

the Colonies the accompanying Addresses for presentation to His Majesty the King and to Her Majesty Alexandra, the Queen Mother."

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. MURRAY moved—

That the foregoing Addresses be forwarded to the Legislative Council, with a message desiring their concurrence therein.

The motion was agreed to.

IMPORTED GOODS FOR STATE DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. WATT, pursuant to an Order of the House (dated October 17, 1905), presented a return giving a list of articles and materials not made in the Commonwealth obtained from contractors, for the service of the Lands Department, during the financial year 1908-9.

COUNTRY STATE SCHOOLS.

Mr. A. A. BILLSON (*Ovens*) in compliance with an Order of the House (dated December 9, 1909), presented a return with reference to sixth and seventh class country schools.

FENCES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. MURRAY.—According to the usual practice of Parliament, and to protect the privileges of this House, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Fences Act.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY AND WAYS AND MEANS.

Mr. WATT.—I move—

That the Standing Orders be suspended to allow the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means to be appointed forthwith.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—I will not object to this motion to day, but I would point out that the necessity for the suspension of the Standing Orders is due to Parliament being convened a week later than it should have been. Parliament should have been opened a week earlier to allow the necessary time to elapse before the money was required to pay public servants.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. WATT.—I move—

That this House will, this day, resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to consider the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. WATT.—I move—

That this House will this day resolve itself into a Committee to consider the Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

The motion was agreed to.

ESTIMATES.

Mr. WATT presented a message from His Excellency the Governor transmitting an estimate of expenditure for the months of July and August, 1910, and recommending an appropriation from the Consolidated Revenue accordingly.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The SPEAKER.—I have to report that the members of this House this day attended the Legislative Council Chamber, when His Excellency the Governor was pleased to make a speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. As the speech is printed, and copies are in the hands of honorable members, it will not be necessary for me to read it.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I move—

That the following Address-in-Reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor to both Houses of Parliament be agreed to by this House:—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to Our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the gracious speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

In doing so I should like, in the first place, to express my pleasure at and appreciation of the eloquent and graceful terms of the addresses of loyalty which have just been adopted. They convey the feelings of this House and State respecting His Majesty King George V., and embody a tribute to the memory of our late beloved Sovereign, and condolence with the Mother Queen on the sad death of King Edward VII. It is also fitting, I think honorable members will agree, for me to say a word of regret at the loss which this Assembly has sustained by the death of Mr. Albert Harris, the member for Walhalla. He was, of course, a very old member of this House, and I had not the pleasure of knowing him for long, but during the few weeks last session that I came into close personal contact with him I very soon learned to appreciate his kindly nature, and the human sympathy which actuated his life. No doubt other honorable members who knew

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him longer will express themselves more freely and at greater length concerning the sad event, but I think it would be wrong for me to omit all reference to the loss which we have sustained. In dealing with His Excellency's opening speech I would like to say at the outset that it did not strike me as indicating, and carrying with it the feeling which, I think, honorable members have of the vast importance to this State of the session upon which we are about to enter. It seems to me that the session will be fraught with consequences of most serious import to our State in many respects. I should have liked to have seen in the Governor's speech some indication on the part of the Government of a determination to appreciate the vital questions which we have to decide at this important stage of our parliamentary life. These important questions involve the relationship of the State and the Federal Parliaments in connexion with matters of finance and industrial legislation which are very far reaching. I would have liked to have seen the Government indicate in the opening speech some determination on their part to uphold what seems to me the intention, not only in respect of Victoria but of the other States, in the framing of the Federal Constitution, which allotted to the Federal and State Governments their duties—not rights, but duties—which they accepted for the respective Legislatures to carry out in connexion with the government and development of this great continent. The allotment of those duties was wisely and carefully considered at many conferences, and those framing the Constitution did not consider the question of rights or privileges at all; they considered what would be best in the interests of the people of Australia. I do trust that our State Government will make up their minds to take a statesmanlike grasp of the great questions which have to be decided, and show a resolution to uphold that Constitution, seeing that no change takes place as far as it is possible to resist it in connexion with the allotment of the duties which the State Parliament has to perform.

Mr. WARDE.—How can the State Government prevent a change of the Constitution if the people desire it?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I quite appreciate that, but I want to show that we deserve to be deprived of the duties allotted us unless we perform them. It would be absurd for this House to claim that there is any question of rights involved in this matter. It is a question of duty to the people of Victoria; and I think with regard to the

question of industrial legislation, which I consider of paramount importance, that we ought to have a clear view of the course we are to take in the future, and to make up our minds that we will deal with the question in a way that will satisfy the people that the State Parliaments are to be trusted with the carrying-out of this important domestic legislation.

Mr. HANNAH.—Will the seconder say "ditto" to that?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—We will hear that later on. With regard to industrial legislation, I quite sympathize with those honorable members on the Opposition side of the House who say that such legislation must be dealt with, because we know that there can be no progress, happiness, or prosperity unless the masses of the people are considered in connexion with the great industrial life on which we must depend. I feel that, and caudidly admit it, and I am prepared to insist upon legislation of that kind to the utmost of my power. At the same time, I think it would be absolutely impossible for a central administration, such as the Federal Government, to take into consideration the various conditions that affect industrial life all over this continent, with its widely scattered population, and for it to administer in an efficient way legislation and regulations which must be framed, and which must vary in different places, according to the conditions which exist. I think that would be the opinion of those who framed the Constitution years ago, but it must also be admitted that, unless Victoria and the other States deal with the subject in an efficient way, they must, and deserve to, lose the exercise of such powers.

