

line of railway from Mullewa to Minigenew, so as to connect the fields with the railway system, and make it desirable for capitalists to work the deposits, but owing to the remonstrances of a large number of the people represented by Mr. Drew, the company were debarred from constructing the line, and the result is exactly what the hon. member complains of. In their short-sighted policy and desire to take everything to Geraldton, the people there cut themselves off from the benefits of an industry, the development of which would have made Geraldton double the place it is to-day; and then they complain that the company have done nothing to develop the district, while, as a fact, they were doing all they could towards that development, and the company were prevented from proceeding. I have a large number of other notes, but in view of the fact that it is getting on towards ten o'clock, and there are other gentlemen who wish to speak, I shall not take up the time of the House any further than to beg hon. members to seriously consider the ridiculous position in which they will be placed if they support either the amendment proposed by Mr. Haynes or that by Mr. Stone.

Amendment (Mr. Haynes's) put and negatived on the voices.

Amendment (Mr. Stone's) put and negatived on the voices.

Main question put and passed, and the Address-in-reply adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House adjourned at 9:50 o'clock until Tuesday afternoon, 11th September.

Legislative Assembly, Wednesday, 29th August, 1900.

Petition: Dividend Duty Act (Companies)—Question: Letter Carriers overworked—Question: Imprisonment without Trial at Roebourne—Question: Pastoral Leases Reserved; Effect of Legal Decision—Question: Indebtedness and Reappropriations—Question: Electors' Right and Revision Court—Leave of Absence—Federal House of Representatives Bill, first reading—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, first reading—Constitution Amendment Act Errors Bill, first reading—Address-in-reply, Amendment (Mr. Illingworth's); debate, fourth day—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION—DIVIDEND DUTY ACT (COMPANIES).

MR. MORGANS presented a petition from shareholders in Western Australian mining companies, praying for amendment or repeal of the Dividend Duty Act 1899, as affecting such companies.

Petition received, read, and ordered to be printed.

QUESTION—LETTER CARRIERS OVER- WORKED.

MR. OATS asked the Premier: 1, Whether it was a fact that the letter carriers of Perth worked sixteen hours, or over, on the 13th instant. 2, Whether any compensation would be paid for this overwork. 3, Whether such a procedure would be prevented in future, unless proper remuneration is arranged for.

THE PREMIER replied:—1, On the 13th inst. the letter carriers did 9 hours of ordinary duty, that is, they made 3 deliveries per man, each delivery averaging from 1½ to 2 hours, or 6 hours on the walk; the remainder of the time would be in the office arranging deliveries. They were warned for special duty at 7:15 p.m., to assist in receiving mails per R.M.S. "Ormuz," but, through unforeseen delays, the mails did not arrive at the office until 11:40 p.m. The work, so far as the letter carriers were concerned, was completed by 1:10 a.m., making 10½ hours of actual work, as the men were not detained at the office from 7:15 to 11 p.m., but were at liberty until the mail arrived. 2, No; as the mail staff are aware that they are liable, in special cases, to be called upon at any hour. 3,

In future, when it is known that mails will arrive as late as in above cases, the letter carriers will not be called upon for duty until the following morning. It should be borne in mind that this being the first of the mail steamers to call at Fremantle, it was a new departure, and matters can be arranged better when more experience in the running of the steamers is available.

QUESTION—IMPRISONMENT WITHOUT TRIAL AT ROEBOURNE.

MR. VOSPER asked the Attorney General, Whether his attention had been called to an allegation that ten men had been imprisoned at Roebourne for eight months without being brought to trial or legally sentenced. If so, whether it was intended to investigate the matter?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: The Attorney General's attention has been called to a series of charges preferred against members of the crew of the schooner "Nellie," for acts of desertion, and refusal to join their ship. The men were charged and dealt with summarily under the Immigration Restriction Act and the Merchant Shipping Act for alleged successive offences. All the men are now discharged, and have been ordered, under the provisions of the Immigration Restriction Act, back to Singapore, at the expense of the importer.

MR. VOSPER: That did not answer the question. He wanted to know whether those men were detained eight months before they were brought to trial.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There were successive charges made against them.

QUESTION—PASTORAL LEASES RESERVED: EFFECT OF LEGAL DECISION.

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked the Attorney General: 1, Whether the decision in the case of Dalgety & Co. v. Murphy is opposed to the reading by the Crown Law Officers of Section 148 of the Land Act. 2, Whether the decision in the case of Dalgety & Co. v. Murphy will affect the Government in reserving pastoral leases for settlement purposes. 3, Whether, if the decision remains as it is, valuable and unexpected endowment will

be given to pastoral leases. 4, Whether the Government will take steps to have the decision reviewed, and, if so, what steps.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:—1, The reading of Section 148 is settled for the time being by the decision of the Supreme Court; 2, This is a matter for the consideration of the Crown Lands Department; 3, The effect of the decision will be that pastoral lessees will be entitled to receive the fair value of any improvements existing on or appertaining to the land applied for by a selector or resumed for settlement, or which, being outside such land, have become valueless or lessened in value by severance; 4, The Government is no party to the proceedings, and therefore cannot take steps to have the decision reversed.

QUESTION—INDEBTEDNESS AND REAPPROPRIATIONS.

MR. GREGORY asked the Premier: 1, What is the present indebtedness of Western Australia. 2, What amount is available from loans and Treasury bills for the completion of works authorised by Parliament. 3, What amount it is estimated will be required to complete these works. 4, What amount has been re-appropriated from existing authorisations. 5, In what way the Government proposes to recoup these moneys thus re-appropriated.

THE PREMIER asked that the question be postponed until Tuesday next. Although this was put in the form of a question, it was really a request for a return. He was willing to answer the question, if the hon. member would give him a day or two.

MR. GREGORY: The reply would be useless, then.

THE PREMIER: This should be a motion, and not a question.

QUESTION—ELECTORS' RIGHT AND REVISION COURT.

MR. GREGORY asked the Attorney General, Whether any adult whose name had been on an Electoral Registrar's list for over six months, without objection, will be entitled to vote at an election for a member of the Legislative Assembly, notwithstanding that his or her claim for

the franchise has not been dealt with by a Revision Court.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: Yes; if the Registration Court had not sat in the meantime.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by the PREMIER, leave of absence for two months was granted to the member for Dundas (Mr. Conolly), on the ground of military service in South Africa; and to the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn), on the ground of urgent public business.

FEDERAL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT ACT ERRORS BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

AMENDMENT, MR. ILLINGWORTH'S. DEBATE, FOURTH DAY.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the Address-in-reply to the Administrator's opening Speech, and on the amendment (no confidence) moved by Mr. Illingworth.

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

THE SPEAKER: If no one is going to resume the debate, I shall have to put the question.

MR. WALLACE (Yalgoo): It would be a pity to let this matter go through without further debate. In the absence of a certain member on the Government side (Mr. Moran), who moved the adjournment and was expected to resume the debate, I ask for the indulgence of the House for a few minutes. I had no intention of speaking on this motion, but seeing that the hon. member (Mr. Moran) is unavoidably absent—[MR. A. FORREST: He is outside]—I will continue the debate in order to give him an opportunity of

speaking, as I know he is anxious to address the House on this question. I was amused and interested at the manner in which the Premier put his case before the House. Had he been a member of the bar, he could not have done it better than he did yesterday; and the effect of his pleading is visible on the Government side of the House. Last week, when the right hon. gentleman asked for the adjournment of the House, it was expected he would bring forward in the debate some reason to rebut this amendment of the leader of the Opposition. There is no getting away from the fact that this amendment is a reflex of public opinion. Yesterday the Premier directed his attention very strongly to the various goldfields members. He picked out six goldfields members, whom he twitted, and he asked their constituents to watch them. If there is one thing that will advance the cause of those six goldfields members, it is the advice of the Premier to their constituents; and at the general election I should like nothing better than for the Premier to accompany me to my constituency, and speak from the same platform against my views in the same way as he has spoken in regard to those six members for the goldfields. I feel sure the remarks which the Premier has made in regard to those six members will not have the desired effect. We have heard the Premier accusing the Opposition of endeavouring to get support from the Government side of the House; but I say that if we follow the example set by the Premier, we are only doing what has been done from his side of the House every session. We know, of course, that the right hon. gentleman does not himself come round asking members on this (Opposition) side to support the Government; but he has very able whips, who are continually prowling round and asking members on this side.

MR. A. FORREST: Never asked anybody on that side.

MR. WALLACE: If whips from this side do appeal to members on the Government side for support on a particular occasion, I do not think that should be put forward as being anything unfair. It is the duty of whips to get the best support they can for their own side, and I do not blame the Government for trying

to get support from this (Opposition) side, while at the same time I do not think the Premier should have accused the Opposition of trying to get support from members on his side of the House. But the question before us is, as stated in the amendment, that the Government no longer retain the confidence of a majority of members of this House. At a stage such as this, when we are in the last session of this Parliament, and when we are given to understand by legal members of the House that we are a moribund Parliament, how can members support such a policy of public works as is set forth in the Speech? We have an endless list of works in that Speech, which we are asked to pass this session.

THE PREMIER: I do not think so.

MR. WALLACE: I notice that it is very carefully worded, for in paragraph 16 we are not asked directly to support the works, nor is it said directly that the Government intend to carry them out during the present year; but it is suggested that the Government hope to carry out certain works. This is the old game prior to a coming election, when everything that anyone wants is promised: railways to all parts of the goldfields, railways to farming centres, and various other things are to be given—Fremantle is to get a slip and dock which have been promised during the last three years, and now Government hope to be able to start the dock. I do not think anyone outside the House will agree that it is wise to bring down such a vast list of public works at this stage. I think the Premier, as head of the Government, is desirous of extending the railways of the colony, and I commend him for it; but, as I said in the last session and say now, I do not oppose the works themselves, but oppose the construction of them at this juncture; and I do say now it would not be wise to burden the incoming Parliament with the cost of carrying out such a policy of works as is embodied in the Governor's Speech. We find it is proposed to submit for consideration several Bills that have been before the House repeatedly; and I would like to know, are the Government sincere in bringing these measures before Parliament? We have the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, and we know that has been asked for

by members for years past. We also know that it was only at the point of the bayonet that the Premier decided to introduce this Bill to the House, and yet when the right hon. gentleman was replying to the deputation from the Trades and Labour Council, he appealed to them to use their influence with members of this House to support the Government, and to oppose the amendment of no-confidence. I have no objection to the Premier using that kind of intimidation to members of the House; but when the right hon. gentleman goes beyond that and asks members of the Trades and Labour Council to intimidate members of this House in favour of the Government policy, I think it is not at all fair. I do not think the members of that deputation went away from the Premier's office believing as he believed they did believe. On the question of the Norseman railway, the Premier referred to that as one of the works which had been submitted to the House last session. I have referred to *Hansard*, and I find the work was carried by a majority; but what was the majority? There were only 18 members in the House when the vote was taken.

THE PREMIER: The work was carried by 16 to 8; 24 in the House.

MR. WALLACE: I have referred to *Hansard* only an hour ago, and find the work was carried by a majority of two, and there were only 18 members in the division.

THE PREMIER: 16 to 8 in the division. I looked it up myself.

MR. WALLACE: The smallness of the majority in this House was the reason why the work was thrown out by one vote when it reached the Council. Now the Premier wants us to carry out that work which was, we may say, lost in both Houses, because this House was not half represented in the division, there being scarcely a quorum present. In opposing that work, the Premier would make it appear we are opposing the interests of the goldfields; but such is not the case. Members on this (Opposition) side and on the other side, who are not in favour of railway communication to Norseman—

MR. MORGANS: Why don't you support it?

MR. WALLACE: I will support a Bill for providing railway communication

from Esperance to Norseman, but I will not support a line for bringing goods all round by way of Fremantle to Coolgardie and on to Norseman; for, in the interests of the people of Norseman, I am not going to vote for that. I heard the Premier refer to the fact that a lot of machinery is lying at Dundas which has not been erected, and a lot of machinery is erected there that is not working, yet in the face of these facts the Premier asks us to expend between £500,000 and £600,000 for a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. It is strange to me that the Government should be so anxious just now to extend railways throughout the goldfields, and especially the attention they are giving to the Murchison goldfields. We know that for two years, when the late Mr. Kenny was continually appealing to the Government for extension of the line to Nannine, the Government would not hear of it, as they said those fields were not sufficiently developed. I venture to say that the same output of gold, or an equal amount, was coming from those fields then as is coming from them now; yet the Government then saw no necessity for the extension of the railway to Nannine. Now we find everything points to the necessity of that extension, and the Premier has given a promise to a deputation from Nannine that he has £40,000 available for that railway extension and will endeavour to get the line constructed in the present year. At this point I should like to correct the statement I made just now, as to the numbers voting in a certain division. From information supplied by a member, I find that in referring to *Hansard* I had looked at the wrong division, which referred to the motion by Mr. Leake that the Bill be read that day six months. That was the Loan Bill, and the division was 10 to 8.

THE PREMIER: It would not be a division on a no-confidence motion; only 10 to 8.

