

which will be laid before the House. Sir Edward Wittenoom referred to the "Julia Percy," and seemed to be in some doubt whether every steamship company had had an opportunity of tendering. The question was before the country for something like 12 months, and I myself have seen a list which shows that almost every steamship company in Australasia was invited to tender. The lowest tender demanded something like £10,000 for half the service supplied by the "Julia Percy." The offer was to furnish one service a week for £10,000 per annum, whilst the "Julia Percy" does two trips per week for something like half the amount. Sir Edward Wittenoom displayed a great deal of sympathy with the people of Geraldton, but I think his remarks were somewhat inconsistent. He first complained that the Geraldton traders would secure an undue advantage over the Fremantle merchants, and immediately afterwards remarked that the Fremantle merchants, in getting through freights, would secure an undue advantage over the Geraldton traders. The only Geraldton residents who are affected by the through bill of lading are four forwarding agents. To my mind the interests of the whole of the Murchison people must be paramount as compared with the interests of four forwarding agents. The other subjects touched on in the Speech I shall take an opportunity of dealing with when they come before us in concrete form.

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN (Central): In addressing myself to the question before the House, I desire, in common with other speakers, to express my pleasure at Mr. Kingsmill's presence here. I trust—and I think the event will prove my trust well-founded—that relations between the hon. gentleman and other members of the Chamber will always be of the most amicable character. In passing, I may express a slight feeling of surprise that the Government did not think fit to call Parliament together a little sooner. I think it must be admitted that this is going to be a fighting session, particularly as the general election takes place next year. I venture to prophesy that as the result of our late meeting we shall be sitting here probably right up to Christmas. That is unfair to everybody. Goodness knows, Ministers have had ample

time to prepare for the session since the House adjourned in December last. I can only hope that the event will falsify my prophecy, and that the session will close before the summer fairly sets in. I was indeed sorry to hear certain references made by Mr. Dempster to that great project, the Transcontinental Railway. The hon. member practically said that this was not a necessary work. If such expressions, which throw cold water on the scheme, fall from members of the Western Australian Legislature, whilst others are so earnest in their advocacy of the railway, what will be said of us in South Australia and elsewhere? I think every effort should be made on our part to induce the Federal Government to take the matter up. Seeing that the Commonwealth Houses will dissolve in December next, I say we should strain every nerve to induce the Commonwealth Government to make the early construction of the Transcontinental Railway a plank in their platform. Something should be done to force the hands of the Federal Parliament. That is the most effective means at our disposal for bringing about the early construction of this most necessary and important national work. The Coolgardie Water Scheme is referred to, and I am sure the completion of that work affords matter for all-round congratulation. So far as can be seen at present, the scheme will prove a great success. I am sorry, however, to learn that a few people are crying out about the price of water. In view of the fact that the community at large has to pay for this great work —

MEMBER: Not the whole community; only one section of it.

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN: I think it may be said that in various ways the whole community has to pay for the work, and therefore I hope that the people who are to derive immediate gain from it will be a little patriotic and will acknowledge the great benefit conferred on them at the cost of the whole State. I trust that the Government will give attention to the supply of water to other places as well as the Eastern Goldfields. On the Murchison the good water obtainable at a certain depth is beginning to give out, and the lack of water must certainly retard the progress of the mining in-



dustry in that important district. It is to be hoped that the Government will give prompt and earnest attention to the question of furnishing the Murchison district with a suitable supply of water. We Murchison residents ask that a little scheme, for which we are prepared to pay, should be provided; we are desirous of borrowing the necessary funds from the Government, to be repaid in small amounts until the total shall have been refunded. The reports of the Royal Commission on the Public Service have not, in my opinion, been treated by His Excellency's advisers in a proper manner. Ministers should have been prepared to put definite proposals before Parliament. I trust that the whole question will be seriously treated, and that before the prorogation the Government will make a clear pronouncement as to the steps which will be taken to carry out the recommendations of the commission. Members ought not to be allowed to go to the country next year unable to say what the Government are doing or intend to do in the matter; and the Government ought not to be allowed to make an election cry of it. Ministers may possibly nurse the whole thing and keep everybody in the dark until the general election is upon the country. Farther, I know that many officers fear they will be retrenched, or reduced in salary. The probabilities are that if the Premier and his colleagues do not take a fair and clear stand now, they may make use of this question to capture votes at the forthcoming general election. Such a proceeding would be most unfair to the country. I trust that the Government will, before the prorogation, take courage to proclaim in how far they are prepared to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The Speech makes reference to the progress of the State as a whole, and I join heartily in the expression of pleasure uttered by His Excellency's advisers in that connection. Every one of our industries—agricultural, mining, pastoral, and pearl-fishing—is prosperous. I regret, however, to have to remark on the presence in our midst of a large number of unemployed. I hope the Government will use every endeavour to provide those men with employment, and I heartily indorse the action of the Government in pushing on the building