Sir ALEXANDER PEACOCK.—That is how they are going to deal with the land tax.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Another matter in which the States duties question arises is the land tax. We must really face the position, and I hope it will be faced boldly and strongly. I regret that there is not in the Governor's speech in a more permanent form an indication of the intention of the Government at the earliest moment to bring in a Land Tax Bill. I think that we must face the necessity of dealing with this land taxation. I have always felt that. I congratulate the Government on having benefited by the discussion that took place last session, and for modifying the land taxation that is to be brought before the House this session. There are no two opinions on this (the Government) side of the House that the question of land taxation is in an unsatisfactory state at present.

I am of opinion that land should bear a fairer and more equitable share of the burden of taxation for the development of the resources of the State. I trust the Bill to be brought in by the Government will appear speedily, and that the Government will not, as indicated in some of the speeches of the Ministry, wait to see what the Federal Government does. I hope the Government will bring their Bill down very soon to impose fair taxation on the lands of Victoria; that there will not be in that Bill any aggregation in connexion with country or city lands, that there will be a fair exemption in respect to mortgage obligations on real estate, and that the rate will be one that will extend fairly to all the lands. I believe there should be an exemption, but £500 is too wide. In addition to that, the great principle that we have been fighting for on this (the Government) side of the House should be recognised, namely, that there should be provision in respect to mortgage debts on real estate. Cases have been mentioned in the House where a land tax disregarding mortgage obligations would prove ruinous to many land-owners. I do not think it is the wish of honorable members on either side of the House to see that brought about. In addition to that the tax should provide for some system of graduation, and as a suggestion I would say it should be $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £1 up to £10,000, and 1d. above that. There should be no talk of the bursting-up process which has proved absolutely useless in other countries.

Mr. ELMSLIE.—What about a Valuation Bill first?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—The time has now come when we should not wait for a valuation. Had the Government acted wisely last session a Valuation Bill would have been passed, and we would now be in a position to know more accurately what a land tax would return. As we are faced with the necessity of providing for additional revenue a land tax is now a reasonable request, but let the tax be imposed for twelve months only, and the House will give fair consideration to what should be done. I have every confidence in the Federal Government now in power.

Mr. WARDE.—You helped to put them there.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—The Federal and the State Governments are appointed by the same electors. If we stand back, as is proposed, the Federal Government will come in with their land taxation and say that we neglected this legitimate source of revenue. Then the

opprobrium of coming in afterwards and imposing taxation on lands already taxed by the Federal Government will be cast on the State Government. I have always held the same opinions in regard to land taxation.

Mr. WARDE.—They were not very definite.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I was returned against land taxation in the form then proposed by the Government, but I have always expressed myself in favour of an amendment of the existing land tax of Victoria. The first item touched upon in the Governor's speech deals with the question of closer settlement, and our irrigation policy in the future. I fear there is a danger of our going to excess in connexion with the expenditure to develop our irrigation lands. When irrigation was first proposed many years ago, it was felt on all hands that our farmers required an object-lesson in connexion with the application of water to our arid lands, and we granted a considerable tract of land to Messrs. Chaffey Brothers, at Mildura, so that they might, with the experience they had had on irrigation settlements, bring out settlers who would be prepared to take up this land, and show the people of Victoria what could be done by the wise application of water. That land was handed over at a very low price, for it was then regarded as almost valueless. I fear that we have incurred loss by ignoring the lessons that Chaffey Brothers taught us. They went to great expense in advertising their settlement, in bringing settlers out, and in helping them with money and agricultural implements. The idea was that Victoria would follow in their footsteps, but that has not been done. We have rushed into large irrigation schemes, involving a great expenditure of money, and we have not the people to put on the settlements.

Mr. LIVINGSTON.—Don't make a mistake about that.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I think it is conceded on both sides of the House that we have not the people. A mission has gone home to try to bring out people to settle on these lands, for our farmers do not take kindly to irrigation, and it is admitted that we must go to a great deal of trouble to encourage settlers to take up the land. I regret that Mr. McKenzie, the Minister of Lands, was sent home. If Mr. Mead went home and brought out settlers to take up one or two of the irrigation settlements it would have been better. I am afraid that we shall have to bear a very heavy burden in connexion with the large numbers of settlers who are to be

brought out. They will be a burden on the State for a long time unless we act very wisely. Immigration is easy enough to talk about, but it is a very difficult problem to deal wisely with. It is no new thing in Victoria to attract immigrants, and we know the trouble we have had in the past in trying to get a suitable class to come here. We do not want the waifs and strays of Europe, but a robust class with capital prepared to come and settle on our lands. We do not want a class that will increase our present trouble in connexion with finding employment for men who are absolutely unemployable. I hope that caution will be observed by the Government in the matter, and that they will see that Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Mead do not commit us to anything that we may regret. There is another matter touched upon, though quite incidentally, in the Governor's speech, that appears to me to be of great importance, and that is the proposal to place on our statute-book an amendment of our electoral law. I trust the Government, in bringing down that Bill, will include a provision dealing with preferential voting, that they will see that we shall have no more members in this House representing minorities, and that they will stand by the measure and not allow it to be thrown out. The Government brought in a Bill last session, and indicated that they believed in preferential voting, but they had not the courage to stand by it.