MR. WALLACE: I was in error, I admit; but the point I wanted to make was that in supporting the amendment now before the House, moved by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth), against the public works policy of the Government, the members of this side support it because at this stage we ought not to saddle the incoming Parlia-

ment with such a burden as would be created if the works proposed in the Governor's Speech were authorised in the present session and carried out. As to the line to Goomalling, I supported that work; but I have since learned that people were misled into believing that the line would be constructed early, and some of them have been struggling to live on the land where no railway facility is yet provided. I never supported the Coolgardie-Norseman line, nor will I support it now or next session. The amendment before the House is one of no-confidence, and I think it is fully justified by the action of the Government during the last two sessions. There are several other items in the Governor's Speech I would like to refer to; but I will hold over my remarks, because I feel sure the Government will, as always, gain a victory on this no-confidence amendment, and at the present stage of the question I will say no more.

MR. RASON (South Murchison): It must be manifest to the House that members on this (Government) side, at all events, are taken somewhat at a disadvantage, as it was expected the hon. member (Mr. Moran) who moved the adjournment of the debate would naturally resume the debate this evening. Personally, I did not anticipate having to address the House at so early a stage, and therefore I trust hon. members will be lenient with me, knowing that I am somewhat unprepared. It does appear to me that this debate, although introduced by the leader of the Opposition on well-known lines, and on lines which could not be mistaken, inasmuch as he challenged the policy of the Government of the day in respect of their public works, and was therefore honest and entitled to all credit for his honesty of purpose—it seems to me that this debate has travelled altogether outside the lines foreshadowed by the leader of the Opposition, and members on the Government side of the House do not know what they have to face. For instance, speakers who have followed the leader of the Opposition have instanced works connected with the Railway Department as being bad, as being sufficient justification for a vote of no-confidence; but, unfortunately, that is not the ground upon which this motion of no-confidence is based. We have had

a direct motion based first of all, as the leader of the Opposition said, upon the ground that, in his opinion, he had very grave doubts whether this House had any moral or legal right of existence at all; and secondly, if it had a moral or legal right of existence, he said it did not possess and did not enjoy the confidence of the country. But if this House, although not possessing the confidence of the country, should elect to reject the Ministry, then, according to the leader of the Opposition, it would be very improper, very wrong indeed, for the leader of the Government to appeal to the country to say whether the country did or did not indorse the verdict of this Assembly. That seems to me a convenient theory, but I think it is hardly a theory which this House will adopt. What is it? That this House, according to the hon. member's own showing, has no legal or moral right to exist.

MR. VOSPER: What has morality to do with this House, anyhow?

MR. RASON: And that it does not possess the confidence of the country when it attempts any legislation; yet notwithstanding, if it throws out a Government which has lasted for nearly 10 years, then it will be improper to ask the electors of the country to say whether they do or do not coincide with the verdict of this House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You know better than that.

MR. RASON: I am dealing with what the hon. member himself said.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You are misrepresenting me entirely.

MR. RASON: I beg the hon. member's pardon if I am: I am sure I have no intention of doing so. I think I am correctly stating what the hon. member said when I say he said distinctly that this House had no legal or moral right to exist, that it did not represent the country, but that, though such was the case, it would be very improper, in case of the Government being defeated, to appeal to the country. If that is a misrepresentation, I apologise.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A complete misrepresentation: I said nothing of the kind.

MR. RASON: Well, I have *Hansard* before me; and if the hon. member will refer to that, and will again repeat his assertion—

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have *Hansard* before me, too.

A MEMBER: Read it for him.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot read from this session's report.

MR. RASON: The hon. member is aware of that, sir.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You are using the words wrongly. I do not say there is any error in the report.

MR. RASON: At any rate, I am sure the hon. member will not accuse me of purposely misrepresenting him.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Certainly not.

MR. RASON: At all events, I think I am correctly stating the hon. member's views when he said that this House did not represent the country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Correct.

MR. RASON: I think I am also correct in saying he told us that, in the case of an adverse vote being passed, it would be improper—

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No.

MR. RASON: It would be unconstitutional—well, there is a difference in the words.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A great difference.

MR. RASON: Then the hon. member said it would be unconstitutional for the leader of the Government to appeal to the country either to accept or to reject the verdict of this House which does not represent the country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: "To ask for a dissolution," were the words.

MR. RASON: I think the hon. member is only bandying words.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You know the difference.

MR. RASON: To ask for a dissolution or to appeal to the country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You know better.

MR. RASON: The hon. member "inferred." Can I pin him to that?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No; you cannot.

MR. RASON: I am afraid it is impossible to pin the hon. member to anything; but I do think I am not misrepresenting him in stating that he said it would be improper to attempt to appeal to the country to accept or reject the verdict of this House if that verdict were adverse to the Government, although, according to the hon. member's own showing, that verdict could not be taken as representing the opinion of the country. The leader of the Opposition

said his grounds for moving this vote of no-confidence were that no further public works should be undertaken and no further public moneys expended. We on this (Government) side of the House have been twitted with holding meetings, and with mapping out a certain line of policy; but I think the other side also had meetings, and undoubtedly they have mapped out a policy.

THE PREMIER: But they do not tell us what it is.

MR. RASON: Oh, we have been told. We have been told by the only authority, the leader of the Opposition, what is this policy. Part of the policy is to do nothing.

MR. VOSPER: And not much of that.

MR. RASON: Well, if the country is prepared to accept that policy, certainly that is for the country to say; but, unfortunately, the leader of the Opposition is not prepared to give a voice to the country: he wants this House—this House which does not represent the country—to turn out the Government, and to put in the Opposition to do nothing!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then the defeated Government have a right to appeal. You know they have such a right.

MR. RASON: He wants us to put in the Opposition to do nothing until such time as the country, which has had no voice in putting in the new Government, may have a voice in either retaining that Government in power or in casting it out of office. But, unfortunately for the leader of the Opposition, another prominent member on his side, when he saw that this policy of do-nothing was not having a very good effect, did what that hon. member very often does—stated the truth. He interjected that the policy of the Opposition, after all, was not so much consideration for the country, nor so much the stoppage of public works, because it was necessary for the good of the country that public works should not be stopped, but it was to turn out the Government. I allude to the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson). What did he say? "Turn out the Government! We will do the public works fast enough." I think there we arrived at the truth after all, and that statement was cheered and appreciated by members on the opposite side of the House; and I think we

may assure ourselves of this manifest fact, that the policy of the Opposition, if it be a policy at all, is to do anything that will turn out the Ministry of the day, even if in its stead they offer the policy of do-nothing.

MR. VOSPER: Hear, hear; and that is a safe policy, anyway.

MR. RASON: The member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) cheers that statement.

MR. VOSPER: Hear, hear. It will do no harm.

MR. RASON: The hon. member, I am afraid, would cheer anything calculated to injure the Ministry of the day. And now I propose to deal with one remark, and one only, which emanated from the member I have just referred to. He spoke of the Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Bill. I believe the hon. member desires to be fair and just; but in his remarks last evening I can assure him he was very far from being either just or fair. He said or inferred that the Government, in introducing this measure last session, did so in a very half-hearted and in not an honest manner; that the postponements and a considerable number of adjournments originated with this (Government) side of the House; that the failure to carry that measure was due to the Government side, and was opposed to the wishes of the Opposition. The hon. member took all the credit for trying to push that measure through.

MR. VOSPER: You know I did my best; do you not?

MR. RASON: I do; but the hon. member took all the credit, not for himself, but for his side of the House.

MR. VOSPER: That was only my modesty.

THE PREMIER: Oh!

MR. RASON: He gave to his own side all the credit for trying to push that measure through: he gave all the discredit to this (Government) side for the failure. As a matter of fact, there were several adjournments; and it is only a coincidence, but a decidedly peculiar coincidence, that the first adjournment was moved by the hon. member himself, and that the last adjournment—the adjournment which was absolutely fatal to the measure—was moved by a prominent member of the Opposition, the member

for the Canning (Mr. Wilson). That last and fatal adjournment was very strongly protested against by the Premier—[THE PREMIER: Hear, hear]—and I desire to be just: it was protested against by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), and perhaps when he recollects the transaction he will remember it was also protested against by myself. The adjournment which was absolutely fatal to the passing of that Bill emanated from the Opposition side of the House, and not from the Government benches.

MR. VOSPER: I think there were one or two adjournments moved by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), were there not?

MR. RASON: There was an adjournment agreed to by that hon. member, but that adjournment also emanated from the Opposition side of the House. The hon. member had better not rake up the history of the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill.

MR. VOSPER: I have nothing to fear from its being raked up. I moved the adjournment in the early part of the session for the purpose of giving the Trades and Labour Council a chance of considering the Bill.

MR. RASON: The hon. member, I am sure, desires to be just; and if he fulfils that desire he will, I am sure, recognise that his remarks made last evening were not quite fair and not quite just. While on the subject of this Bill, the leader of the Opposition said he also had a great desire to pass that measure this session; also that the proper course to pursue would have been for Parliament to meet on the 10th of August, to sit on till not later than the 17th of August, and that this Parliament should not have attempted to deal with any important measures. If the hon. member seriously thought the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill should have been passed this session, does he mean to say it would have been possible to deal with the Address-in-Reply, to vote supplies, and to attempt any legislation between the 10th and 17th August?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And more than that, if we had sat at 10 o'clock in the day.

MR. RASON: I am bound to accept the statement of the hon. member; but if

he says, as he did say, that this House should not have attempted to deal with any important measures, then either we should not, according to his own showing, attempt to deal with the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, or else he regards that Bill as not being an important measure.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I distinctly said I made a difference between social legislation and financial legislation.

MR. RASON: That is so, but the hon. member said distinctly, and repeated it on several occasions, that this House was not entitled to deal with important measures. That being so, either the hon. member regards the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill as not being an important measure, or else he thinks this House has no right to deal with it. It is perhaps only a coincidence, but it is a curious coincidence, at all events, that the leader of the Opposition bases his motion of no-confidence on the ground that there should be no further expenditure of public money; and an amendment to the same effect has been introduced by a member on this side of the House, of which the leader of the Opposition had due notice. I repeat that the leader of the Opposition knew that amendment would be moved on this (Government) side of the House. Imagine for a moment that all that weighed in his mind was his duty to the country, his duty to the country was manifestly met by the amendment that was moved by a member on this side of the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I never heard a word about it.

MR. RASON: The amendment was moved in this House.

MR. VOSPER: It has not been moved at all.

MR. RASON: Notice of the amendment was given in this House before the leader of the Opposition moved his motion of no-confidence.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Our arrangements were complete then.

MR. RASON: The hon. member says his arrangements were complete, and no doubt they were. Unfortunately I do not know what those arrangements consisted of. But what I have said is manifestly the truth, that the hon. member was aware notice had been given of an amendment based on precisely the

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. PIESSE (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-

stitutional manner, and stand down in order to let some other man take his place. If there were any doubt about the division, as to how the vote would be cast, I should want to know from the Premier as to what he really did intend to do, before I would vote for the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition.

MR. MORAN: The Premier has told us already.

MR. HOLMES: The responsibility of a dissolution would rest entirely with the Premier.

THE PREMIER: I deny that I threatened a dissolution. I do not know that I told that to anybody.

MR. MORAN: You told it to me.

MR. HOLMES: We saw it in the public Press, and the leader of the Opposition has told us that the Premier used words of that kind to him in conversation.

THE PREMIER: I know my duty better than that, I think.

MR. HOLMES: I know that if some other Premier did take possession of the Treasury benches, the people would then get what they ask for; they would get what they are entitled to; and they would get what I propose to show the necessity for, and that is a peep behind the scenes to see exactly how things are. If the Opposition went into power, that would be about all they could do in the first session, and all they would do. They would, in the present session, have to pass legislation that was absolutely necessary; and, during the recess, they would endeavour to find out exactly how and where we are, so that when the general election came along they would be able to say that after the Ministry had been in office nine or ten years they had left the affairs in this condition, and it would be for the people to say then whether they would have the Forrest Ministry back or not. But, as I said, there is no possibility of this, for I am fully convinced that the exposures that would probably take place are the principal reasons for the Premier clinging to office in the manner he is doing. I am afraid that the exposure would have the effect of probably making the present Administration objectionable in the nostrils of the people. When I attempted to prove non-confidence in the administration of

the Railway Department, some fifteen months ago, I had only one object in view, and that was to bring about a real improvement. But from facts that have come to light recently, it would appear that the last state of that department is even worse than the first. I do not wish to blame the late Commissioner in this matter, because the exposures that have recently come to light relate to matters which would not altogether come within the scope of his jurisdiction. I blame the management of the Railway Department, and the management only, for what has recently transpired.

MR. PIESSE: What matter is that?

MR. HOLMES: I will deal with three or four matters, and one of them is the exposure of the frauds committed by, or the conspiracy between, the Railway Department and the Perth Ice Company.

MR. MORGANS: That is a very cold subject.

MR. HOLMES: It is a cold subject; but I think it is the duty of every hon. member to keep it warm, and to make it warm for everyone who is responsible. It appears these frauds have been perpetrated by this Ice Company for the last three or four years, and perpetrated under the very eyes of the officials in the Perth station yard, after repeated warnings, too, had been received by those officials. On two or three different occasions the officials were warned that the frauds were being committed, and yet these practices were allowed to go on for three years. I want to know, for what do we pay a General Manager £1,250 a year? For what do we pay a Chief Traffic Manager £800, a District Superintendent and Goods Agent and all those officials, if wholesale robbery can be perpetrated under their very noses for three years, and though they are warned of it, they take no action whatever until the goldfields Press brings the facts to light. I think it is due to this House that we should know why action was not taken in this matter. As we know, frauds extending over three or four years were perpetrated, to the extent of £3,000 or £4,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is what we know of.

