

19. The large increase in the Revenue, and the consequent flourishing condition of our finances, have given my Ministers the welcome opportunity of considering whether some of the Duties now chargeable under "The Tariff Act, 1893," might not with advantage be abolished, especially those on articles of food in general use, and not capable of being produced in the Colony) and I have pleasure in informing you that they propose to submit a Bill for your consideration dealing with this important question. My Ministers also propose to introduce a Bill repealing the Export Duties on Pearl Shells and Sandalwood, as they are of opinion that these duties are not justifiable or necessary under existing circumstances.

20. The question of the continuance of the Annual Grant for Ecclesiastical purposes has been considered, as promised last Session, and a Bill will be submitted to you providing for the termination of the grant by two instalments. My Ministers are of opinion that this will be the most suitable way of dealing with the grant in the interests of the Churches, and the most economical for the Government.

21. The increase of telegraphic communication has made it necessary to duplicate the telegraph line to our Eastern border at Eucla, and you will be asked to provide a sufficient sum to erect an alternative line from Coolgardie via Dundas, Ponton's Station, and Eyre, to Eucla, provided the South Australian Government agree to erect a duplicate line from Eucla to Port Augusta, via the Gawler Ranges. The numerous new centres arising on the goldfields have necessitated a considerable extension of the telegraph system, and my Ministers propose to provide postal and telegraphic communication to all important mining and agricultural centres, as soon as possible.

MR. PRESIDENT AND HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

22. The low prices obtainable for our staple products, especially wool and cereals, give cause for serious consideration and anxiety. My Ministers propose to meet these adverse circumstances by reducing the transit rates on our Railways for agricultural and pastoral produce to the lowest possible paying point, by giving cold storage accommodation on our Railways, by the establishment of a Market and Cold Storage in Perth, which is now in course of erection, and by providing good jetty and wharfage accommodation and other increased facilities for shipping at all the ports of the Colony.

23. The Legislative Assembly having resolved last Session that the Railway Workshops at Fremantle should be moved to a more advantageous site, my Ministers have, during the recess, given the subject the most careful consideration, and they propose to recommend that the shops be moved to a site near the Midland Junction, on a reserve of 266 acres

belonging to the Crown. In arriving at this decision, my Ministers are acting in accord with the recommendations of a Commission specially appointed to consider the question, and also in accord with the opinions of the professional advisers of the Government.

24. Owing to the increase of population, the necessity for improving the Water Supply and Sanitary arrangements of the larger towns has become a question of much importance, and a comprehensive scheme for dealing with these matters is being considered by the Government. My Ministers are anxious to assist all local efforts in the above direction, and a contour Survey of Perth is now being carried out with the object of enabling reliable estimates to be prepared for any Drainage or other works that may be necessary in connection with the Sanitation of the Metropolis.

25. The Railways are proving of the greatest importance to the country, and the revenue for the present financial year will not only exceed the working expenses, but will also pay the interest and sinking fund on the capital expended in their construction. The success which has attended the opening up of the country by Railways proves, beyond any doubt, that the policy of giving facilities of transit by railway has been thoroughly justified, and should be continued to the utmost extent consistent with the means of the Colony.

26. I now leave you to the consideration of the important matters that require your attention, with the full assurance that you will bring to bear upon them your practical knowledge and experience; and I hope and believe that, with the blessing of Divine Providence, your labours will result in the continued prosperity of this portion of Her Majesty's Dominions.

His Excellency and the Members of the Legislative Assembly then withdrew from the Chamber.

#### FEDERAL COUNCIL REFERENCE BILL.

This Bill was introduced, and was read a first time.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

THE HON. E. McLARTY: Mr. President, I rise to move the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Speech with which His Excellency the Administrator has opened Parliament this day. It is with pleasure that I do so, for I feel it a compliment and a great honor to have been asked to take this action. At the same time I approach the task with considerable diffidence, because I am sensible of my inability to deal with the subject as I would wish to. I accepted the responsibility of making this motion for two reasons—the first of them being that I did not feel justified in shirking a duty, and the second being that I knew hon. members would bear with me some-