Mr. WATT.—They did stand by it, but the House threw it out.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—The Government should have gone out rather than drop it. There are two kinds of tenacity—tenacity of principle and purpose and tenacity of office, and I prefer the former. I hope, too, that in the Electoral Reform Bill we shall be able to secure a uniform system in connexion with the enrolment of the electors, and I trust another place will now abandon its hostile attitude in this matter. In connexion with electoral reform there is a matter of serious importance demanding consideration, and that has become necessary by reason of the extension of the franchise to women. We have a great disparity in the number of electors on the rolls. There should be a more equitable distribution of seats throughout Victoria in view of the great change, and I hope provision will be made for it in the new Bill. We are also promised an amendment of the factories law, and I am pleased at that. I trust that the law will be made more generally applicable throughout Victoria, and let the

people realize that the State Parliament believes in factories legislation and is going to make it effective, so that there shall be no necessity for the Federal Government to come in and deal with the matter. We must desire that, not to protect State rights, but in the interests of the masses, and to carry out the intentions of those who framed our Constitution, and who realized that this kind of legislation can be best dealt with by the States. It cannot be said that our factories legislation is of a satisfactory character. I am connected with a hospital in Melbourne, and the other day the committee which deals with applications for admission had before it the case of an unfortunate man of forty-five years of age who had been employed by a large establishment in the city for twenty-five years, and who had to keep a wife and four children on 35s. a week. I think every man in the community must realize the necessity of dealing with wrongs of that kind, and the only way we can deal with them is by extending our factories legislation and our Wages Boards, but I trust at the same time wisdom will guide us in these matters, and that we will see that the Wages Boards' decisions, dealings, and regulations are of a more elastic character. We cannot, in a hard and fast way, administer legislation of this kind without driving into the ranks of the unemployed thousands who are at present earning their livelihood in certain occupations, and who are unfit for any other occupations. I trust that the members of the Labour party, who are so anxious for the welfare of the industrial classes, will recognise that unless the Wages Board system is to prove a failure, it will have to be administered with greater consideration for the weak worker and the old worker in our midst. We do not want to drive them to the streets to swell the ranks of the unemployed.

Mr. WARDE.—How do you propose to get factories legislation through another place?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I think that wisdom will prevail in another place. There is such a thing as the ballot-box, and the spirit of the State at the present time is in favour of applying this system of industrial legislation generally to help the workers as far as it can reasonably be applied.

Mr. WARDE.—Don't you think it is much easier to get it through the Federal Constitution than through our property House?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I do not think the Federal Parliament could apply this legislation as well as it can be applied by the State.

Mr. WARDE.—Better.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—It cannot be done. I pity our industrial classes and our manufacturers also. I pity them all. You could not apply factories legislation throughout Australia through paid officials in Melbourne. There would be so much red-tapism involved in dealing with the various conditions of life and trade that the whole system would break down. What we must do is to discharge this duty which has been imposed on us by the Constitution. The manufacturers, the trades-people, and the employers of labour have been unduly afraid of factories legislation, but I think they are getting used to it. There was tremendous fear on the part of the drapers and softgoods people on account of the extension of the Wages Boards to their employés, but that fear has passed. The Boards have come into operation, they have done no one any harm, and every one is pleased with them. I hope this session we will pass legislation to bring under Wages Boards tramway men, clerks, and accountants. I hope some protection will be given to the thousands of men employed as clerks and accountants in the city. Banks and other institutions are paying these men wages which are disgraceful and which are a temptation to dishonesty. The thing can be done, but at the same time it will require the greatest caution and wisdom. With regard to closer settlement, I may say that I do think too little attention has been paid in the past to the interests of the producers. We induce people to take up land, they plant their orchards and produce their crops, and very little attention is given to roads and railways to enable them to get their produce to market. When it gets into the city, very little consideration is given to the producers by the Department of Agriculture in regard to regulations enabling them to ship their produce to other ports. I trust something will be done without delay to remedy this state of affairs, because the producing interests have been practically brought to stagnation by the multitude of regulations framed by the Federal Government in the first place, and the State Government in the second place, which harass the exporters of produce to such an extent as to make them think of stopping business altogether. Many of them would stop doing business, only that they have large amounts of money involved. It appears to me that the Commerce Act gives to the Federal Government the control of over-sea and Inter-State commerce, and no better step could be taken than for

our Department of Agriculture to hand over to the Federal Government those matters connected with the giving of certificates in connexion with crops to enable the exportation of those crops to other States. We have had instances of Victorian officers giving clean certificates in regard to potatoes and of those potatoes being refused admittance by the State officer in Sydney. They have to be shipped back to Melbourne, and by the time they get here they are rotten, and the man who has worked six months to produce them loses the value of his labour. These are matters that should receive immediate consideration at the hands of the House, and I hope they will be dealt with by honorable members with some grasp of the necessity of the case, and with a desire to encourage people to settle on the land. With regard to the bringing of fruit to market by rail, I would point out that the charges are such that tons of fruit are left rotting on the ground in Gippsland orchards because it does not pay to send them to Melbourne. The leader of the Opposition last session urged that some steps should be taken with regard to regulating in the city the distribution of fish and fruit. I regret very much that nothing has been done in connexion with that matter, and I trust that it will be attended to before the end of the session. There is one other matter I would like to mention in connexion with the Department of Agriculture. Wherever you go throughout Victoria the earnest desire is expressed by the farmers that we shall not lose the services of Dr. Cherry.

Several HONORABLE MEMBERS.—Oh!

Mr. SNOWBALL.—There is too little recognition of the value of the services of the experts who from time to time have rendered valuable services in connexion with the producing interests of our State. There is too much wire-pulling and intriguing in connexion with these positions. I hope that from time to time the best men will be considered apart altogether from influence and friendship. I regret very much the attitude of the Labour party in connexion with immigration. It is certain that we must have more people in Victoria.

Mr. HANNAH.—What is the attitude of the Labour party?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—It is generally opposed to the principle of immigration.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—No.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Excuse me, it is.