MR. HOLMES: And if frauds have been committed by this company, as no doubt they have been, we are anxious to

know how many other companies have defrauded the department in like manner.

MR. PIESSE: Many try to do so.

MR. HOLMES: I think that is a reasonable question for us to ask.

MR. VOSPER: Yet the department prosecuted a firm for cheating them out of fivepence!

MR. HOLMES: If this be the only guilty company, there are all the more grounds for my charge; for if this be an isolated case, there really seems to be some reason for it. If it be not an isolated case, hon. members can only conjecture the extent of the exact loss to the country. Another question which presents itself is: in the face of these facts, can we leave the management of the Railway Department, the great earning and spending department, as the Premier termed it yesterday, from which we derive so much revenue, in the hands of the Forrest Ministry? I know how the general public are treated. I know that if a small trader in a country district has a case of goods consigned to him, and if, by an error, the goods are not properly specified in the consignment note, he is taken before a police court and prosecuted. For paltry offences such as putting cigars in a case of groceries and consigning them as groceries, instead of indicating on the consignment note that the package partly contains cigars, which are subject to a higher rate, small traders are repeatedly brought before the courts; and yet large companies are allowed to perpetrate extensive frauds untouched.

MR. VOSPER: Look at the share-list and you will see the reason.

THE PREMIER: You do not want to put all the shareholders in gaol, do you?

MR. VOSPER: I do not know.

THE PREMIER: That would be rather hard.

MR. HOLMES: I am not asking for that: I am asking for an alteration in the railway management, not for the prosecution of the company's shareholders. In this case I am prepared to hold the shareholders free of all blame. I do not think it would be fair to insinuate that the shareholders knew anything about the frauds; but I am justified in blaming the Railway Department, and I intend to make myself heard.

MR. CONNOR: You said a conspiracy to defraud.

MR. HOLMES: It was a conspiracy.

MR. CONNOR: Then you must blame both the company and the department.

MR. HOLMES: I will tell you why it was a conspiracy. The Premier asked, did I intend to prosecute the shareholders? I can tell you what was done in New South Wales. I think it was Mr. Wright, of Wright, Heaton, and Co., who was Director of Public Works there and was also conducting a large hardware business throughout New South Wales; and when the frauds that he committed as Director of Public Works came to light, I think the authorities arrested him and the whole of his managers throughout New South Wales, and held them until the frauds supposed to have been committed had been investigated. That is what they did in New South Wales: of course we do not ask for anything of that kind here.

MR. VOSPER: And you would not get it if you did.

MR. HOLMES: However, the hon. and learned Attorney General says we cannot prosecute in this case. Well, some learned gentlemen of the same profession have told me as late as yesterday that those who were actually responsible for consigning those goods—and there must have been more than one person involved; in fact, there were two or three concerned at different times, the manager, the carter, and sundry other persons—all these are liable at common law. If two persons conspire in this manner they are liable to a penalty of fifteen years' imprisonment. [Mr. VOSPER: Hear, hear.] And yet the Attorney General says that in this case, under the Railways Act, the Government cannot prosecute. But there are many other Acts under which they can prosecute.

MR. VOSPER: It is a clear case of compounding a felony.

MR. HOLMES: It seems that in the case of a small trader they can prosecute, but in a case of this kind no action can be taken. On the back of every consignment note issued by the Department there is printed the section of the Act bearing on the subject. The notice reads:

The Railways Act provides that every person being the owner of any goods, or having the care of any goods passing or being upon a railway, shall on demand give to the Collector of Tolls an exact account in writing, signed by him, of the number and quantity of the goods, and should goods which have to be conveyed

or are brought forth for conveyance as aforesaid be liable to the payment of different tolls, then such owner or other person shall specify the respective number or quantities thereof liable to each or any of such tolls.

The notice goes on to state that if any owner give a false account, he shall forfeit to the Commissioner of Railways on behalf of Her Majesty the sum of £10 for every ton in addition to the toll which the Railway Department are justified in collecting; and I should like to know how many tons of produce during the course of the last few years has the Perth Ice Company consigned to Kalgoorlie, and what would be the amount if the Government levied the penalty of £10 per ton, which they can undoubtedly do under this section of the Act, an extract from which is printed on each consignment note.

MR. MORGANS: Perhaps if they did levy, they would not recover the amount.

MR. HOLMES: Facts like these speak for themselves, and show that although we are supposed to be living in a country where justice is administered equally all round, we must arrive at the conclusion that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor.

MR. MORGANS: Nonsense!

MR. HOLMES: I say, the manner in which the Railway Department have transacted their business with the Ice Company is simply a tacit inducement to traders to rob the railways. If one company rob the railways in this manner, and the management close their eyes to it after being repeatedly warned, it is a tacit inducement to other companies to go and do likewise.

MR. PIESSE: From my experience, they do not require much inducement.

MR. VOSPER: It is compounding a felony.

THE PREMIER: Take care that you do not become amenable for libel.

MR. VOSPER: I am willing to take the risk of that in my paper. I do not shrink prosecution.

MR. HOLMES: One would think there would be no necessity for urging on hon. members opposite what they ought to do in this case. The duty of the Ministry is quite clear; and unless they carry out that duty fearlessly, as they should do, they can rest assured, their action will recoil upon them at a

later date. In connection with the Railway Department, there is one other matter which demands the attention of this House: the number of free passes issued at various times to distinguished visitors.

MR. KINGSMILL: And to others.

MR. HOLMES: And to others: quite so.

MR. DOHERTY: Are you referring to Miss Hickey?

MR. PIESSE: You should call for a return.

MR. HOLMES: I think if I did call for a return it would be both interesting and amusing. A member of the Upper House asked a question yesterday in connection with a certain distinguished visitor who had been travelling over the railways, and got an answer which did not satisfy him, and which, to use his own language, he said was a lie.

MR. GEORGE: That is not parliamentary, is it?

MR. HOLMES: I do not say it is; but the hon. member in another House said it. I want to know who has the right to issue these passes? So far as I can understand, no one has that right but the Commissioner of Railways.

MR. PIESSE: You are wrong.

MR. HOLMES: None but the Commissioner of Railways has the right to issue free passes; and then it is understood that he issues them to distinguished visitors only. However, in this colony it seems that the General Manager can issue free passes to distinguished visitors, and to some who, perhaps, are not distinguished visitors. Possibly that would not be so bad if it were only a free pass that were issued, but I understand that a first-class reserved sleeping-compartment is granted to some of them. I contend that the only remuneration due to the railway officials is the actual salaries voted to them by this House; and if they want to treat their friends to free passes over the railways, they should pay for those passes out of the moneys this House grants them for their services.

MR. DOHERTY: Do you refer to the railway servants? They have passes.

MR. HOLMES: No; I refer to the officers of the Railway Department—and I contend they have no authority to do so—issuing free passes over the railways

to their friends. I contend that this House pays those officers sufficiently well to enable them to buy tickets if they want to send their friends over the State railways. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I know that the principal officers of the Railway Department treat their wives to free passes, and I think that is a luxury which they should not be allowed to extend to their wives.

MR. PIESSE: By the regulations, free passes are allowed to the wives of officers at certain periods of the year.

MR. EWING: Then they ought not to be.

MR. HOLMES: But are they not allowed to travel free at all times?

MR. PIESSE: You ought to read and study the regulations before you speak on the subject. Free passes constitute a privilege which you are all crying out for now.

MR. HOLMES: The wives of the principal officers, I understand, travel free over the railways at all times of the year. I have been told by members of this House that they have asked for passes for their own wives and have been refused.

MR. DOHERTY: Quite right too.

MR. HOLMES: Quite right: the words were taken out of my mouth. I always understood the only privilege extended to a member of Parliament was a free pass for himself, and hon. members should not expect anything more; and I also understand that the officers of the Railway Department should not expect anything more than the salaries voted to them by this House.

MR. PIESSE: I am glad to hear you say so, for it reminds me of something I shall have to say later on.

MR. GEORGE: Unlike Ministers, however, they are not allowed to send telegrams on private matters.

MR. HOLMES: I contend that it is the duty of individuals we pay so well to set a good example to those under them. If a railway guard took a person into the brake-van at one station, and put him down at the next, and the General Manager knew of it, instant dismissal would follow; but officials can send their wives over the whole of the railways of this colony. Is it not an inducement to these guards, and the rest of them, to take advantage of the position and shift their friends from one station to the

other, if they find the officials of the department doing likewise? It is a very bad example indeed. I think there are other matters, too, the officers of the Railway Department have conceded to them, and that they have no right to have. I am referring to the free carriage of goods over the railway. I know the Chief Traffic Manager has often had a truck of timber sent from Yarloop to Guildford.

MR. PIESSE: You had that out last year.

MR. HOLMES: I did not mention it. You do not know what more I have to come out yet.

MR. JAMES: They will dismiss the man who told you.

MR. HOLMES: They will have to dismiss the whole of the staff. A truck with a pony and cow came from Mt. Barker to the Chief Traffic Manager at Guildford. Freight was debited to the Traffic Manager in the usual way, but the Chief Traffic Manager has a right—at least I do not know whether he has a right, but he does it—to issue free freight orders, and the account presented is indorsed "free freight." The auditor of the Railway Department, who, as I explained last year, is a servant of the Railway Department and not a servant of the Audit Department, passes this account as correct. Does the late Commissioner of Railways see the point now? I would like to know by some reply from a member on the Government side of the House, whether the Chief Traffic Manager has the right to issue these free freight orders, and if so, to what extent he is allowed to do it. If an employee takes a parcel from one place to another for a man, and the management get to know it, the employee is prosecuted or dismissed probably for carrying goods over the railway of the State without paying the proper freight. Is not what I refer to a bad example from those in authority?

MR. VOSPER: If the allegation is true, what takes place is downright thievery.

MR. HOLMES: Is not that a bad example to the employees? And can we wonder if disorganisation occurs throughout the service? I was always given to understand that in matters of this kind what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander, but from the management

of the Railway Department it would appear that things are altogether different. I suppose the House would be interested to know that during the summer months the whole of the Railway Department is supplied with ice free from the Government Ice Works, and the ice is delivered free of charge. It is sent by parcel delivery to the Railway Department, and delivered from door to door. A double supply came on Saturday, and in some cases I believe it was cut to suit the requirements of the officers.

MR. MORAN: Your information is very detailed.

MR. HOLMES: I believe two hundred weight was sent one day. If an officer lives at Guildford, the ice is sent freight free. Hon. members looked surprised when I said the Railway Department was corrupt or incompetent, or both. I am inclined to think I am proving my case as I go along. Now, I come to another matter, which would appear to be almost a falsification of the estimates. When Mr. Short, the Chief Traffic Manager, was appointed to the position he now occupies he received—I think I am correct in saying—a salary of £300 a year. When the Estimates came down the following year it was shown in the column of the previous year's expenditure that this officer had received £750, and there was an increase of £50 in the column of the current year, making it appear to this House that the officer was having an increase of £50 for the year. I think that at that time the officer in question had only been six months in the service, and he really ought to have drawn £300 of salary for the six months, but in the column relating to the previous year's expenditure the sum for the year was put at £750, and the House voted him £800, thinking it would only be an additional £50.

THE PREMIER: The column showed the actual expenditure.

MR. HOLMES: The Premier shakes his head, but I think the matter is worth inquiring into, and I believe in that same year both the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) and myself complained bitterly of the way in which the railway estimates were presented to this House.

THE PREMIER: Someone else may have had the money referred to. There were two officers.

MR. PIESSE: The Chief Traffic Manager was drawing that salary and then another appointment was made. You need not worry about all these things, because they take so much time to explain.

MR. HOLMES: Notwithstanding that this House was under the impression that the Chief Traffic Manager, when taken from the Great Southern Railway, received £750, and that he was getting an increase of £50, the Government really gave him an increase of £200 a year. It looked very bad on paper. I think that when the right hon. gentleman gets figures and paper —

THE PREMIER: The amount does not deal with the individual, but with the office.

MR. HOLMES: When the Premier has figures and paper he can prove anything. There is another question, that being in relation to the supply of trucks. The Chamber of Commerce at Fremantle have been complaining bitterly of the way ships have to wait for trucks, and so on. They cannot get trucks, and Mr. Short tried to set up the plea only recently, that they could have got trucks if they had wanted them, and there must be some misunderstanding. There is evidence that some influential persons in Perth can get any trucks they want, yet other merchants or traders at Fremantle have to take exactly what the responsible officers choose to dole out to them from time to time. This is another matter that requires attention, and would no doubt command the attention of hon. members on the Opposition side of the House if they had the opportunity of going into it, but I am afraid they will not have such opportunity. I have shown the necessity for it, and doubtless the people will carry out our wish when they get the chance to do so. As things are now, if forgery were proved, the Forrest Ministry would go on all the same. However, I hope that, when the general election takes place, action of this kind will be put down with a firm hand, and it is for that reason I am exposing the corruption which I say exists, and in regard to which I challenge denial. The object I have in view is to let the public know what is going on, so that they shall not be led away by the flowery statements made from time to time by the gentlemen in office. I propose to deal next with the abnormal leave of

absence that is extended to these railway officers. Hon. members will know that the General Manager returned from a six months' holiday to England in May, 1898.

THE PREMIER: The General Manager? He deserved it.

MR. HOLMES: Yes; he deserved it. Since then he has been to the Eastern colonies three times.

MR. PIESSE: Each time on business.

