

same grounds as those upon which he based his amendment of no-confidence.

MR. GREGORY: You will not take this as a want of confidence, will you?

MR. RASON: I am not going to be led away from my argument. The notice was based on precisely the same grounds as the amendment tabled by the leader of the Opposition.

MR. VOSPER: We are not confined to those grounds.

MR. RASON: If the duty of the leader of the Opposition was to the country only, then manifestly it mattered little to him whether that amendment was introduced on this side of the House or the other; but it appears as if it made all the difference to the hon. member, and some of those sitting with him, whether an amendment of this sort emanated from this side of the House or that. Possibly it made this difference, that someone else might have been asked to take the reins of office, which perhaps the hon. member desired to obtain for himself. It has been said we are a moribund Parliament, and much has been made of that; to my mind, too much altogether. We may be a moribund Parliament, but there is no reason why we should die of inanition. Our duty to the country remains the same as upon the day we were elected. Our duty is to do that which we consider best in the interests of the country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And commit the next Parliament to irrevocable expenditure. That is what you are doing.

MR. RASON: The hon. member is mistaken.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No; I am not.

MR. RASON: I repeat, our responsibilities are the same as on the day we were elected, and amendments of this sort, which seem to be popular now, appear very much to be regarded as a farce, judging from the levity with which hon. members approached this question last night. Surely it is better that we should have done with trifling of this sort, and should get along with the business. There is good honest business to be done. There are Bills to be introduced on which there can be little or no controversy. Surely it is better for us to get on with these measures, rather than trifle with the time of the House and the country in considering amendments of this sort, based upon paltry grounds—

there is no other word for it—which have only one motive, that being not the good of the country, but rather to turn out of office a Government which I think the country will show, at the next general election, maintains the respect of the majority of the electors. At all events up to this date there is nothing to show the contrary.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Government sit by divine right, you know; not by the will of the people.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Geraldton): As this is the first time I have had the honour of addressing the House, I hope members will extend to me that sympathy which every new member finds it necessary to ask for. At the present stage in my political career I should not have thought it becoming of me to take part in this debate at all, but for the reference yesterday made to me—an unseemly reference, I consider—by the Premier. The Premier, in speaking to the question before us, said: "I wonder where the member for Geraldton is going to be on this occasion; I wonder how he is going to vote. On his first appearance in the House, is he going to vote against a matter that concerns his district?" I consider the Premier might have left me alone for a day or two on that question; but as he wanted to know how I am going to vote, I will tell him that when I came here it was not my intention to permit any man to dictate to me how I should vote. I came here as representative of the electors of Geraldton, and to vote for what I conscientiously thought to be right. Whilst here I intend to do my best to vote as my conscience dictates, irrespective of the opinion of the right hon. gentleman, or of any one on that or on this side of the House. Perhaps it is a good thing that I should understand the position of affairs so soon. I want to make a clear statement that whatever position I may take up on any question that comes before this House, such position will be the one I consider I am justified in adopting in the interests of my country. I noticed, too, that when the right hon. gentleman referred to me in that pointed manner, he said he hoped the electors of Geraldton would know the way I voted and acted. I hope they will know. If there had been any shadow of doubt in

my mind as to how I should vote, if I had been undecided in any way, the words of the Premier would certainly have caused me to make up my mind to vote against him, because otherwise I, as a new member of the House, would be placed in one of the worst positions a man can occupy, for I should be made to appear before the electors as having given way to dictation. There are two or three matters in His Excellency's Speech that I will briefly refer to, and I will promise the House I will not detain it long in so doing. Paragraph 16, I think, refers to the Metropolitan Water Supply. That is a question deserving the assistance of every member of the House when the time comes for bringing it about, but I think the Government might in that Bill make provision for the inclusion of municipal councils in different parts of the colony outside the metropolitan area. The Government will recognise that for some years past they have been paying immense sums of money in my electorate, at any rate, for water to keep the railway trains running, and perhaps the money so expended would have enabled them to pay interest for a supply of water necessary for the town itself, if money had been devoted to the inauguration of a system of water supply some years ago. If the question of the Cue-Nannine railway had been before the House, and I had had to give my vote "yes" or "no," I should certainly have supported that line. I consider that railway should have been built years ago, and it is a disgrace to the Government themselves that it was not built years ago. The money was voted for it, as the Premier stated; and the fact that it has not been built is one of the grievances of Geraldton. One of the Government supporters has never been tired of telling us that the reason the railway was not built was that the member representing North Murchison sat on the Opposition side of the House. I do not say that such was the case. When the Nannine railway comes up to be dealt with I shall not forget my duty to the district.

THE PREMIER: It will never come up, if you have your way.