Mr. McGRATH.—You will know before the debate is over what the attitude of the Labour party is.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Not only in the State Parliament, but in the Federal Parliament also, we have a clear indication of the feeling of the Labour party on this matter. It was hoped, when the Commonwealth Constitution was framed, that the Commonwealth Government would take in hand the matter of peopling our vast plains and empty spaces with population from Europe. We are doomed to be disappointed so far as the Commonwealth Government is concerned. The Governor-General's speech indicated that all the Federal Parliament is going to do is to attract population by reform of our land laws.

Mr. TOUTCHER.—By the note issue.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—The honorable member for Stawell says the Commonwealth Government is going to attract people by the note issue. He may have something to say on that matter. He is the financier of the House. I have every sympathy with honorable members on the other (the Opposition) side of the House. I have seen the leader of the Opposition standing near the Treasury in the midst of a group of unemployed, looking with commendable compassion and pity on the men who cannot find relief. Honorable members opposite are mistaken in their remedy for that evil. We all sympathize with these men. They are the product of the neglect of the development of the splendid resources of our country. If there were generous encouragement given to mining development, and to development in other directions, there would be employment for every man in the land. These men who are unemployable are really the product of our defective education system. I trust that in the Education Bill to be brought forward this will be remedied, and that every child leaving the hands of the State will be able to take his place in some industrial occupation. The Education Bill that we are promised is an important measure, and I am glad that the Government has benefited by the criticisms in the press of its proposals, and that the octopus measure that was proposed has been cut down to reasonable limits. We are but a handful of people in this land, and the requirements of our primary education and technical education are such as will absorb all the means within our power for many years to come. The Minister of Public Instruction will agree that almost every school in the State is in a wretched state of neglect. There is hardly a district in Victoria in which there is proper school

accommodation. The children are crowded into the buildings, and it will take a long time to bring our State schools up to requirements.

Mr. KEAST.—The Government have done well in that direction.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—They are doing wonders.

Mr. KEAST.—What is the good of always complaining?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I am not complaining. I was about to observe that we cannot give too much praise for the splendid enthusiasm the Minister of Public Instruction and Mr. Tate have thrown into their work. The Education Department for years was an absolutely neglected Department, but during the *régime* of the late Government and that of the present Government the requirements of that Department have been, and are being, splendidly looked after. At the same time, I think we should be cautious in connexion with this matter. I trust that the Education Bill will provide for a large development of our technical schools, so that the children will be trained in some handicraft that will enable them to go out into the world and earn their livelihood.

Mr. CARLISLE.—What about primary schools?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Primary schools and technical schools are all, in my opinion, that the State should undertake.

Mr. CARLISLE.—What about agriculture?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Agricultural education belongs to the technical schools.

Mr. WARDE.—Should not the State undertake the control of secondary schools?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Other States have dealt with this matter, and I do hope that institutions like the Working Men's College in Melbourne, the Technical College for the Eastern Suburbs, which has been established with the assistance of the honorable member for Hawthorn, and the splendid technical schools which the London County Council has erected, will be very speedily established right throughout Victoria. The London County Council is a radical democratic institution, which has taken charge of this work in a way that is an object lesson to the world. The council guarantees to fit every child that leaves its hands for industrial life, and not only that, but to find employment.

Mr. WARDE.—Then why are they brought here to work for 6s. a week for the dairy farmers of Victoria?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—The London County Council has 750,000 children in its various schools upon which it spends a million and a half of money, of which half-a-million is devoted to technical schools. As I say, not only have they given this education, but they have solved the problem of employment after education.

Mr. WARDE.—If that is so, why are those boys being sent out to Victoria?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—That is a silly question.

Mr. HANNAH.—Yes, it is a bit awkward.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—There are other than State schools in our midst. These other primary schools should be considered, but as one who, for many years, has been a member of a Board of Advice, I know that there is a serious anomaly at the present time in connexion with those schools. Our Education Act provides that children shall not be required to attend a State school if they are being educated up to the standard required in State schools. But we have no means of checking the standard of education which is given in these primary schools—none whatever—and I do trust that a system of inspection of all primary schools by the Education Department will be insisted on. Some have said that such a system cannot be permitted without State aid to these schools. That is by no means the case, because in New Zealand they have a system of inspection without assistance or grants, and in Western Australia also this difficulty has been dealt with. It is an undoubted anomaly which I think honorable members will appreciate, and one that should be dealt with in the Bill which is to be brought before us. There is another matter that has been agitated a good deal before the public lately, and that is the desire of private primary schools to participate in the Government scholarships that are given from year to year to encourage children of superior talent and help them on in the world. But I do trust that nothing of that kind will be allowed. I notice that the Methodists, Presbyterians, and others are anxious to have a certain number of scholarships allotted to them, but if such a thing is allowed it will be the thin end of the wedge which will destroy our State system of education. These outside schools are all of a denominational character. The Presbyterians represent about 16 per cent. of our population, the Methodists 15 per cent., Roman Catholics about 22 per cent., and Church of England about 36 per cent. These four denominations together represent about 90 per cent. of the children of this State, and honorable members will see

the extent to which we will break down our State system of education if we permit these denominations to bring back again the bad denominational system which we used to have in Victoria. All the money we can find for a long time to come will be required by our own State schools, and I do trust that no step of that kind will be permitted. I regret to say that the Church of England and other denominations are building up denominational schools in our midst; because I think it is a bad principle. The American people, when they started on the educational problem, brought in a regulation that all children should be educated together in the primary schools without regard to creed or denomination. If we do the same we shall tend to become a great united people, working together for the development of this land.