MR. HOLMES: I will presently tell what the business was, if the hon. member will let me go on. The member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) says some people assert that the General Manager is having a perpetual holiday with salary, and I am prepared to indorse that. The General Manager has been three times to the Eastern colonies since he came from England. He first went to a conference of railway experts in Queensland; and from what I see I do not think he gained much knowledge from the experts with whom he came into contact, otherwise the railways would be conducted in a manner different from that in which they are to-day. As I explained, he first went to Queensland to attend a railway conference. He came back, and some little time afterwards he left Perth hurriedly, and it was reported that when he reached Albany he announced that he was going to appoint a locomotive superintendent.

MR. PIESSE: That was a deliberate misstatement.

MR. HOLMES: It was stated at the time, and as the Engineer had not resigned, the officials left behind here had to deny the statement. On that occasion the General Manager came back without appointing the Locomotive Engineer he was supposed to have gone away to appoint. However, immediately afterwards he went away again to the Eastern colonies. In the meantime the Locomotive Engineer had been got rid of, I believe to please the General Manager, who said previously there was nothing against him, and that he carried out his work faithfully and well. He would not resign, and they could not make him resign. The Government gave him £1,000 to do so, and, having received the £1,000, he resigned, and Mr. John Davies then had a trip to the colonies to appoint a successor. There is another matter in connection with appointments

of this kind. Two years ago I began to trace this matter, and I have been following it up since, and have traced it.

MR. VOSPER: Sherlock Holmes.

MR. HOLMES: Two years ago I challenged the appointment of two officers at £450 a year. When the Estimates came on I wanted to know where those officers came from, and why they were appointed. I referred to one as an English "Johnny" walking about in knee-breeches. The Commissioner replied that they were competent men, that they were necessary officers, and that the department must have them to keep up with the work. The House voted the £450 salary.

MR. PIESSE: Four hundred.

MR. HOLMES: The House voted £400, and immediately afterwards those two officers disappeared. In the next year's Estimates it was shown that their salary was drawn, nevertheless; it was shown also that their passages back to London were paid. When the Supplementary Estimates, or Excess Bill, came on last year, there was, in a corner where perhaps no one would notice it, an entry of an additional £400 paid to those two officers. It would appear that these necessary officers were brought from London; and in order to induce the House to pass the salaries, it was stated the officers were necessary and competent; yet immediately afterwards, to the surprise of everyone, those two officers disappeared from Fremantle, and it now appears their passages home were, as I say, paid, and they got two years' salary.

MR. PIESSE: Nothing of the kind. It is a misstatement.

At 6:30, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. HOLMES (continuing): When the House adjourned, I was referring to the leave which had been granted to some of the chief railway officers. I find that no less than three of the prominent railway officials have been absent from office at one time; that the Engineer for Existing Lines, the Chief Accountant, and the Locomotive Engineer were absent all at one time; and the peculiarity about the position is that, during their absence, no officers seem to

have been appointed to their places, and yet the work of the Railway Department has gone on as if they were present. To an ordinary business man, it would appear that there was no necessity for those officers at all, if they could absent themselves from office for months at a time on full pay and the work go on just the same. However, the directing heads of the Railway Department take a different view of it, or they do not realise the extent of this granting of leave; but now that the matter has been brought under their notice, I hope they will take advantage of the information that has been conveyed. I have referred also to the General Manager's visit to England on six months' leave of absence, and since then he has taken three trips to the Eastern colonies. When he returned from the Eastern colonies on his last visit, the next officer to take leave was the Chief Traffic Manager; and since then the Chief Accountant has also taken a trip to the Eastern colonies, and at the same time the Chief Accountant, Mr. Paterson, is at present on four months' leave of absence, on full pay. Now, if there is a necessity for such an officer, it must be at the end of the financial year especially, when the returns of the department have to be made up; and if he is entitled to a holiday, he should take it at a time when the work in his office is not urgent. But for the Chief Accountant to be absent from that department which controls such a large amount of public traffic and a large amount of money, I think if he can be absent at the end of the financial year, there can be no necessity for a Chief Accountant. Further, the officer who has relieved him is placed at this disadvantage, that a lot of documents and books relating to the business of the office are not available to his successor; and if a visit were made to that office at the present time, it would be found that there are drawers locked and pigeon-holes sealed in which are documents and papers not available to the officer who is performing the duty. This Chief Accountant, in addition to his trip to the Eastern colonies, accompanied the General Manager to Queensland when he attended the conference there, and in addition to that he had a visit up the North-West coast, I believe to inspect the Roebourne-Cossack tramway line, though what in the name of fortune he had to do

with the inspection of that line it will be for those to explain who know better than I do.

MR. PRESSE: Do you say the Chief Accountant accompanied the General Manager to Queensland?

MR. HOLMES: If he did not do so, he went with the Chief Traffic Manager.

MR. PRESSE: Ah! That is different.

MR. HOLMES: However, he had his trip to the Eastern colonies, and now he is having his trip to the old country at the expense of this colony. When the chief officers are here, they seem to spend most of their time in travelling about to make inspections; though I believe the only way they inspect is to inspect the inside of the travelling car, not even getting out at stations where they are supposed to make an inspection. It seems to me there is too much of a combination existing between the principal officers in the Railway Department, to be beneficial to the country; and the existing combination managing the railways here might almost be termed "John Davies & Company," as if they were the proprietors of the Railway Department. It is about time someone stepped in and burst up this combination, and I am satisfied the result would be beneficial to the country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Is there a railway ring?

MR. HOLMES: I do not know; but I know there is a railway land syndicate, and I could give the numbers of the blocks of land in which that syndicate is jointly concerned; and I say if the General Manager combines with some subordinates in his department to speculate in land and other things, I can understand he will have a difficulty in refusing a request for four months' leave of absence on full pay, when one of those officers wants a holiday.

MR. VOSPER: One good job deserves another.

MR. HOLMES: A search of the Land Titles office will prove that there is a railway land syndicate; and, if that is so, it is not desirable in the interests of the country or of the Railway Department. It has been said this is only a question of administration, and that matters of this kind should not be brought into a debate on a motion of no confidence in the Government. I will admit, and I said

before, it is a question of management and of administration; but if the Government of the day countenances this sort of thing it then becomes a matter of more importance, and should certainly become a party question in this House. I have on two previous occasions referred to the necessity for an audit of railway accounts outside the pale of those officers altogether; and I have asked previously that the audit of railway accounts should be brought under the direction of the Auditor General. I ask again now that this be done, because the facts I have given prove there is a necessity for it, unless we are to have the railways carried on as the concern of John Davies and Company. Of course it has been said—the Premier said it yesterday—that every credit was due to the management of the Railway Department for the great surplus which they showed for the past year. I will admit that the revenue derived from the department is a pretty big revenue, and I will admit also that it might easily have been very much larger. I have shown this evening that one company swindled the department out of £3,000 or £4,000 of revenue; and if that amount, and sundry other thousands of pounds of which the department may have been defrauded, were available, the revenue would be much larger than it is to-day. The railways pay, because the freight is there and the department carry it, and they do not carry it in as satisfactory a manner as they might do; and all the facts show that out of the whole railway service there is only one line which pays, and that is the Eastern Railway, of which the commencement is at Fremantle and the destination Kalgoorlie; and all the department have to do is to put the goods on the trucks and carry them to their destination. All the other railways are carried on at a loss. The Great Southern Railway, which the Government bought a couple of years ago, has been run at a loss of about £20,000 a year since the date of purchase.

MR. PIESSE: On the working expenses?

MR. HOLMES: Yes.

MR. PIESSE: No; it has not. It has paid all the working expenses, besides £4,000 towards interest on the capital.

MR. HOLMES: I will take your figures as correct for the time being, but

I will avail myself of an opportunity of checking them.

MR. PIESSE: You will find them in the last year's report.

MR. HOLMES: I am not often wrong; I do not think I have ever been wrong in this House; and I have been given to understand that there has been a loss every year on the working of the Great Southern Railway; and if there has not been a loss in the past, I am sure there will be in the future, because now that Fremantle has been made the principal port of call for the mail steamers, the only traffic that did exist has been diverted direct to Fremantle.

MR. PIESSE: And you debit that to the management?

MR. HOLMES: No; I do not debit that to the management, but to the Forrest Government. If they had held over the purchase of that Great Southern Railway until to-day, they could have bought it at their own price; but they bought it two years ago—

MR. PIESSE: Three years ago.

MR. HOLMES: Although they were then preparing to make Fremantle the principal port of call for the mail steamers.

THE PREMIER: Four years ago.

MR. HOLMES: When the two hon. gentlemen arrive at what is correct, I will go on. Was it three or four years ago?

THE PREMIER: Four years in January.

MR. PIESSE: January next.

MR. HOLMES: Four years ago, then, the Forrest Government bought the Great Southern Railway, and made a boast of it.

THE PREMIER: The Parliament bought it too.

MR. HOLMES: On the recommendation of the Premier.

THE PREMIER: That is right.

MR. HOLMES: And the Government made a boast of it.

THE PREMIER: A good thing, too, that we did.

MR. HOLMES: And they have been ever since losing money over it. If, instead of buying it then, they had waited till the mail steamers were taken away from Albany, they could have got it at their own price.

THE PREMIER: Somebody would have lost the money, you know.

MR. HOLMES: Let the people who undertook the responsibility lose the money. Do we keep a Government in office to get railway syndicates out of any fix in which they may be?

MR. VOSPER: The Government exist for the protection of syndicates.

MR. HOLMES: I take it we have a Government to conduct the business of the country in the interests of the people of the country, and not in the interests of railway syndicates domiciled in London.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is a mistake: the Government exists for the syndicates.

MR. HOLMES: Coming back to this railway revenue, it resolves itself into a system of book-keeping. It is simply taking loan money out of one pocket, as the Treasurer does, and counting it as railway revenue. The whole of the material for the Coolgardie Water Scheme is carried over the Government railways, and it is carried and paid for out of loan money. The freight is paid for out of loan, and the railways are credited with the amount. Had it not been for the Coolgardie Water Scheme, the railway revenue would not have been anything like what it was last year.

MR. PRIESSE: It would have been £13,000 less.

MR. HOLMES: We cannot have the Coolgardie Water Scheme going on every year to make the railways pay. And I am looking to the time when that scheme will be completed, if it is ever completed.

MR. VOSPER: You will be grey-headed then.

MR. HOLMES: We shall then have to look somewhere else for railway revenue. I think I have said enough to convince the House—

MR. JAMES: The intelligent House.

MR. HOLMES: To convince the House that the Railway Department is corrupt or incompetent, or both.

THE PREMIER: It is paying very well.

MR. HOLMES: Yes; but if the Premier had listened, he would have learned that it could have been made to pay much better. Now I come to another item: the Jobson railway and tank concession.

MR. VOSPER: The Jobson job.

MR. HOLMES: I want to know how a syndicate has been allowed to construct 40 miles of railway without the sanction

of Parliament. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] I was always under the impression that no one could construct a railway without parliamentary sanction, yet I am given to understand the Jobson railway syndicate have constructed a line without such sanction, and further, that this company has been allowed to connect direct with the main line of Government railway. That in itself makes their line part and parcel of the railways of Western Australia, save that this particular section belongs to the Jobson Firewood and Railway Co.

MR. VOSPER: Call it the "Jobson job," for short.

MR. HOLMES: I find further that the material for the construction of this line was bought from the Railway Department. It was bought to connect a tank known as the 42-Mile tank with the railway service of the colony. The Government owned the tank first; it was full of water; they leased it to the syndicate, and then sold to the syndicate railway material with which to connect the tank with the main trunk railway. Now why could not the Government have done this themselves, because the necessity arose after for the Railway Department to consume the water which was in the tank?

THE PREMIER: What! Build a line of railway 40 miles to a tank?

MR. GREGORY: Why give the syndicate the concession?

MR. HOLMES: You had the rails.

THE PREMIER: We got the money for the rails.

MR. HOLMES: I will come to that presently—the money for the rails. I do not know whether the right hon. gentleman has got the money.

THE PREMIER: We were not prepared to build 40 miles of railway to get a few gallons of water.

MR. HOLMES: At one time the Government had the rails; now the syndicate have the rails and have not paid for them: therefore I take it the Government are now in a worse position than before. Once they had the rails, and now they have nothing except perhaps the unallotted shares. I think the Premier had better let me go on, because I am determined to prove what I said I would prove.

MR. VOSPER: The syndicate bought the water.

MR. HOLMES: Evidently, on the Commissioner's own admission, this syndicate or company had far more foresight than the officers of the Railway Department.

MR. JAMES: That is not saying much for them.

MR. HOLMES: Because the Commissioner says it was fortunate that the line was built, so that his department might get the water. The syndicate evidently saw trouble coming.

THE PREMIER: The syndicate built the line for the sake of their timber business, and not merely to get the water.

MR. HOLMES: Yesterday, sir, the right hon. gentleman appealed to you and asked to be allowed to go on. I appeal to you also, and ask for your protection.

THE PREMIER: But you talk such a lot of twaddle.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What did you talk yesterday?

MR. HOLMES: What I want to know in connection with those rails which ought to belong to the Government is, why was the syndicate allowed to obtain them on the time-payment system? It is understood that the terms for the sale of Government material are cash before delivery. In this case, however, the material was delivered first and the cash afterwards.

MR. VOSPER: A long time after.

