State have worked in the interests of a few privileged people, without regard for the great masses. I am pleased to congratulate the Minister for Lands on having instituted a policy which, I believe, will effectively develop the lands

of this State. Any casual observer travelling over the railway lines of the State must realise that the land close to the existing railways is in many districts nothing but a wilderness, while genuine settlers have to go out into the interior of the country under a diminished rainfall in order to gain a living from the soil. Clearly in the past speculators have held the land close to the railways for the sake of the unearned increment, and have thus retarded the progress of the State. I am pleased to see that every effort is to be put forth to assist the settlers on our land so that those who desire to take up land and utilise it shall have an opportunity afforded to them such as has never been afforded in the past. Owing to the dry season in certain parts of our agricultural areas at the present time we realise that settlers have to struggle with many difficulties, and it is pleasing to note the prompt action on the part of the Government with a view to alleviating the discomfort of these people. The Labour party realise that if we are going to have progress in the State it is essential that we should develop every industry. The more avenues of employment opened up, the better for the State and the Commonwealth generally. Therefore we are a national party. There is no attempt to set the goldfields against the coast. One of the sins the late Administration had to carry was that they always endeavoured to set the coast against the goldfields with a view to securing a further lease of power. The present Administration recognise that the coast and the goldfields are indissolubly linked together, and recognise also that if we are to have progress we must do all we can to assist those in our agricultural areas. And so we see to-day the national party in Western Australia having representatives, not only from metropolitan constituencies but also from agricultural constituencies, and a monopoly of representation from the goldfields constituencies; and this party is going to work unitedly to develop every industry. I am pleased to know that at last we have an energetic Minister for Mines who is determined to do all he can to open up new fields, the greatest stimu-