Mr. TOUTCHER.—Did they have religious teaching in the schools?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Yes, they have the Bible in those schools. I would also like to mention to the House that in the schools under the control of the London County Council no religious instruction is allowed, but they have Bible readings in those schools. They specially declare that "secular" shall not exclude the reading of the Bible, and in all their schools Bible reading without any sectarian or denominational teaching is permitted and enforced. No difficulty whatever has arisen in carrying out that system. I trust that in the measure which the Government intend to introduce provision will be made for dealing with this matter, which is a burning question in Victoria, and for disposing of it once for all.

Mr. HANNAH.—It has been burning for a long time. I wonder when the fire will be put out?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—If the honorable member poured his volubility upon it, it would quench any fire. I notice that not very long ago a deputation waited upon the Minister of Public Instruction in connexion with this matter, and proposed that instead of the old claim for the adoption of the Royal Commission's recommendations on this question, we should have introduced into Victoria the New South Wales system with regard to the use of the Bible as part of the ordinary curriculum in the schools. The Minister said that that was a compromise on the claims that had been made previously, and I do hope that after the mature consideration which he must have given it, he will make up his mind to adopt that half-way course. That will be far better than to have a referendum on the subject. Honorable members no doubt noticed

that in Queensland, where this question was submitted to the people on the day of the last Federal election, when such a splendid majority of liberal votes was cast in favour of the party represented by my friends on the Opposition bench, the democracy, the men and women who then voted for labour, voted also for the introduction of the Bible into the State schools of Queensland.

Mr. GLASS.—Do you remember the figures in South Australia?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I hope in all seriousness that this matter will be dealt with, and in a way which the people of this country desire, by the introduction once for all into the lives of the children of this land of influences which will tend to develop their moral character.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—It will be a very awkward question for the Government.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I do not know whether what I say will meet with the views of many people, but in my opinion our State schools are not the place for clergymen at all. I think that God's Word should be allowed to work what it is capable of, and it is capable of everything. It is a layman's question, and not one for a clergyman at all. I have been asked whether I would allow the Bible to be put into the hands of a teacher who is an atheist or an infidel. My answer has been that I certainly would do so.

Mr. TOUCHER.—And into the hands of the child itself?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Yes. If that is done it will give to the child that moral character and stamina which have made the British nation what it is to-day. Certainly I would place the Bible in the hands of the atheist or infidel. It is the only influence which will bring him to his knees, and the only influence which will bring about what we desire in our national life. It was urged in Queensland, notwithstanding the splendid majority which was given in favour of Bible reading, that the will of the people should not be given effect to, but the Premier there has put that aside with the scorn it deserved, and is framing a Bill to introduce into the schools of Queensland a religious influence of that kind, undenominational and unsectarian. I trust that we in Victoria will bring this matter to a conclusion and come into line with the State educational systems of Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania, in all of which States there is working splendidly, and without trouble or friction of any kind, a system of the kind I hope to see introduced into this State.

Mr. McGRATH.—It has not been introduced yet in Queensland.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I have already explained that a measure was passed in Queensland providing for a referendum of the people on this question. That referendum has been taken, and has resulted in a splendid majority in favour of the proposal, and the Government is now bringing down a Bill to give effect to it. I believe that that Bill will be carried, and I say without hesitation that the people are in earnest about this matter. During my election I made this a test question at every meeting. I made no secret about it at all, and honorable members know how the people spoke then.

Mr. COTTER.—I made it a test question at Richmond, and how did they speak of it there?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I do not know; I was not there. This is not a trifling matter. It is one that affects the very life of this community in the future. It affects our industrial life. It is a bread-and-butter question, and it affects our homes. I hope honorable members will not make a joke of it. During the last few weeks we have seen an exhibition in Victoria which, I am sure, brought shame to the cheek of every citizen, in connexion with the circumstances which led to the prosecution in the Harper and Brockett and Kemp cases.

Mr. WARDE.—It was not the want of religious instruction in their case.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Do not let us bring party considerations into a question of this kind. It is not a party question. In connexion with that case my feelings were shame and grief that such a thing could occur—that practically for the asking a man could go round in our streets and get any number of witnesses, without pay or reward, to swear anything.

Mr. TOUCHER.—Promises were made.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—There was no fee or reward.

Mr. HANNAH.—What about the drink?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—There was, no doubt, some drinking. It is a very serious matter for our State that such a thing should be possible. However one may look upon questions of truth and honour in connexion with the ordinary relationships of life, the sacredness of an oath has come to be an ideal among British people. That is the great safeguard of life and property, and of what is dearer than life itself to most men, and that is character. We all look to the sacredness of the oath in our legal tribunals as the ultimate safeguard by which we are

surrounded. We find that in Victoria it is possible to sweep that safeguard away which should surround us all. That indicates a rottenness in connexion with our moral atmosphere and life and character, and I have no doubt that every man in this State feels that it was a disgrace that such a thing should be possible in Victoria. It indicates the necessity for dealing with the question. The Chief Justice, referring to the dreadful state of morality of our public, begged the public men of this land to deal with the question in the only way in which it could be dealt with, and that is by strengthening the moral character of the people.

Mr. WARDE.—Is your inference that if Robert Harper had received religious instruction he would not have found money for this purpose?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—The question is worthy of the honorable member. He is trying to drag a red herring across the trail.

An HONORABLE MEMBER.—What about the slander on Ronald?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I have nothing to do with individuals. I am dealing with principles. I hope honorable members will put out of their minds the unfortunate men who were affected by this dreadful incident, whether Ronald, Harper, or anybody else. That is beside the question. What happened might happen with any honorable member of this House to-morrow.