MR. HOLMES: The cash is not forthcoming yet, and there is a doubt as to whether it will be forthcoming. It may be that when all the water in the tank is exhausted, the syndicate will say: "There are the rails; you can take them back again; they are of no further use to us." I hope those responsible will tell the House how it is an exception was made in this case; how it is that goods such as rails and sleepers are sold to a syndicate of this kind on the time-payment system. During the last session of Parliament, a few months ago, questions were asked in this connection both of the Commissioner of Lands and of the Commissioner of Railways. The answers given would have led the House to believe that the matter was easily explained—a very simple little story; but facts disclosed since prove it is not so. The House was told that the concession was made to one C. Jobson; and it has since transpired,

and it will be seen by looking up the records in the proper office in Perth, that the concession was granted to a syndicate, and not to C. Jobson. The shares are allotted, some to C. Jobson, some to prominent timber-merchants, and the others stand unallotted. Now, I want to know, who holds the unallotted shares, who is holding them, or who is going to hold them?

MR. VOSPER: They are held in trust.

MR. HOLMES: I am inclined to connect the sale of railway material with the unallotted shares. It seems to me someone holds those shares as security for the payment for the rails. However, that is only a supposition, though I do not think I am very far off the mark. Further than this, I believe the company are allowed to carry goods over this line of theirs, and subsequently over the line of railway connecting the Sutherland Siding with Kalgoorlie, and are allowed to pay their freight when and how they like. In other cases, freight has to be paid beforehand, but an exception is made in this case; and it is to these exceptions that I take exception. To make exceptions of this kind on such large transactions, smacks, I think, of corruption, if not of something worse. I am inclined to think it is the fear that the Opposition, if they get possession of the facts and go peeping into the ledgers, will get to know exactly how things are—it is the fear of something of this kind which makes hon. members opposite cling to the Treasury Benches so tenaciously, as they have been doing for some years past. I think I undertook to prove that the Public Works Department has been guilty of misleading Parliament.

A MEMBER: You have not done that.

MR. HOLMES: I am going to commence now, and I first propose to deal with the Fremantle Harbour Works. It has taken me thirteen months to prove statements I made in connection with those works. In July last year I made statements in connection with what had been going on, and it was admitted on all hands that if the statements were proved true, they would wreck any Ministry in any country. I am come now prepared to prove the statements, but I am satisfied they will not wreck the Ministry. I will admit that the Harbour Works at Fremantle are a great work, and have been

a great success in many directions, but there is such a thing as paying too much for your whistle, and I am afraid that in connection with the Fremantle Harbour Works the country has been paying too much. I find that according to the original design, and the design, I think, approved by Parliament, the scheme was to cost £800,000. I find also, that the first plan of the Harbour Works which was published bore this inscription on the corner—since that they have been issuing plans, but have left this information out—the first plan, I say, had this printed on the corner of it :

The work at present contemplated, under the title of "The Harbour Works," consists of a North breakwater having a length of about 3,400 feet, and a South breakwater having a length of about 2,000 feet (total 5,400). Also the dredging of a channel to a depth of 30 feet below low-water mark, and having a width of from 450 feet to 1,200 feet, for a total length of 8,400 feet, of which about 4,000 feet is through coralline limestone rock, which rises at mouth of river to low water level. Also the reclaiming of 85 acres of land, of which 31 acres will be on the North side of the river, and 54 acres on the South side. Also the construction of a wharf on the North side for a length of about 3,000 feet, and on the South side for a length of 5,300 feet. The original estimate for all these works was £800,000, and it is believed that they will be constructed for that amount or less.

THE PREMIER : Yes; but we widened it from 800 feet to 1,400 feet, and extended the mole.

MR. DOHERTY : The work was carried out for £100,000 less than it was estimated at.

MR. GEORGE : That has not been done yet.

MR. HOLMES : If members have made up their minds to vote—

A MEMBER : Made up their minds?

MR. VOSPER : What they are pleased to call their minds.

MR. HOLMES : If they listen, they will see they are wrong. That was the work that was to be done for £800,000. The Premier interrupted me just now with the remark that they had widened the basin a hundred feet.

THE PREMIER : No; from 800 to 1,400.

MR. HOLMES : There is something else you have not done. Do you say from 800 to 1,400 feet?

THE PREMIER : Yes.

A MEMBER : 1,200 to 1,400.

MR. HOLMES : This is the original scheme, and I am reading from a printed plan, which I think bore the signature of the Engineer-in-Chief, who said it was to be 1,200 feet.

THE PREMIER : Yes; the original one.

MR. HOLMES : The original one.

THE PREMIER : What date is that?

MR. HOLMES : If the right hon. gentleman will look it up, he will find I am correct. He says they extended the width of the basin 100 feet.

THE PREMIER : I say it is 1,400 feet.

MR. HOLMES : There is one thing they have not done, that being the wharf on the north side of the river, which was to cost £50,000.

MR. MORAN : What is the total amount of money?

THE PREMIER : What are you driving at?

MR. HOLMES : I will tell you presently. We have not been able to find out up till now what the Fremantle Harbour Works have cost up to date. I think I have arrived at it. Yesterday the Premier told us he had £48,000 in hand; not to finish the work, but that was the money he had available. Up to the 31st May, 1898, he had spent £700,000.

MR. GEORGE : May, 1898?

MR. HOLMES : May, 1898. I think I am right.

MR. GEORGE : He stated in the House that it was £632,000.

MR. HOLMES : £700,000 on the 31st May, 1898, leaving a balance of about £50,000 in hand. I take round numbers. I think if you will turn up the information supplied by the Auditor General, you will find I am pretty near the mark, except that I use round numbers to curtail figures. In 1898 £128,000 was re-appropriated to this work.

MR. MORAN : That is extra to the £700,000?

MR. HOLMES : That is extra to the £700,000. In 1899 £70,000 was taken from loan moneys for the same work.

MR. MORAN : Extra still?

MR. HOLMES : Extra still. I think there was £25,000 for sheds to be built on the south wharf, but the sheds have never been built, nor anything commenced. That makes, according to my figures, £948,000.

MR. MORAN: You are wrong there. Was £700,000 the first lot?

MR. HOLMES: £700,000 had been spent, and there was a balance in hand of £50,000. £128,000 was re-appropriated in 1898, and in 1899 there was £70,000 from loan moneys, making £948,000, and now the Premier has £48,000 in hand.

THE PREMIER: That was included in the amount.

MR. HOLMES: I am showing that the amount totalled £948,000 in round numbers, and if the Premier has £48,000 in hand, it must follow that the work has cost £900,000. What is the work to cost? Mr. McDonald, the expert engineer in charge of the works at one time, proved that if the original design—not the present design, but the original design—had been carried out, it would have cost £1,267,566. That is £467,566 more than the original estimate. But what the work will cost on the improved and enlarged conditions, the House must judge for itself. They dismissed Mr. McDonald.

MR. GEORGE: No. They will never dismiss Mr. O'Connor.

MR. HOLMES: We know they dismissed Mr. McDonald, and they did so because he supplied this information. What they will do with me for supplying information I am not prepared to say. However, I am willing to take the responsibility. If members will only consider for a few minutes what has to be done there, they will find it somewhat startling.

THE PREMIER: Do you not want the work done?

MR. HOLMES: I want the work done, but I said it was costing too much money.

THE PREMIER: Oh, I see. I suppose you are a good judge of the cost of work of that sort.

MR. HOLMES: Two years ago you asked me whether I was an engineer, a financier, or what I was. I do not know what I am, but I am here to have my say. In July, 1895, and on the 5th July last year, I said the wharf constructed on the South side of the river was in a state of collapse, and I was jeered at and laughed at. To-day I am here to say that, although they have been spending money on it ever since, it is still in a state of

collapse, and ultimately the greater portion of it will have to come down. The wharf is a mile in length, and the Eastern part of it is fairly substantial. For the last twelve months they have been driving piles, altering the width of it. It was 47 feet, I think, and they are now making it about 15 feet wider, and by that means tying it to the main bank. Mr. McDonald estimated that the cost of this would be about £40,000. That was only upon a little bit of it; yet there is only £48,000 in hand. The Western end of the wharf is still in a state of collapse, and the general impression is that it is the timber on top that is holding the piles, and not the rock below. The surface of it, which was originally levelled, has sunk, and it still sinks. These statements I made thirteen months ago, and, as I say, I was jeered at. This work was hurried on and constructed in this slipshod manner in order that the boast of the Premier might be fulfilled. He was boasting about the country that at a certain date such a wharf would be constructed, and such and such a boat should enter the harbour, or rather it was arranged privately that Captain Pitt was to bring a boat in on a certain date.

THE PREMIER: It was Mr. McDonald who did what you are speaking about.

MR. HOLMES: Under the instructions of the right hon. gentleman to get on with this work as quickly as possible.

THE PREMIER: Certainly; I always do that, but I did not tell him to do it badly.

MR. HOLMES: I said on the 5th July last year the wharf was in a state of collapse.

MR. GREGORY: Who were the contractors?

MR. HOLMES: We have not come to that yet. We have that for the last; the best for the last. In April, 1898, ten months before I made the statement, Mr. O'Connor wrote to Mr. Royce, the engineer in charge, and he said:

The whole of this expense is the result of the hurry scurry to complete the wharves sooner than it could reasonably be expected, and is of the character of what I call doing the "Ostrich Trick," namely, shutting one's eyes to the surroundings and assuming that no ill result will follow.

He concludes by saying "I hope no more of this kind of thing will be done."

MR. MORGANS: Who wrote that?

MR. HOLMES: Mr. O'Connor.

MR. MORGANS: He wanted to put himself right.

MR. HOLMES: I have not said who was right, or who was wrong. I think that is for members opposite to do. I am stating plain facts. At the same time I said that if you proceeded further along the back of the wharf you would find they put sheet piling in at a cost of £10,000.

MR. GEORGE: Was that not a judicious thing to do?

MR. HOLMES: Quite so, but they sent the dredge along the front of the wharf, and sucked the sand out from underneath the sheet piling.

MR. MORAN: Took the piles up through the dredge?

MR. HOLMES: They took the piling up, and to get over the difficulty they have been tying this mile of wharf to the land, by making it 15 feet wider, and tying it with cross beams. Now I come to the cost of the slip at North Fremantle.

MR. VOSPER: Was there not a question asked about those rotten piles?

MR. HOLMES: That is a good thing kept for the last. The slip was to cost £5,000, and when it had cost £20,000 the officer in charge was written to in the following strain. Mr. McDonald wrote to Mr. Royce, who, I understand, assisted in getting Mr. McDonald out of his billet, and subsequently got the billet himself.

MR. GEORGE: And subsequently got the sack himself.

THE PREMIER: He got a better billet.

MR. HOLMES: Mr. McDonald wrote in the following strain:

In reference to your extravagant reports, however, I have postponed taking any action in order that you might have an opportunity of verifying the wild statements contained therein. As you have not yet done so, and as the work is in abeyance, you will now act as directed below, and there must be no unnecessary delay.

They had spent £20,000 up to this time, and there was to be no unnecessary delay! The slip, he said, was designed by Mr. Royce, and Mr. Royce was afterwards put in charge of the whole of the Fremantle Harbour Scheme. Mr. McDonald went on to say:

The slipway was designed by yourself, and you neglected to have a proper survey of the foundations or have borings taken, with the

result that when you assumed there was solid rock, such did not occur.

That is Mr. McDonald writing to Mr. Royce.

MR. HIGHAM: Which man do you believe?

MR. HOLMES: I believe the facts. Further he says:

The measurements you made were indefinite and incomplete, and the measurements since made are quite useless.

That letter was written to the officer who designed the slip that was to cost £5,000 and ultimately cost £20,000, and that officer was afterwards put in charge of the Fremantle Harbour Works, and remained in charge until a few months ago. I make these statements, believing them to be true, and I can call for papers and persons to prove them.

MR. VOSPER: Have a court martial, and see how we get on.

MR. HOLMES: About this time every officer had a craze for a steam launch; and when they had bought all the steam launches in Fremantle, they took to building one. The original design for that launch showed the cost was to be £1,200. They built the launch, since known as the "Black-eyed Susan," and there was a great ceremony in christening her on Saturday afternoon; but she ultimately cost over £3,000 as against the £1,200 estimated.

MR. VOSPER: Will she float now?

MR. HOLMES: Mr. McDonald has had something to say about Mr. Royce in connection with the building of this "Black-eyed Susan." He says: "I find the original estimate of £1,200 was based on a sketch for a boat 50ft. long and 10ft. beam; and that after approval for same was given, the foreman boat-builder laid the keel, which was never charged up to the work." Prior to Mr. Royce's removal to Midland Junction, he spent £1,110, leaving only £90 for his successor to build the hull and find the machinery. The launch ultimately cost about £3,000. While the fight was on, I think Mr. Royce was sent to Midland Junction, and he stayed there for some six months at a big salary, for which he did nothing. When Mr. McDonald afterwards went, Mr. Royce took charge of the Fremantle Harbour Works. Mr. McDonald, in the report, says Mr. Royce spent £1,110 belonging to the

"Black-eyed Susan," leaving to his successor only £90. This is the way the money has been spent. One other matter I will refer to is:—

MR. HIGHAM: He is making a farce of his speech.