MR. HUTCHINSON: If there is a question of the expenditure of £60,000 or £70,000 on that railway, and £600,000

or £700,000 on other works, I would be doing my duty even better to my electorate and to the country in refusing to vote blindly on such a question, and in such a manner as the Premier considers I should do. He has referred to the electors of my district, and to what they will think of me and what they will think of the Government. I think members of this House know what Geraldton has thought of the Government for some years past. There is no doubt the Government of this colony have neglected that district in a shameful manner.

MR. DOHERTY: What district is that?

MR. HUTCHINSON: The Victoria District.

MR. DOHERTY: Oh!

MR. HUTCHINSON: That shows the the hon. member does not travel much. The policy of centralisation which the Government seem to delight in has done everything to destroy every one of the interests of that district. With regard to the railway service, we find that while a ton of stuff can be sent from Fremantle to Cue for £1 11s. 1d., a Geraldton man has to pay £1 1s. per ton for stuff carried to Cue in the same train. If the railway service of this country were to get the benefit, perhaps that would not be so bad, but it comes down to the question of that rate being maintained either through the people of Fremantle and Perth or the Midland Railway Company. It would pay the Railway Department far better to have the stuff railed from Geraldton at 5s. or 6s. a ton.

MR. PIESSE: The rates are the same in all parts of the colony. There is no differential rate whatever.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. HUTCHINSON: It comes to this, that the train which draws the stuff from Fremantle will, as I said just now, take it from Midland Junction to Cue at 8s. or 10s. a ton more than it will take Greenough or Irwin stuff for. I presume the Railway Department, as we were told by the late Commissioner, is run on commercial lines; and, if so, the department are not justified in charging the Geraldton people more than the department can draw the other stuff for. We do not ask that the rates should be raised, but we do ask that we should have facilities equal to those given to other people.

This is one of the grievances of which the people of Geraldton complain.

MR. PRESSE (late Commissioner of Railways): I think the hon. member is labouring under a misapprehension.

THE PREMIER: The charges for long distance are the same all over the colony: the longer the distance, the smaller the rate.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Yes; that is what we complain of.

THE PREMIER: How is the man to get on who lives farthest away, if the rates are not to be less in proportion to the distance? Equal rates would ruin him.

MR. HUTCHINSON: There is the question of the Midland Railway. When the Commissioner of Crown Lands was in that district a few months ago he made certain statements; and the Attorney General more recently has told the people there that the Government intend to have the Midland Railway grievance done away with, that the company's concession will have to be burst up or the line must be purchased. Yet the reference made to the Midland Railway in the Governor's Speech does not indicate any such intention on the part of the Government. I say the sooner that question is dealt with, the better it will be for everybody. We were told by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, when he was up there, that he had satisfied himself the Midland Railway Company's concession included 200,000 acres of some of the finest land in the colony; and he admitted that people there were hungering for possession of the land, that men who had sons growing up were obliged to let their sons leave the district because they could not get land to settle on within the Midland area. The original idea in granting that great concession to a company, before the present Government came into power, was that people were to be settled on the land as a necessary part of the scheme. But it has not been so. I can only say again that, in the opinion of most people in that district, the longer this question is left without being dealt with, the worse it will be for the country and the worse for that district.

[A lengthy pause ensued, no member rising to speak.]

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A conspiracy of silence, again.

MR. HOLMES (East Fremantle):

The Premier, in speaking to the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition, stated yesterday that the objects of hon. members on this side of the House are two: firstly to block the construction of public works, and secondly to seize the Treasury benches on that side, which members here appeared to be hungering for. As far as I am concerned, I am prepared to say at this stage that the object of the motion is to remove the present Ministry from office; and I propose to give my reasons for supporting the amendment for carrying out that object. I believe, and will try to prove amongst other things, that the Premier has manipulated his finances as presented to Parliament and to the public with the object perhaps of misleading Parliament and throwing dust in the eyes of the people. I believe, and will endeavour to show, that the Public Works Department have been guilty of the same thing. I believe, and will endeavour to show and give my reasons for believing, that the management of the Railway Department is corrupt or is incompetent, or perhaps both; and I will show further, and will give as a reason for supporting the amendment, that the Government have been guilty of condoning a felony. With these facts before me, it cannot be a surprise to hon. members on the Government side that I am prepared to support the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition. If the amendment is carried, the right hon. gentleman has threatened that he will seek a dissolution. In making that threat, he endeavoured to coerce members on his side of the House, and he has also thrown out a challenge to members on this (Opposition) side of the House that they dare not vote for the amendment and bring about a dissolution at this stage. Well, if I thought the carrying of this amendment would bring about a dissolution at present, I would not be prepared to support the amendment; because I am not, nor would any honest man be, in favour of a dissolution at this stage. I am sure the Premier dare not bring about a dissolution at the present stage. If he is beaten in the division, though there is no doubt as to what the division will be, but if he were beaten, then he must act in a con-