Mr. WARDE.—Is it not the honorable member's argument that if these people had had religious instruction this would not have happened?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—If all our citizens had a regard for truth and honour it would have been impossible to go among the working class and pick up men who were ready to perjure themselves.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—What class? Not the working class. The derelicts of your side.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—The working class is as good as any other, and is as honorable as any class.

Mr. HANNAH.—Harper does not belong to the working class.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Well, does the honorable member?

Mr. HANNAH.—Yes.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I say it does not matter what class they belong to. It shows that it was possible to find as many men as one liked in the streets who had no regard for, no due appreciation of, the truth, which is the foundation of our national life, and one

of the influences which religious instruction got from the Bible has on human character.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—You have to prove that these men had not religious instruction.

Mr. McGRATH.—Were they not all bright scholars out of Sunday school?

Mr. WATT.—We have to get this speech finished to-night.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—This is not the time to discuss this question at any length.

Mr. HANNAH.—This is disconcerting for the Government.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I think that if the Government do not settle this matter, the House will. I believe honorable members are prepared to look this question boldly in the face and to deal with it; and I hope that it will be dealt with without passion or prejudice, or party feeling. The State schools, with their great ideal of life, are the most precious asset we have, and I trust that they will not be interfered with, and that we will not allow any private schools to interfere with them. There is a department of education which has been in the past seriously neglected. We are a maritime people practically in Victoria, and it is pitiable how little has been done in the past for educating children with a disposition that way for the sea. Eighty-two per cent. of our seamen on the coast and in the Inter-State trade are foreigners.

Mr. ELMSLIE.—Wait until the *John Murray* gets in full bloom.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I have to congratulate the Government so far on the success of the *John Murray* venture. Provision is made there for 130 children being given nautical education. It is expected that forty every year will leave that ship, and I trust that credit will be given to the Government for what they have done in this direction. I should like to congratulate the Government upon the appointment of Captain Heddle to take charge of that vessel.

Mr. HANNAH.—And of Admiral Boyd.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I do not know what on earth outsiders wanted to do on the Committee. Our own departments should have been capable of dealing with the matter without idle politicians being imported into it. But still I congratulate the Government upon the appointment of Captain Heddle, and I think they have done the right thing. In spite of intriguing going on, the right thing has been done this time. I referred to the incident in connexion with the Harper prosecution. I think that should not be passed over without some reference to

another aspect of the case. Everybody will justify and applaud the Attorney-General for the alarm that the events created in his mind, and for the action which he took in probing the matter to the bottom in connexion with the first inquiry. A more experienced lawyer would have seen that there was nothing in the evidence, and would not have put these men on their trial before the police magistrate even, because even then there was not a particle of evidence to justify that being done. But still I think the extraordinary circumstances would justify us in passing by, or compel us to pass by, the action taken on that occasion; but, after these men were discharged, and without any further evidence of any kind being brought forward, that these men should be put on trial again and placed in the dock as criminals, is a matter on which I think the Government should give the House some justification for the action that was taken.

MR. WARDE.—Is not that common enough in criminal cases?

MR. SNOWBALL.—It is not common in criminal cases.

MR. WARDE.—I could give a dozen cases.

THE SPEAKER.—The honorable member should take no notice of questions.

MR. SNOWBALL.—I want to enlighten the honorable member. His question is an honest one. I should like to say that it is not uncommon for the Attorney-General to file a presentment where he feels that a matter is not being dealt with by an efficient tribunal, and that there is some evidence which would go to a jury. We know that Attorneys-General have repeatedly done that, but in no case similar to this, where the tribunal was presided over by the senior police magistrate. After twenty days had been spent in an exhaustive inquiry, with the most capable legal luminaries at the bar to bring out and give full weight to all the evidence against the men, the police magistrate said that there was not a particle of evidence against them. I could have understood the action of the Attorney-General if the honorable gentleman had discovered some other evidence, or if he thought that the police magistrate had not given due weight to the evidence. But nothing of the kind took place here. I am perfectly sure that the Attorney-General was quite honest in what was done, and I do not believe for a moment that he was actuated by animus in the matter, but I believe that in his prentice hands the powers of the Attorney-General have been misused.

MR. WARDE.—I know a case where the same police magistrate discharged a man who was afterwards put on trial, and the man is now doing three months.

MR. SNOWBALL.—That would be a case where there has been some evidence to go to a jury of the guilt of the accused.

MR. MURRAY.—If there be that evidence—

MR. SNOWBALL.—The Premier must not interrupt. In this case we are faced with these striking facts. It is a very serious matter. I do not want to pillory the Attorney-General, but we must remember that one of the most eminent Judges of the Supreme Court and the jury—

MR. ELMSLIE.—A special jury.

MR. SNOWBALL.—A special jury said that there was not a particle, not a scintilla, of evidence, and they forfeited half of the jury fees in order to mitigate the men's sufferings. I know that the Government are not responsible for this matter. It is a question in which the Government could not interfere, but I think we should have some explanation of the circumstances which led up to the prosecution that took place. It has been suggested that the powers of the Attorney-General should be limited in some way. I trust that they will not be interfered with at all, as they are powers which must exist, but they must be wisely administered. In this matter of perjury, however, I trust that honorable members see the enormity of the disgrace that has been put on the State, and that they will not allow the matter to pass without considering what is at the root of this evil, and try to remove the evil as soon as possible. I think it was Sir William Blackstone who said that perjury and subornation of perjury were crimes sufficiently heinous to justify capital punishment.

MR. PRENDERGAST.—Is the honorable member defending the man responsible for it?