MR. HOLMES: I have repeatedly complained to this House about the answers given by Ministers to questions; and it will be noticed that recently I have given up asking questions, because when a member asks a question in this House he is entitled to a direct answer and to the truth. We do not get it. Referring to *Hansard*, it will be found that on the 22nd June, 1898, Mr. Vosper asked the following question:—

1. Whether the project of dredging the main channel near the North Mole, Fremantle, to a further depth of six feet had been abandoned for fear of undermining the piles recently put down? 2. Whether the said piles were only sunk some four feet into the ground? 3. If true, who was responsible for this condition of affairs?

The then Director of Public Works replied as follows:—

1. The main channel (*vide* plan 5,832, which will presently be laid upon the table) was never intended to run alongside this mole, and the mole does not in any way interfere with the main channel, which can and will be dredged to full width and depth originally designed and shown on drawings, without interfering with the wharf in question at all; but if the piles could have been got down to the depth intended, the sea bottom alongside the wharf at the eastern end would have been dredged some feet deeper than it is at present, in order to give deeper berthing to vessels lying alongside it. It was stated, however, some considerable time back when inquiries were made on the subject, that the piles could not be got down any deeper than they have been put down. 2. The piles are reported to be driven an average of 10 feet into solid rock. 3. The work was designed by the Engineer-in-Chief personally; and the officers who had charge of the construction were Mr. J. A. McDonald, resident engineer, and Mr. David Johnston, inspector.

This wharf on the north side of the river was constructed by contract, and I regret to have to refer to the firm of Gill, McDowell, and Company.

MR. A. FORREST: I beg your pardon: It was Mr. McDowell himself who tendered for that work, and his tender was accepted. I had no interest in the firm then.

MR. HOLMES: Mr. McDowell constructed it and was paid for it; but with

whom he divided the money afterwards is a matter of conjecture. Mr. O'Connor had something to say on this. Although this question was asked on the 22nd June, 1898, Mr. O'Connor on the 27th April, 1898—

THE PREMIER: Two years ago, that was.

MR. HOLMES: It does not matter how long ago. What I want to show is that we want some new men on those Treasury benches. Two months prior to that answer being given to the question put by Mr. Vosper, Mr. O'Connor said:

The same applies to the front piles on the North Mole wharf, which, for some reason which is unknown or altogether insufficient, were only driven nine or ten feet below the ground, instead of eleven feet below a line 30ft. under lowest water mark, as the contract provided for, and this, too, in the face of numerous assurances which I asked for and received, to the effect that these piles were going down to their proper depth, and moreover that one at least had been drawn and found to be uninjured after having gone down to that depth.

Here is Mr. O'Connor's statement that the piles had not been driven as they should have been driven; yet two months afterwards we have the reply to the question put by Mr. Vosper in this House, that the work had been carried out as originally intended. I say that reply proves that the department have been guilty of deceiving this House. In the designs for the Fremantle Harbour Works as first published, the work was estimated to cost £800,000, and the intention was to dredge to a depth of 30 feet right up to the railway bridge, as the plan showed. But the plan did not provide for a new railway bridge, and the piles of the present railway bridge had been driven to a depth of only a few feet in the sand; therefore, if the department had dredged to a depth of 30 feet in the immediate vicinity of the railway bridge, down must go the bridge. Nevertheless, in designing these harbour works no provision was made for a new bridge, although they were going to dredge in the immediate vicinity of the bridge. The member for the Murray (Mr. George) had something to say on that subject in this House, and he was told that everything was right: but since then the department have been bringing stone from the North Fremantle quarry, and throwing it in day by day to keep up the structure and make it safe. They

have not attempted to go within some hundreds of feet of the bridge, because they knew what the consequence would be.

MR. GEORGE : The natural scour would do it.

MR. HOLMES : Those in the department never see these things till it is too late, and I am trying to point them out so that the information may be of some use. In His Excellency's Speech, we have reference to a dry dock which is to be constructed at Fremantle. We have had this kind of reference in the Governor's Speech year after year. In 1896, prior to the general election there was a sum of £140,000 on the Estimates for the construction of a dry dock at Fremantle; at the same time there was a sum of £142,000 for deep sewerage in Perth and Fremantle; but neither of these works has been carried out, yet the money seems to have disappeared, or the greater portion. Two years ago I stated that although Fremantle had been promised a dry dock since 1896, the promise was there but the dock was not. Mr. Leake, who was then leader of the Opposition, interjected that "If you are not careful they will reappropriate the promise." I have always been opposed to the policy of reappropriation, but if the Premier will reappropriate the promise and construct the dock, I will support him in that direction. What I and the people at Fremantle want to know is, how is the dock to be built without the money? The money has been reappropriated. I find that in 1897, immediately after the general election, £70,000 was reappropriated from this vote, that in 1898 £35,000 more was reappropriated, making altogether £105,000 out of a total of £142,000, leaving £37,000 as a balance; and I suppose we will have the £37,000 to construct a dock which was originally estimated to cost £142,000! We have now the same old promise that the Government intend to construct the dock, when they know they have not got the money to do it. I next propose to deal with the question of finance. The Premier has stated recently on the gold-fields that no one on this side of the House knows anything about finance; and probably it is on that account he trifles with the finances of the country, expecting that no one on this side can check him. However, I have endeavoured

to analyse the last statement of the public accounts issued in the *Government Gazette* on the 30th July, and I intend to refer to some of the items there which appear on the credit side of the account, and which, to an ordinary business man, ought to appear on the debit side. I regret to observe that the Premier is leaving his seat just now, because there are some items in that statement on which I want information. I find in the published statement of accounts that we were supposed to have on the 30th June, being the end of the financial year, a surplus of £12,000; also that we have wiped out the deficit and have that surplus remaining. But at the end of July, only a month later, we find that we had a deficit in the July accounts amounting to £20,000; and that deficit with the surplus of £12,000 a month before will be found to make a total on the July transactions of £32,000. [Mr. A. FORREST interjected a remark.] This public statement of accounts is signed by John Forrest, Colonial Treasurer, and not by Alexander Forrest; therefore I should not expect the hon. member (Mr. A. Forrest) to attempt an answer. I find on the credit side of the account this item: "Railway Paymaster, £16,460 4s. 3d.;" and that appears as an amount to be recovered, although I am correct in saying this is the amount for salaries and wages due to railway officers by the Government for the month of June. That money was in the hands of the Paymaster, certainly, and it shows clearly in the accounts as an asset; but it is really a liability, being money in the Paymaster's hands to pay the June salaries. I find also £22,000 expenses for sending the Western Australian Contingent to South Africa, and that appears as an asset; but how the Government can expect to recover that amount as an asset is for the Treasurer to explain if he can. I understand that Western Australia sent a Contingent to South Africa, that Western Australia has to pay the cost, and will pay the cost ultimately. In other words, this colony has spent about £20,000 in sending Contingents to South Africa, and yet that amount appears in the public accounts as a credit and an asset, instead of a debit and a liability.

MR. MORAN : The total cost will be nearer £50,000.

MR. HOLMES : I find in the same statement that sundry persons owe to the Government £10,000; but what I should like to know is how much do the Government owe to sundry persons. The fact of a deficit in the following month proves that the Government must have owed sundry persons £34,000 or more, because on the liability side there is nothing that would be paid off, so far as I can see. Manipulating the figures like this may make it an easy matter to bring out a surplus of £12,000. I find there are £50,000 in three items shown as assets, which should have been shown as liabilities; and adding the £34,000 in July which I have referred to, these amounts make a total of nearly £100,000. Yet we are assured there is a credit on the past year's finances of £12,000! The Premier says he has nothing to trouble him now; that the finances were never in better order. I told him this afternoon, and I say it again, that give him a pencil and paper and he can prove anything with figures. He boasted at Fremantle about six months ago that he had a million and a half of money that he did not know what to do with. He boasted at Kalgoorlie the other day that he had a million which he did not know what to do with. I proved to this House last session that the Premier had been paying 5 per cent. on his borrowed money, and if hon. members will figure that out they will find that interest at 5 per cent. on a million of money is about a thousand pounds a week; so that if he has had a million of money in hand for 26 weeks, the interest on that would cost the country £26,000, and yet he calls that finance! If the manager of a large company financed in that manner, I know what the directors would do with him; and I know what the people of this country ought to do, and will do, with the present Colonial Treasurer, when they get the opportunity.

MR. GEORGE : What is that? the sack or the bowstring—which?

MR. HOLMES : Last night the Premier dared the members for Fremantle to vote against him; dared them to stop the works which were going on. As far as I am concerned, with this information in my possession—

MR. MONGER : Where did you get it from? Is the man here?

MR. HOLMES : I got some of it from the Premier.

MR. HUBBLE : Did you get it from any dismissed officials?

MR. MONGER : Has it ever been made public?

THE SPEAKER : Order! Do not interject.

MR. HOLMES : Yesterday the Premier dared the Fremantle members to vote against him, because he was spending public money down there, and he intended to spend more in the same place. Well, I do not think I was sent here with such an object; or at all events, if I were, I did not come prepared to carry out a project of that kind, which would keep a corrupt and incompetent Ministry in office simply because they were spending money in the constituency I represent. I did not come here with that object, and I am not going to carry it out.

THE PREMIER : Mr. Speaker, is it competent for the hon. member to call the Ministry a corrupt Government? It is monstrous, the use of words of this sort by a man of his stamp.

THE SPEAKER : I do not think it is a proper expression to use.

MR. GEORGE : Is it right, sir, for the Premier to use an opprobrious term against the hon. member (Mr. Holmes) by speaking of him as "a man of that stamp"?

THE SPEAKER : I did not hear the Premier say that.

MR. GEORGE : I heard it.

THE SPEAKER : I think it is improper so to speak about a member of this House.

MR. HOLMES : I think, sir, I said I was not sent here to support a corrupt Government.

MR. VOSPER : If the cap fits, they can wear it.

MR. HOLMES : The Premier objects to my making such statements, but he immediately imputes and says awkward things and ungentlemanly things about me, or attempts to say them in an indirect manner. He has tried two or three times to do that, and has failed. All he could do in that direction was to say that he made me a justice of the peace, and that he thought I should afterwards follow him blindly. But, when I found

him out, I threw that appointment back at him; and he has been looking for something else against me ever since, and cannot find it. My reputation, I think, is as clean as is that of any other gentleman in this House; if it had not been so, the Premier would have found me out ere this.

THE PREMIER: I do not go about trying to find out weak spots in people's characters.

MR. GEORGE: There is no weak spot in your personal character.

THE PREMIER: Certainly not.

MR. HOLMES: I notice the Premier vacated his seat when I touched on the question of the finances. I intended, as I said, to draw him on two or three of these items, but he was not to be drawn: he immediately got up and went out of the House. As soon as I have finished with the finances, he comes back and takes his seat again. However, I regret he did not give me the opportunity of obtaining the information I desired; but, I think, I may well conclude by saying that I have also proved this last charge of mine: that the Colonial Treasurer has been manipulating his accounts, with the object of deceiving Parliament, and of throwing dust in the eyes of the people.

MR. VOSPER: Hear, hear.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): I notice the applause as I rise on this occasion comes from the other (Opposition) side. I suppose that is all due to federation, and to the mighty changes which have come in its train. I have a desire, at this stage of the debate, to place the discussion, if possible, on somewhat different lines; and I wish to ask the House to consider with me for a few moments the changed conditions in which we sit here to-night, as compared with those under which we have sat hitherto. In other words, to my mind, as I have said all through the late federal campaign, party lines are now destroyed. They are absolutely destroyed to me: to me, at the present moment, they have no meaning whatever. The old party associations, with their tender recollections and personal friendships, still remain; but I shall prove to-night, before I sit down, that any appeal to party at the present moment is a vain and empty appeal, and that anyone who, at the present period in the colony's history, is led aside from

the narrow path by old party associations, is absolutely and entirely neglecting his duty. If I do not prove that, then I am wrong: if I do, and if I prove also that things have altered and that we must alter with them, then I shall expect some direct reply from those who control our late party, or else I shall expect every man of that party to be a free lance—"on his own"—with one main object in view, that object being the pursuit of what is best for the future of Western Australia under her changed conditions. [MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.] I am simply continuing in the career I have mapped out for myself ever since this question of federation became a live question. I know it would suit many hon. members—and none more than the Premier of this colony—were we now to consider that this great federal struggle is buried in the limbo of the past for ever. It would, no doubt, suit the Premier if we could say: "Very well; we will unite this evening as an old party." Party matters have not cropped up, and should not crop up on this occasion. If this federal matter be regarded but as a meteor which has dashed across the sky of politics in Western Australia, and has left no visible traces behind, that might be the position; but we know it has not been a meteor; it has been a mighty change, an absolute revolution in the whole political life of this country; a revolution causing, as it has caused, a complete change in the political life of this country, interfering altogether with the reason for the existence of parties as at present constituted; interfering altogether, I maintain, with mighty political planets like the Premier, and with the course of the satellites which have revolved round those planets in the past. Systems are changed. There is a new universe.

MR. VOSPER: "A new heaven and a new earth."