of railways and other necessary public works, since by these means the pressure will be relieved. [MEMBER: The unemployed won't work.] Not many of the unemployed are unprepared to work, provided reasonable employment is found for them. An unfortunate feature of the situation is that in this State the workers necessarily make for the large centres, and that therefore the moment work becomes scarce the pressure is severe. However, I trust that the public works I have referred to will relieve the congestion. I regret that no mention is made of an intention on the part of the Government to deal in some way with that complex question, the Midland Railway. The only attempt which has been made to solve the problem is the subsidising of a steamship trading between Fremantle and Geraldton. I regard that as a good move, and as one likely to have the effect of bringing the Midland Railway Company to its bearings. Indeed there is reason to believe that the effect is already making itself felt. One unavoidable feature of the situation, however, is that since the Murchison people will not now use the Midland Railway as much as formerly, residents of such places as Mingenew and Dongara will be put to considerable inconvenience. I understand that even now the Midland Company will have to curtail its service, and from this injury must result to settlers along the line. It is matter for regret that the Government do not strain a point to try and make a deal with the Midland Railway Company for the vast extent of beautiful land between Midland Junction and Mingenew. Still, it is not yet too late; and I trust that the Government, by bringing proper pressure to bear, may be able to effect something before long. Sir Edward Wittenoom referred to the fact that the Government are making a certain concession. That concession relates to the handling of goods sent from Fremantle to inland towns beyond Geraldton. To my mind, the Government are doing only a fair thing; it is necessary to counteract in some way the moves of the Midland Railway Company; and by taking the goods off the boat, loading them on railway trucks, and consigning them inland the Government afford greater encouragement towards the use of the steamer subsidised by the State.

When all is said and done, the concession affects very few people injuriously. At all events, the interests of goldfields residents, who are already heavily taxed, ought to be considered before the interests of a few forwarding agents in Geraldton and Fremantle. As regards education, I admire the noble spirit of the Premier: I admire him for proclaiming that the time has arrived for this State to have something in the shape of a University. I am inclined to believe, however, that the country is hardly yet ripe for incurring the exceedingly heavy expense of absolutely establishing a University. Without entering farther into the matter, I desire just to remind the Government that a great deal remains to be done for the education of young children in various small towns. For a few years, at any rate, we shall have quite enough to do to keep afloat and maintain in a proper manner our elementary schools. Though I have not the slightest desire to throw cold water on the Premier's project, I must say that to establish a University now at heavy expense would be to do something altogether premature. I agree with other members that the University would be patronised only by a few whose parents could well afford to send them to the universities of the sister States.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It is the other way about—the poor would patronise the university of this State, while the rich would send their children to the Eastern universities.

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN: I have pleasure in supporting the motion. I shall not detain the House longer.

At 6:35, the ACTING PRESIDENT left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

HON. W. T. LOTON (East): The Speech submitted to us has been discussed in so many various aspects, that it seems to me very little that is new can be said. There are one or two points on which I wish to say a few words. I have no doubt it is a satisfaction to members generally to notice that His Excellency the Governor is pleased with the reception he has met with in Western Australia. I am sure that would be so in any case, whoever the person may be who

represents His Majesty the King; and although we hear sometimes of rumours and opinions put forward in the direction that persons who occupy this position should be selected and appointed from the States themselves, I have no sympathy with feelings of that kind. The present system is the main link which binds us to the Empire, and I trust it will be a very long time before it is severed, if ever, but that the appointment will be made from the old country, and that we shall thus have continually introduced as the direct representative of the King a person who is a stranger to us and is not connected with any particular section or faction of the particular State in which he represents His Majesty. I am pleased to be able to congratulate the leader of this House on his successful career in gaining that position without opposition, which must have been satisfactory to him. It was rather a bold stroke, but seeing that he had his Government behind him, the Premier practically living in the constituency for which he came forward, and another prominent Minister, the Minister for Railways, very closely connected with another part of the constituency, I suppose he had very little trouble. I do not know whether he is a hard-worker or not—we shall know that during this session—but he looks quite able for work. I trust he will place the business before us in a plain and straightforward way, and as far as I am concerned, and I believe the House generally, he can count upon getting fair and honest consideration. The most prominent clause in His Excellency's Speech, and I think it is the first clause of importance brought to our notice by him, I suppose as the view of his advisers, is this: "The recent movement in the mother country towards securing closer trade relations between the various parts of the Empire has been welcomed in this State with feelings of warm sympathy and with sincere hopes for its ultimate success." Various views have been expressed on this question, and it seems to me that we have not really got the subject before us to talk about. The Secretary of State for the Colonies alluded to these closer relations, and if I have read the papers correctly he intimated that there should be between the old country and the colonies preferential trade relations.