MR. SNOWBALL.—I am not defending any man. I think there was a lot of hysterical nonsense in the correspondence that took place about the matter.

MR. MURRAY.—Do you think there was any hysteria in the letter I wrote?

MR. SNOWBALL.—I was afraid to read it, because I know that the Premier goes off sometimes at a tangent when dealing with these questions. I should like to express my keen regret at the Premier's delivery on the question of gambling.

MR. MURRAY.—And yet I am a product of the Sunday school and religious instruction.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—The Premier says he is the product of the Sunday school. But the honorable gentleman is not the product of the State school system under which the Bible is not taught. He has been a consistent opponent of that principle.

Mr. MURRAY.—I was taught in a State school where the Bible was read.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I think it my duty to say that the whole community heard the remarks of the Premier with keen regret.

Mr. ELMSLIE.—And tears.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—It is not a question of the opinion of the Honorable John Murray, but of the opinion of the Premier of this State. A few years ago the question of minimizing gambling was discussed in this House, and Sir Thomas Bent, who carried through legislation on that subject, and on licensing reform, told me that he would never have carried the anti-gambling legislation but for the assistance of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. He assured me of that, and I think it is pitiable now, when the measure is working satisfactorily, and has wiped out the "totes," that the Government should think of tampering with it. The people who were punished under the old system were the working classes, because the gambling evil was taking out of the hands of poor people the result of their labours. I trust that the Premier was not representing the whole of the Government when he suggested that we should tamper with the splendid anti-gambling legislation of Victoria. I feel great pleasure in realizing that something is to be done during this session by the Government in connexion with the charities. The Treasurer has already indicated his position and his feeling with regard to this important subject. During last session, I think in November, he called a Conference of the charities to help him deal with this problem, which is undoubtedly a very serious one at the present time, and one that must be dealt with, otherwise the public will lose without doubt the indispensable help that sickness and distress are receiving at the hands of the splendid charitable institutions in Melbourne. Those institutions are at the present time in a very seriously embarrassed state—every one of them. The Melbourne Hospital is £6,000 overdrawn in connexion with its maintenance account; the Alfred Hospital, £3,000; the Women's Hospital, £2,500; the Eye and Ear Hospital, £3,000; the Children's Hospital £800, and so on. These are the leading charitable institu-

tions that we have in the metropolis, and they are practically brought face to face with a very serious financial problem. An enormous sum of money is being spent from year to year by the Government and the public in helping to maintain our charities. It is very creditable to the public, I think, that they have responded so long to this appeal, an appeal which is certainly a very strong one in all properly constituted communities. The public provides from £150,000 to £180,000 a year, and the Treasurer provides £100,000 a year for charitable institutions alone, apart from the moneys which the Government spend on their own establishments. The Treasurer pointed out to this Conference the serious nature of this problem, namely, that the public support of our charitable institutions was falling off, that, comparing the last two financial years, there has been an actual falling off of £9,000 in the public support of those institutions. This is undoubtedly owing to the fact that there is an unduly large number of charitable institutions in the metropolis. Honorable members will hardly realize that there are 164 or 165 charitable institutions in Melbourne, one tumbling over the other in trying to relieve distress, and appealing to the Government from time to time for assistance. All this shows the necessity of dealing with the matter, and this necessity has now become absolutely acute, so that something really must be done. I have for many years been connected with one leading charitable institution, and I know something of the inner working of these institutions. I feel that there is no necessity for more money being spent or found by the Government in connexion with the matter. Royal Commissions have been appointed from time to time by Parliament to inquire into the question of the charities. I know of at least three such Commissions, and I believe that inquiries of this kind have been instituted almost from the earliest days. Some of the recommendations of the Royal Commissions have been wise, while others have been found not in any way to touch the subject. But, at all events, these Commissions have agreed on one important matter, namely, that the multiplication of charitable institutions was a menace to the public support, and they have all recommended and urged that the opening of any new charitable institutions should be restrained or regulated in some way. I think those Commissions recommended that no new hospital, for instance, should be started

within 40 miles of any existing hospital. But all this has been absolutely disregarded, and any one can start a new hospital or a new charity, and when it is started it becomes another burden which is placed on the charitable public and on the Government. Appeals are made every day to the Treasurer for additional support to these institutions. Of course, we cannot afford to neglect such appeals, but I trust that during this session a Bill will be brought in, and passed, to deal with this subject. As I have said, there is an absolute necessity for doing something in the matter; otherwise, the public will cease to contribute in the future as freely as they have done in the past. The fact which the Treasurer pointed out to the Conference, and which I have already mentioned, is certainly an alarming one, and one which, I think, should convince the House of the necessity of doing something to deal with this problem. I remember also that Mr. Fairbairn spoke very courageously on this matter, and pointed out the danger to the public in new institutions being started from time to time, and thus placing an additional burden on the shoulders of the charitable. Nevertheless, a great many well-meaning people in our midst find a considerable amount of pleasure in starting a movement of this kind. But, however good their intentions may be, I think the matter should be controlled by legislation, and, as I have already said, I hope the Treasurer will bring in a Bill to deal with it. As the Treasurer himself has said, his time is already so much occupied in dealing with other important subjects, that he really cannot find sufficient time to deal with the charitable institutions himself. Therefore, I think a Charities Board, as was proposed by the Bill which was previously prepared by the Government, should be constituted, consisting of three experts, men who would take over the distribution of the Government grant and the control of charities generally. All the institutions vary in their management and their mode of admitting patients, and at present they are vying with each other to monopolize as much as they can of the distress and want which has to be dealt with, so that there is overlapping. Patients travel from one hospital to another, going the rounds, imposing in that way on public charity. I think that the matter can be easily dealt with in the way I have suggested. The expenditure of public money by charitable institutions should really be controlled in some way.