MR. MORAN: And in making these appeals to old party associations, I maintain that a red-herring is being drawn by the Premier across the path of Western Australia's proper track for the future. What do I mean when I say party ties are wiped out? I mean this: I shall presently state what has been the history of our own party in the past, since I have had the pleasure of belonging to it. What has been the history of our

existence as a party—the old party to which we used to belong, and who sit together still (on Government cross-benches)—I hope for convenience? We have been known in the past, and we must ever be known in history, as the public works party of Western Australia; that party which kept the Government in power—a Government which, with a great deal of success and advantage to the colony, let it be admitted, carried on an extremely progressive public works policy, a public works policy the like of which has scarcely ever been seen before in Australia. By whom was this Ministry kept in power? By the agriculturists of Western Australia and their members in this House. [MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.] We have been known in the past as the public works party, kept in power largely by the old settlers of Western Australia—a strange phenomenon! Here were the permanent settlers of Western Australia, who trusted one man for ten long years so well; and well he has fulfilled that trust. He has used it right up to the last moment; and the magnificent public works carried out are evidence of this; and the last and greatest of them all, the Coolgardie water scheme, is an evidence of a trust and a belief in one man—an affectionate belief in the career of one man—such as no Australian colony has ever seen before. It would be impossible to find in the pages of history any small collection of people such as there is in Western Australia, who allowed one man, one politician, after he had executed so many public works of such magnitude as we find in this colony, to embark upon a scheme the like of which has scarcely ever been seen in the world. That has been the reason for the existence of our party in the past. It cannot be said that we were, nor do I wish to claim that we were, the liberal association in this House any more than the party on the other (Opposition) side: as a matter of fact, true social legislation did not come from the Forrest Government; social legislation was always forced upon our party, let me admit, from that (Opposition) side of the House, or from the country. It is true that we “dished the Whigs” in every instance—(MR. KINGSMILL: Hear, hear)—by introducing such legislation when we could not possibly help it as a party. That is a plain, honest admission

of the truth. I have always had rather liberal tendencies, or I used to have. It may be I am getting somewhat crystallised and conservative in my old age; but so far as my powers went, I and several others on this side were rather inclined to introduce social legislation of a democratic character. But the past history of the party has been what I have stated. And now, are we to remain any longer as an agricultural or a public works party? Are we to remain here as a party kept in power by the agricultural people of Western Australia, or by their representatives—what for? For what earthly reason? And I should have liked to hear the Premier make this appeal and explanation as to what earthly reason there is for the existence of the agricultural party in this House at the present moment. What reason is there for the Premier of this colony to make an appeal to the old agricultural party of Western Australia? Why, the old methods of helping the agriculturists have gone for ever. Bonuses, and protection through the customs, which we as a party fostered always, have gone. We were the protectionist party in this House. They (the Opposition) were the free-trade party always. The protectionist leader himself, the old, tried, and trusted leader of the farming community of Western Australia, has been the principal means of destroying for ever the power of his own party to protect their own agricultural interests. He was the man, who, more than any other, had the question of federation settled in the affirmative in Western Australia; and he, above all other men at the present moment, should be the one to face the necessities of the future, to look around him and to see what is left to him of his old agricultural party. But to make a direct appeal to that party, and to say: “I am your friend, and I am the man who is supporting the agricultural interests at the present moment,” seems to me utter foolishness. How can the Premier now help the agricultural party? As I say, he has given away more than any other man in this colony. He gave away the autonomy or self-governing power of this colony, whereby we have helped the agricultural interests by direct bonuses or by protection. There is one thing

remaining: there is the sliding-scale—that abortion, as it has been so often called—that abortion of the sliding-scale. And as for me, as a protectionist, who has been fighting federation right through, I trust that the federal party in Western Australia will honour the promissory note they made in favour of us anti-federalists for the benefit in particular of the agricultural industry, with a view of helping the agricultural interests around Perth, to the last penny. I hope no attempt will be made to sweep away that sliding-scale, and that the people who were induced to vote for federation for the sake of that protection promised them by the Premier and by every other federal leader, will not be cheated by the federal party. And I should be very sorry for one moment to consider that we are asked to remain here as a political party to resist the encroachments of the federalists on the pledges they made on the public platforms of this colony two or three months ago. I have yet to be told that it is the intention of the Opposition, of the federal party, to endeavour to sweep away the sliding-scale in Western Australia; and I hope I am right in believing that all parties will do their best to act honourably towards the agricultural population of this colony, who entered into federation on the strength of these promises. Even if that were a reason, even if it had been bruited abroad that the Government were going to protect the farming interests through the sliding-scale, and that the Opposition were going to destroy the sliding-scale, where is the mention of it in the Governor's Speech? Did the Premier mention one word about the sliding-scale, or give one single indication of what he is going to do in this matter? Now, when the country expects men to come to the front and to face the issues under federation, there is only one mention of the tariff; and that is a proposal to take some of the duties off, that he intends to take some duties off; and if once he opens up the financial question, I do not know whether he will be brave enough and able enough to stop others in the House from interfering with the tariff generally; and then, whether they do or do not alter the tariff, let me ask what would be the sense of this Parliament's interfering with the tariff at all? That is what I

want to know. Of course, the question of the duty on meat I place outside the argument altogether. The duty on meat has been no protection to the pastoralists for a long time. Meat is altogether outside the argument. We ought not only to take the meat duty off, but also, if possible, to subsidise, by some means or other, the importation of meat. But what would be the good of tariff revision this session? Why keep a party together for the sake of it? There is the general election after Christmas, and the country, as a country, has yet to say whether it is going to have freetrade immediately with the Eastern colonies, or whether protection shall be continued. Why interfere with our tariff this session; why hamper the country when we have no possible means of judging what will be the result of the general election after Christmas, when this very question of the tariff will be one of the main issues which will make a new cleavage between old parties? Next Christmas, or a month or two after, I hope to see a complete amalgamation of the forces of this House, with the object, if possible, of doing their very best for the country under the strained conditions in which Western Australia will find herself in a few years. And if there be a cleavage, I hope it will be a new one following the lead of those who will give the manufacturing and agricultural interests of Western Australia whatever small benefits may be obtained for the next five years out of the sliding-scale. Where is the reason for the party appeal of the Premier, and where are the principles of those who listen to and come to that call? What are they here for?

MR. JAMES: That is what we have been asking for five years.

MR. MORAN: Well, with all due deference to the member for East Perth (Mr. James), I hope I am not looked upon as one who is indulging in any recrimination against his party. What I want to point out is that conditions have altogether changed. The principal reason for the existence of the Forrest Government has gone. The reason has gone because public works have become a danger to this country, and I am against them tooth and nail. We have borrowed beyond all possible hope of being financially sound for the next few years in this colony, under the temporary loss we

shall suffer under federation. The right to protect the agricultural interests is destroyed by the leader of my party; and how or why am I bound to follow any party? Perhaps some members of the Opposition will rise and tell me.

MR. JAMES: You must ask the Premier first.

MR. MORAN: What do we find in the Governor's Speech this session? We find the same old party principles set forth—new proposals for loan expenditure. Now that is our old party cry. If I find in this House to-night, or find in looking through the finances of Western Australia, that we cannot possibly as honest men—that we cannot unless we are criminals to this country, political criminals—go into and incur any additional public works expenditure, how, then, am I bound, or how is my party bound, by this political cry of public works? Last year, I seconded the motion of the leader of the Opposition against new public works. This year, I think we have tenfold more reason to be careful than we had then. For why? For one thing: no man, federalist or anti-federalist, can foresee what the financial position of Western Australia is going to be. No man can indicate to me what revenue we shall get under the federation tariff, because the federal tariff is not yet born. It has to be made, and it may be a free-trade tariff, in which event we may lose £600,000. On the contrary it may be a high protective tariff, and so high that we may still lose our revenue. If it be so high that Victoria and New South Wales will send us all our goods, we shall be left stranded without revenue. Who will demand allegiance of me in a further plunge into borrowing? When the Premier is standing on a bed of shifting sand, when he has deceived the country, and has wilfully neglected an opportunity to touch the financial position of Western Australia, the real crux of the question, then I say that to me party allegiance has no sense at all. To come straight to the position of Western Australia, and the proposal of the Government for fresh loan expenditure. Last year I opposed such expenditure on two grounds. First, on the ground of prudence, that it was not wise to plunge ahead in this reckless manner, and, secondly, I said the Government were fooling the country by promis-

ing works which they could not carry out.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear: and they are doing it again.

MR. MORAN: The first reason, that of prudence, has increased tenfold; and my second statement is correct. There is not a foot of the Leonora railway yet in hand, and the rails are not yet in the country, but still we have more proposals for railways. All our calculations are gone. We cannot calculate what revenue we shall have with which to pay our way. I repeat that all our calculations are gone. The basis of calculation is removed, and yet there is the blind, old, reckless way of plunging in; and, in this case, plunging in where angels fear to tread. Every Australian colony is standing on the verge of a change which she cannot fathom, and Western Australia more than any other colony is unable to penetrate the future, so that the greatest caution must be exercised. Safety first. Go slowly first. Till we find our feet, till we see what the federal tariff will be, and till we ascertain what revenue we shall have, let us refrain from carrying out public works. I opposed public works last year on these grounds. I said it would be criminal to plunge this colony into more public expenditure. We have had many battles in this House in the past in connection with loan Acts, and we remember them well. The old agricultural party were always sound and solid, faithful and true to the leader of their choice. What were they buoyed up with in those times? Three things. First, by the fact that this colony was independent, and therefore was master of her own destinies. She was master of her own revenues; she could impose taxation if she liked, and if so much taxation would not make her solvent, she could raise more. She was, I say, complete sovereign in regard to her own financial matters. They knew that while the colony was independent, it was only a question of taxation to pay her way. But Western Australia has no longer independence. We no longer as a Parliament shall be supreme master over taxation, and never shall we be so again. We shall be second for ever more in regard to taxation. The Federal Parliament has an absolute right and title over every industry and everything we have in this

colony. First and foremost comes federal taxation. There are no reservations in the Federal Act. There is no taxation we might apply, that the Federal Parliament might not apply before us. We are, I repeat, second. How, then, do we know who will be served first? How can we tell what the necessities of the Federal Parliament will be? How can we lay our finger on one source of taxation and say that there we are secure? There is no taxation that we can impose in which the Federal Parliament has not a finger. That holds good even in relation to railway taxation. The Inter-State Commission has powers which no man can understand, and at length we shall learn how much independence we have in dealing with our railways in Western Australia. The first reason was national independence, the second being sovereign rights over taxation, and the third, more important, perhaps, than all as far as the party here is concerned—I refer to the protectionist party—this colony had fiscal freedom. What did it mean to our party? It meant that we had a right to fix the tariff, and while prosperity was flowing on in our goldfields we had the right to nourish every industry in Western Australia by protection or bonus, and to build up the industries of the colony. That right has gone for ever. We can no longer help our agricultural industries by protection. Our fiscal freedom is, I say, gone, and we have no longer any reason to plunge in for public works. We cannot divert some of the wealth of the colony into the natural channels of agriculture, according to the old methods. I say that the day when we could do that is gone. We exist as a protectionist party, but we have no longer fiscal freedom; therefore we no longer have the right to interfere with our tariff in such a way as to benefit the very interests which have kept the Government in power. These three things are gone, and with it is gone all earthly reason for this party in this House supporting the Government any longer in a wild and reckless work of public expenditure. Not only has this change come about, but unfortunately some of the dire results of it appear to be very close to us. The immediate future is clouded with difficulty, as far as I can gather, and when I come to the financial question I will show without doubt that there is a

hard row for the new Treasurer to hoe, whoever he may be. The position will be no sinecure for the next Minister who takes office in this country, and never in the history of the whole of Australia will there be a Minister who will enter into power with so much doubt as will the next Premier in Western Australia.

MR. MORGANS: Why do you try to defeat the present Premier?

MR. JAMES: Because the present Premier made a big enough mess.

MR. MORAN: I suppose on the old plan that, since a change cannot be for the worse, it may be for the better. The near future is clouded with probable financial shortage. Inevitably, we lose a quarter of our customs revenue, for that is part of the statute law. Can we afford to lose it and plunge ahead in the same wild reckless way? We may get some of it back, but by the law the Federal Parliament is entitled to take everything. Our customs amount to about £900,000, and in that matter we lose £200,000 of our revenue. That is not improbable, but fairly probable. Also there is the other question: what can we get from intercolonial customs in Western Australia at the present time? We gather some £300,000. It was a little over in the past, but now we gather about that amount from intercolonial customs. Then on the top there is a general election, which will take place probably about February or March. We must meet early, if we are to do any good in relation to any fiscal scheme. If the free-trade party is returned to this House, we stand to lose straight away a quarter of a million, or more. That will be gone under intercolonial free-trade, the amount being probably £300,000. Mr. Owen gives an estimate of something like £300,000, and I think that is nearly correct. Mr. Coghlan, of New South Wales, gives a very much higher estimate. He says we will lose a great deal more than £300,000. That is a serious matter, yet it is not mentioned in the Administrator's Speech. These are matters which are engaging the attention of the people, and make men think seriously. I repeat, that if at the next election the freetrade party is returned to power, there will be an absolute loss of £300,000 straight away, yet not a word is given in the Administrator's Speech regarding the mighty changes

coming about in this colony. Do I overstate the matter? Is there a possibility of holding that amount in any way? None whatever, except moderate men come into Parliament next session, and leave us the benefit of the intercolonial tariff. Even then we shall lose some of our revenue, and in five years' time that which we now receive from the intercolonial tariff will have disappeared for ever.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If you first reduce the amount to £600,000 you cannot lose that afterwards.