what during the time I shall detain them, in the same way that they have shown consideration towards me in the past. I do not think it is necessary for me to dwell at great length on the matters touched upon in the Speech, because we shall have an opportunity of discussing them fully when they come before us more in detail. As a whole the Speech will commend itself both to hon. members and the country generally. It shows us a flourishing past, and breathes hope and prosperity in the future. It is gratifying for us to find that the finances are in so sound a condition, and that the revenue has exceeded the estimate of the Government. This, Sir, taken together with the fact that our credit stands high in London, (the first portion of our last authorised loan having been floated on very advantageous terms) must be a matter for general congratulation. In addition to this our public works have been pushed on with great energy, and with much advantage to the colony. In no part of Australia, having regard to the proportion of our population, has a large public works policy proved of such great advantage, and on this account I concur with what is said in the Speech that we shall be justified in extending our railways still further among the settled districts as far as our means will allow. Those districts to which there is no railway communication cannot make much advance, nor can they share in the prosperity which other parts of the colony are enjoying. The flourishing state of our finances will justify these further extensions, and I hope in the not distant future to see branch lines from the South-Western Railway to the Williams, and from York via Greenhills towards the Southern Cross Railway. I have no particular knowledge of this latter country, but from what I have heard of it I feel sure we shall be justified in constructing a railway through it. Our trunk lines are now fairly established, and we may now proceed with the construction of branch lines to act as feeders to the main lines and open up the country. We have just heard that our railways are at the present time not only paying working expenses, but are also providing the interest and sinking fund, a fact which, I think, reflects great credit upon those responsible for the management. During the recess it has been proved beyond all doubt that we have a very valuable coalfield in the South. Several members have lately visited the local-

ity, and I am sure they must have been surprised at the great developments which have taken place, and there can be no doubt, I think, but that we have a rich and extensive coal field, and when the Bill authorising the construction of a Railway to it comes before Parliament, there will be no dissenting voice, at any rate in this House. If there is, it will certainly be on the part of members who did not avail themselves of the opportunity of visiting the field. I hope, however, that the greatest possible care will be taken in selecting the best route through that mountainous country, with a view to avoiding a repetition of the painful mistakes we have experienced on the Eastern Railway. The news from the Goldfields continues to be encouraging, and there is every reason to believe that the output in the future will exceed even the satisfactory results of the past. It is satisfactory to note that the Government are alive to the necessity of postal communication with distant parts of the colony and that they are going to provide steam communication between Albany and Esperance. I am glad to learn that the contract and concession with the W.A. Timber Company is at an end. The concession granted to that Company was an extraordinary one—one which I am sure would not have been entertained in these days. I now come, Sir, to the most important clause of the Speech. It refers to the termination of the Ecclesiastical Grant. I feel, Sir, that this grant must soon be abolished, and that being so, the present seems to be an opportune time to deal with the question, because the finances are flourishing, and we can therefore afford to treat the Churches of the colony in a more liberal manner than it otherwise might have been possible to do. I fully concur with the idea of the Government to pay the Churches two lump sums in lieu of the annual grant. By dividing the amount it will not entail such a strain upon the revenue as if the payment were in one sum, and it will enable the Churches to be more liberally dealt with. For my part I think we should treat the Churches with the greatest liberality possible. The Agricultural Bank seems to be working satisfactorily, although it has not been in existence long enough to enable us to form an accurate opinion of its merits, although I may say I am pleased to see that the money is being lent under the most careful conditions. The proposed lighthouses along the coast are much required and will prove of great advantage. The opening up of well-watered stock routes is a matter of urgent

necessity to the whole of this Colony, and I am glad to find that the Government intend to deal with the matter. At the present time there is a great scarcity of meat in the centres of population which the North can well supply. I know this statement has been doubted, but I am in a position to say that in the Kimberley District there are many thousands of fat sheep waiting to be sent to market, besides hundreds of bullocks for which there is no means of conveyance, either by steamer or by droving. It is with great satisfaction, therefore, that I learn the Government intend to take this matter in hand, and thus provide a supply for the central parts of the colony, and an outlet for the squatters in the North. It is satisfactory to know that the Harbor Works at Fremantle have been pushed on with so much vigour, and are being constructed considerably under the estimate for them, especially when we find they have so well stood the severe trial of the recent gale at Fremantle. I note it is proposed to bring before Parliament a Bill to establish a Royal Mint. I have no knowledge of this matter, but I have no doubt if it is not too costly, it will prove a great benefit. I observe also that it is intended to bring in a Bill dealing with the Tariff. I must say I regret rather that this proposition is to come before us at the present time. Although the finances are in a flourishing condition, there is a great deal which is required to be done, and I do not think the taxes as imposed to-day press heavily on any portion of the community. I think the Government would do well to maintain the revenue as it is, and to employ whatever surplus may be available on necessary works within the Colony. At the present time sanitary works are much needed in this city of Perth and in other towns, and I am of opinion that the general public would be more satisfied if the Government were to undertake these and other like works, than by a remission of the taxation proposed, which after all will only result in a very slight individual saving. I think it is imperative that something should be done to improve the sanitary condition of Perth and other towns, and I hope that steps will be taken at an early date to bring this about. I do not think the taxes press heavily. We now pay something like fifty per cent. less for the necessaries of life than we did a few years ago, and at that time we were paying similar taxes. Take sugar, which is an article of