We have one large hospital in the city which not very long ago erected a new ward which cost £240 per bed. That was an outrageous waste of public money. Another institution built a large ward, up to date in every way and meeting the requirements of the Board of Public Health, costing £84 a bed. Honorable members will therefore see the necessity of this question being effectively dealt with. No more public money should be given to the building funds of our charitable institutions. The whole of the public money distributed among charities should be for maintenance. The charitable spirit of the people will always prove sufficient to supply money for building purposes. That has been the experience of all our hospitals. If they have the confidence and respect of the community, and money is forthcoming, the requirements of the hospitals in that direction will be met. Additions are frequently made to hospitals, and as soon as they are built an appeal is made to the Government for additional money to carry them on. These are things which it is not only desirable to regulate, but which must be regulated. Every country town has several charitable institutions. Money can also be saved by co-ordination in the purchase of supplies and in other ways. I do trust that the Government will carry out their promise and introduce and pass a Bill dealing with this important matter. Another matter which is very much before the public at the present time relates to the development of the coal industry, and the power which it is urged should be given to sell to the public coal produced at the Government mine. I hope that the mine will as early as possible be handed over to the Railways Commissioners, and that they will be given power to sell coal to any one who is prepared to buy it. At the same time, I trust that every encouragement will be given to private enterprise in connexion with the development of the industry. There is an enormous tract of country in Victoria which has been proved to be coal bearing.

Mr. HANNAH.—That was proved long ago, but private enterprise has blocked it.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Private enterprise has been crippled by the coal combine, and the railways too. The tests made from time to time of our coal, I feel sure, have not been genuine. Now a start has been made with the development of this industry, I hope that nothing will be done to check it. The Government should see their way to permit private enterprise in connexion with it, and I hope that leases will be freely issued;

subject, of course, to proper labour conditions. The Governor's speech states—

There is every assurance that, in the near future, the importation of fuel for railway purposes will be rendered unnecessary.

I think it will be a disgrace to us if there is a ton of coal imported into Victoria in twelve months for public or private enterprise. It may be a considerable time before the coal mine at Powlett can supply all State requirements, but no restrictions should be placed on private enterprise, which I believe would do—

Mr. SMITH.—As they have done in the past.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I would never allow a repetition of what has taken place in the past in connexion with the coal combine. The New South Wales strike freed Victoria from the control of the combine, and there is one regret which we have—that it did not free the coal mines of New South Wales from the control of the combine. That, however, is quite another matter; but I think we ourselves have broken free from the cruel control which has kept our resources bound up.

Mr. HANNAH.—Why not keep ourselves free?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—Private enterprise is the soul of progress in every industry. I believe in the control and regulation of private enterprise by proper legislation such as we have, but I do think that every man would be employed if the yoke was taken off private enterprise. I feel keenly on this subject, because I think that the secret of our progress lies in the encouragement of private enterprise in that direction. Capital is awaiting investment in every direction, and it is a lamentable thing to find money so plentiful in the hands of financial institutions. The time has come when the House and the country should indicate its feeling that private enterprise should be left free. With regard to brown coal, honorable members know what wonderful deposits there are waiting to be opened up at the doors of Melbourne. I think every encouragement should be given to the development of the brown coal industry in Victoria. A bonus might well be given by the Government to encourage the opening up of the brown coal resources close to Melbourne and in Gippsland. I regret that there is no indication in the Governor's speech of the intention of the Government to give effect to the promise which the Premier made that a Bill will be brought in to deal with certain matters in connexion with the licensing laws. I do not know whether that is an oversight.

Mr. MURRAY.—It is included in the "Other measures" mentioned at the end.

Mr. SNOWBALL.—I am pleased to hear that. The questions of grocers' licences and club licences should be dealt with. I think club licences are abused. They lead to propagation of the drink habit. Clubs may be serving a good purpose, but young men get into some of them and are being made drunkards. Therefore, I hope that some restriction will be placed on the clubs, and that the late permit which the Premier has so often referred to will be stopped. It is a privilege under the Act which is being abused, and great harm is being done. The grocer's licence—the two-gallon licence—should be done away with. It leads to drink being brought into many a workman's home. I quite approve of the compact with the licensed victuallers that their licences should not be further interfered with for a reasonable term. These are matters which honorable members on both sides of the House feel should be dealt with without delay. I earnestly hope they will not be overlooked.

Mr. HANNAH.—What about the abolition of barmaids?

Mr. SNOWBALL.—That is a matter that the honorable member may deal with. It is evidently deeply interesting to him. I have not had much experience with barmaids. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your patience in listening to a young member trying to grapple with these questions. I do hope that the discussion on this Address-in-Reply will indicate the feeling which is abroad, for what the public require is that the development of this State shall be carried on actively. We have in the other Parliament, as I have said before, a young, virile, energetic representative of public feeling, and if we do not carry out the development of the great interests committed to our care, others will be intrusted with the task. Therefore, we should let it be felt that we are not here to waste time, but to take in hand earnestly and in the best interests of the whole community the great public questions that are before us.

Mr. CULLEN.—In rising to second the motion that has been proposed by the honorable member for Brighton at such great length, I wish to say that it is not my intention to travel over the large area of measures and subjects which he has dealt with. I intend to devote my attention to a few measures mentioned in the Governor's speech dealing with country districts and the rural industries. At the outset I wish to join in expressing deep regret at the serious loss which the nation has sustained by the death of our