everyday use. I remember that a few years ago this article of consumption was sold at £44 per ton. Now it can be purchased for half that price, and even as low as 2½d. per lb. in this town. It seems to me that it is hardly worth while opening up the whole question of the Tariff simply for the purpose of taking off the duties on some few of the items which cannot be produced in this colony. If the question is opened up, we do not know where it will end. There is not only the question of the sanitary arrangements of Perth and other large towns, but an immense amount of money is required to be spent on the conservation of water. Many districts are badly off in this respect, and I should have been glad to have seen the Government rather trying to maintain than remit existing taxation for a little time longer until such works as I have referred to are carried out. It would be of far more benefit to the people that this expenditure should be going on than that the Tariff should be altered for the purpose of remitting what I have already said amounts to a small individual charge. I note that it is intended to bring in a Bill to duplicate the line from Coolgardie to Eucla. We all know the inconvenience and loss the colony has been put to by the interruptions on the overland line in the past, and I am glad to see the Government are taking action to provide a remedy. A Bill is to be brought before Parliament to provide for the removal of the Railway Workshops. This is a vexed question and one which will no doubt involve a great deal of discussion, although I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion that if it is in the best interests of the colony, (and I am inclined to think it is) that the shops should be removed, all feeling should be left out of the question, and we should abide by the wishes of the advisers to the Government. I do not know that I need detain the House any longer, I feel sure that all matters submitted to us will be dealt with in an impartial and careful manner, and I hope the same cordial feelings which existed among members during our last session will be continued in this one. I now beg to move that the following Address-in-Reply be presented to His Excellency the Administrator.

*To His Excellency Sir Alexander Campbell  
Onslow, Knight, Administrator of the  
Government of Western Australia, &c., &c.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.—

We, the members of the Legislative Coun-

oil of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

Our most careful consideration and attention will be given to the important matters referred to by Your Excellency, and all other matters that may be brought before us; and it shall be our earnest endeavour to so deal with them that our labours may result in the continued prosperity of this portion of Her Majesty's dominions.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: I have much pleasure in rising to second this Address, although I wish the task had fallen into more able hands, or into the hands of some older member who would be able to deal with the various questions more fully than I can. I can support the remarks of the mover of this Address when he refers to the thoroughly satisfactory state in which we find the finances of the colony. We have known the position for some time, and we can only hope now that some further public works will be started without recourse to Loan funds. I congratulate the Government on the satisfactory way the last loan was floated, and I trust that their next effort in this direction may be even more successful, and that we shall be able to raise what money we require at 3 per cent. as the other colonies do. In reference to the paragraph of the Speech relating to the Federal Council I think we may congratulate our delegates on the course they took at the last meeting, as it is well known that this colony cannot afford to go in for Federation. If we were to do so we might just as well cease trying to supply our markets and all march off to the goldfields. With Federation this colony would be flooded with Victorian and South Australian produce. Everything which has been overdone in those colonies would be used as a means of ruining our farmers, for as I have said, they would flood our markets with their over production. We must, therefore, congratulate the delegates, or the larger proportion of them at any rate, on the course they pursued. I believe one of them would have liked to have gone further, but I am afraid he will have to wait a little longer before he can spend his eloquence and powers in a Federal Parliament. The Government, and everyone who believes in the colony, may congratulate themselves that common sense prevailed, and that the delegates were not

found willing to throw away all the good that has been done in building railways and opening up the country and allow other places to flood our markets with their produce. I am glad that the Government have got some backbone, and has not been found willing to sell the country for a little praise. We are not ripe for Federation. If we were to go into it our farmers might as well leave their lands at once and go to the goldfields. With reference to our railway construction, the line to Coolgardie has been taken at a very cheap rate. I am glad that this line, together with that from Mullewa to Cue, has been undertaken first, because there is no doubt we must attribute to these goldfields our present prosperity. As regards the railway from Donnybrook to Bridgetown, I am rather in a fix about it, because last year I was one of its greatest opponents on the grounds that I did not think it was justified. I asked that it might stand over until this year. With the present state of the finances I shall not be opposed to it, and I hope and trust that we shall be able to construct many more railways through agricultural districts, or branch lines into them. The Greenhills District and the East Beverley District, where there are large areas of agricultural land, should be opened up. During the last five months we have imported £60,000 worth of wheat, flour, hay and chaff, which shows that it is necessary to build further railways into agricultural districts where we have good land, so as to avoid sending money out of the colony for articles we should produce here. If £60,000 were spent among our population of 80,000 or 90,000, which includes children, it would do a great deal of good, to say nothing of the amount we shall have to send away during the remainder of the year, especially as for the next few months we must import almost everything. We know we are greatly depending upon our goldfields; but they may give out, and we should endeavour to have something to fall back upon. There is enough good agricultural land in our Eastern Districts to supply twice our present population. I will now say a few words about our coal deposits. I was not among those who visited the field, but I have heard from several who have been there—even from those who have been opposed to the railway to the Collie and who are among the most cautious—that there is a very good thing there. I hope now that we are going to construct the