MR. MORAN: It may be a year before the Federal Parliament produces the federal tariff, but the question may be tackled in the first session. The ratio comes to the same, and if we lose the intercolonial duties the Federal Parliament will take a quarter of the customs duties that remain. If we are left with a revenue of £600,000, a quarter of that comes to £150,000, and that leaves us with £450,000 instead of £900,000. That is the absolute state of the figures, which no one can deny. What loss stares us in the face in regard to one of the public works of this colony? The Coolgardie Water Scheme has yet to reach its most interesting stage. I am perfectly certain that my friend, the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), will admit this. There are two certainties in connection with that scheme. First, the interest on two-and-a-half millions, amounting to £75,000, and secondly the sinking fund that the Premier promised in introducing the subject, the amount being three per cent., and the sum reaching another £75,000. That should be going on now, because we have already borrowed the money, but I shall show later that it is not going on. That is another £150,000, and there will be the up-keep, amounting to £175,000 more. These are certainties of that scheme. We will have to pay for the up-keep of the scheme, and the probabilities of revenue are not too certain. Of a certainty we have the expense, and we have yet to devise legislation which is going to get that water sold, and give us back the revenue. Not a word of all this is in the Administrator's Speech; not a word of all these difficulties facing Western Australia. Yet the scheme is going on, and the money provided is not going to nearly complete

it. I know what I am talking about, but I do not want to go into details. Originally the scheme only provided for bringing the water in a main pipe to a certain place, but now it has to be scattered far and wide over the country, and we know that the development of the mines cannot pay for sending water there. I will refer to the people of whom we have heard so much lately: a certain ill-defined leaderless legion called the "Corner party." I am going to ask the independent remnant of that glorious party whether their independence is real or not. I want to take this opportunity of saying I regret very much one thing in connection with the matter, and that is that a paper should have referred to me as the leader of that party. That is not true, and I regret the statement very much, because I know perfectly well that these are unpleasant matters, and that someone may think I endeavoured to force myself into that position.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You contradicted it.

MR. MORAN: I did. Those belonging to that party will know that I have never endeavoured to thrust myself to the front in politics unduly or unnaturally. Had I been a place-seeker that might have been done, but I am not a place-seeker, except by the legitimate task of open discussion in this House, with the colony behind to say who are the men who have shown the ability to re-examine the affairs of the colony, and who are the men who are not afraid of giving expression to their honest convictions. That is the only position I stand in to-night. I am one of the eight gentlemen who broke away from the Government and came to the conclusion that we should no longer support the Government and the public works policy; one of those eight and no more. And now I ask what are we coming to in the face of all these things? In the face of all these impending changes may we not reasonably have expected from the Premier some indication as to the future, some indication of what he will do, but there is not a word as to how the Government will keep the colony from financial difficulties, which the Premier, more than any other man in the colony, has led this colony into. I own him as a leader no longer. I could not do it. Even had there been

a party policy set forward this session it is pretty hard to imagine that such a cleavage and such a resolution as took place over federation, can be bridged over almost within earshot of the battle. Things occurred in that federal campaign which will take a long time to heal over. I say this, not because I differ with any man in his honest convictions, not because I differ with one owing to his taking up a certain view of a matter, and not for a moment do I wish to say the Premier was not sincere, but he ought not to have represented that he had a threat from Mr. Chamberlain that if we did not federate the goldfields would be cut adrift from us. We were met with that representation wherever we went. The agricultural party, the old settlers of the colony, the manufacturers, and the people of Perth and Fremantle were all telling us about it, and we were led to believe that such was the case, until the Premier contradicted the assertion; but then it was too late to stop the effect. People were led to believe that we would lose the goldfields if we did not federate. That was not an honest vote on federation. We did not have an honest vote at all, and I say, and always will say, that there was no hope of that separation movement being carried. It was a wild thing at the best, but it was used as a lever to get the federation scheme adopted. No British Government would cut off a desert like the goldfields and make a colony of that part of Western Australia whose only interest is an industry that may not last fifty years. Separation ought never to have been threatened. The very man who ridiculed the petition, and who gave a reply to the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, in which he proved that the statements made were false from beginning to end, and that the goldfields were telling untruths, frightened the people afterwards into federation on the ground of the danger of separation. That is where I differ from the Premier; that is where I find fault with him; and that is where carelessness lies in this matter. I do not say I believe federation would not have been carried without that threat, for I believe that it would have been. At one time our cause did not look so bad in Perth and Fremantle, and I think we were doing well. We fought a good battle. We did not use threats, or any-

thing of that kind, and at one time it looked as if we were winning, until this threat was used by two men, of whom the Premier was one.

MR. GEORGE: One was a man, and the other a traitor.

MR. MORAN: Used by two men who have done more in the cause of anti-federation to my mind than any other men in Western Australia. One of them was in the other House. That is how I find myself in reference to this matter. If I may be allowed, I will now go on to the question at issue, and say, "Let us forget the federation fight altogether; let us forget now what side we were on, and let us face the altered conditions of the colony under federation, so as to realise the exact position." If members will follow me I will endeavour to point out what this country is pledged to in the way of loan expenditure. These are figures to which I have given considerable thought, and I have checked them with at least one other member who will probably have something to say on this question, and we have arrived at the same conclusion by different methods. I am sorry the Premier has not been man enough to remain in his seat to hear these figures stated, and that he is taking this matter too much as one of personal opposition. I dislike very much to see any man taking political differences to heart in a personal manner; and the sooner we in this country rise to the higher level, and consider political questions on their merits without considering the man, the better it will be for all of us. The Premier has gone from his seat, having probably made everything right for a division before leaving. I was not at the last caucus meeting of Ministerial supporters, and I will tell the House the reason why I did not attend. I had attended the previous meeting, and I gave the result to the newspapers, because I thought the country was entitled to know the reasons which actuated members in taking a particular course. But I found afterwards that I was expected to treat it as an obligation to say nothing about what was to be done in the second caucus meeting, I thought that was too much for me altogether, and I stayed away. The country expects to know from me why I changed my opinions, and if I go back to the old party with which

I have been hitherto, they will want to know whether I get anything in exchange. Therefore I did not go to the last caucus meeting. At the previous meeting an honourable understanding was arrived at that we were to be given an absolutely free hand, that is in regard to public works—an absolutely free hand. That is the reason I have given notice of my intention to move an amendment in this House, because I know the present amendment (Mr. Illingworth's) will be defeated—I have reason to believe that; but I do not see how my motion can be defeated, for it is a motion confirming an arrangement made between ourselves and our leader. How can we possibly be defeated?—because it is the policy of the leader and it happens to be the policy of eight men here. We may be divided on the general vote of want of confidence, but if we are earnest and honest about our intentions towards the country, there can be only one result, and that is to stop public expenditure.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Won't that be a want of confidence.

MR. MORAN: No; a different question. The financial position is this: The loan authorisations, before we passed the Loan Bill last year involving over a million of money—and that Loan Bill, I may say, was put together according to a habit the Premier has got of putting his loan proposals in sections, bits of public works here, there, and other places—the loan authorisations up to last year were about £11,870,000, according to the accounts published in the *Government Gazette*. The Loan Bill as proposed last year, with the Norseman railway and the Bonniavale railway in it, provided for an expenditure of £1,406,000; and when I was criticising the cost of those works completed, the then Commissioner of Railways interjected that the total would run into £906,000 without rolling-stock. I will quote from the *Hansard* report what he said about the rolling-stock, that he would require at least £500,000 for rolling-stock. The Premier said they would require even more. Add these sums together and you have a total of £13,276,000. Just a parenthesis here: We cut the Norseman and Bonniavale lines out of the Bill of last year; but we have them before us again in these proposals; for though the

Bonniavale item is not here, we have the proposed extension of the Murchison Railway to Nannine, which more than balances the estimated cost of the Bonniavale line of last year. To complete the Nannine Railway would mean, I expect, another quarter of a million; but the Government propose at present to spend an amount of money in hand for the work. Add to these the new proposals for a dry dock at Fremantle, which the Premier estimates to cost about £200,000; also a water supply for the metropolitan districts, which he estimates to cost about £300,000, though I am sure it cannot be done for the money; add improvements to the Boulder Railway, and new expenditure on the proposed loop line and station buildings, etc., for which altogether £100,000 will not be sufficient, how much will that make? An extra £600,000; and adding these to the other proposed authorisations, we get a total of £13,876,000. I am not going to talk about reappropriations. This large total I have arrived at should be enough to make any sane man pause, and ask "Whither are we going?" But this is stating the matter in its best and most favourable light; for how much more serious is it when we come to examine it in the light of further facts? Let us ask first, will the money be enough to do the proposed works? This is how I figure out the answer to that question. The total amount expended on the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme, as published in the *Government Gazette*, is £592,803 up to date. Assuming the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief to be correct, that he can complete the scheme for 2½ millions as first estimated, then if he can complete for that amount there will be nearly £1,900,000 more to be expended on the work, and that is without reticulation at all. Now we come to the question of the money in hand at present, and the authorisations outstanding. Of the loan authorisations for public works proposed in 1896, totalling £6,000,000, we raised £3,000,000 on account of the loan of 3½ millions for general purposes, and we have raised £1,000,000 on account of the Coolgardie Water Scheme (estimated to cost 2½ millions); making a total of £4,000,000. We have further raised against authorisations £1,800,000; consequently we have

raised in all £5,800,000. What amount further have we to raise? Our remaining authorisation on the old loan is £200,000; we have an authorisation of £600,000 for the last loan; besides this the Premier says he has in hand £970,000, of which £330,000 is in stores; but supposing the whole of it to be cash, and to be applied in completing the Coolgardie Water Scheme, there will still be left a million to be raised for completing that scheme, on the Engineer-in-Chief's estimate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions for the work. What amount has the Premier got to do that work with? There is a million to get somewhere, and where is he to get it from? Does it not look very much as if there was another million to be borrowed for the Coolgardie Water Scheme? If so, that would make a total of something like £14,876,000 to complete the scheme of public works. But here I wish to take into account a credit from old loan authorisations prior to 1896, amounting to £754,494. I do not know whether that credit from the old loans carried with it any obligations in the way of works to be completed; but, crediting the Treasurer with the whole amount, that still leaves a total of £14,121,500. Then, to complete the Harbour Works at Fremantle at the estimated cost of a million, we have spent three-quarters of a million—or rather, from information supplied to-night, I find we have spent nearly a million on the Harbour Works and additions. That makes my figures all the worse. We have to borrow a quarter of a million to complete that harbour scheme, and this brings the obligations up to £14,370,000. A further amount has to be allowed for lighthouses and other small works, bringing up the total to £14,400,000—practically $14\frac{1}{2}$ millions—that is if we give to this Government the power, as they have had the power hitherto and as they have gone on in the past, to commit us in the face of the difficulties ahead to a total expenditure of $14\frac{1}{2}$ millions of money for completing the scheme of public works! Then, secondly, will the revenue bear this expenditure? Briefly, I work out the figures thus: Loss from intercolonial duties under Federation, £300,000. Who shall say what is the further loss on the extra Australian tariff? We may gain, but that is in the future; or we may lose; and if the free-traders in this colony get

their way we may lose altogether, for their idea is to cut down the revenue from customs until we can get nothing from customs. I am not taking any consideration of the loss from the extra Australian tariff. We have to add in this calculation £15,000 of a dead loss on the working of the Great Southern Railway.

MR. PIESSE: That is very doubtful.

MR. MORAN: We must also add an increased charge for the Coolgardie Water Scheme for sinking fund, which I take at £75,000. These are the increased charges; the others are the losses; and you must add the two together to get a balance on the expenses with upkeep and other charges. We are now paying interest on 11 millions of money, and by the time we have completed our public works policy, as proposed by the Premier, we shall have to pay on $14\frac{1}{2}$ millions of borrowed money. Thus you have a certain decrease in the revenue of the colony amounting to £315,000, and an increased expenditure amounting to £350,000, making a total in round figures of over £665,000. Supposing the Coolgardie Water Scheme to be self-supporting, we shall still be the worse off by £420,000, and how is that difference to be made up? I remember the Premier, in speaking on the Loan Bill last year, quoted the value of our gold mines, the face value of their scrip in the market at 70 odd millions; so that following that line of argument I want the Premier to quote the value of these mines now, the reduced value, and then borrow accordingly. As an example, I will mention one mine up there. It is often said to me, "Why do you run down the goldfields?" I reply, "What is the good of blinding the country about the value of the scrip of our gold mines? Those mines cannot last for ever; they may not last 50 years. What is the good of deceiving people by quoting the scrip value of our gold mines? Take, for instance, the scrip value of the Associated Mines, which represented £6,000,000 only a short time ago, and the value is down so low that the difficulty is to say what the real value is."

MR. MORGANS: The Premier's reasoning about the value of the mines was only collateral, by way of advertising the colony.

MR. MORAN: Let us have the truth. The truth is that when we use the face

value of our gold mines as an advertisement for the colony, it is the worst advertisement we can put forth, because of the great drop which may occur at any time in the scrip value of those mines; and surely I am entitled to use the reduced scrip value of those mines as a collateral argument, and say we should be cautious in borrowing more money for public works. As to the real value of the mines, we know the mines will come right in the finish; but there have been millions of money wasted on those gold-fields, and whilst the mining companies are getting over those troubles, there are a couple of thousand men idle in Kalgoorlie streets. In view of all these things, I say we have been living up to high-water mark; we have been forging ahead at high-pressure speed; and I object to the Premier's policy in pledging this country to a penny more of expenditure at the present time. I do not care who may be hurt by this stoppage of expenditure, whether it be Kalgoorlie or Fremantle or the Boulder; but I say a sacred duty lies on every public man to take in sail and see whither we are going, before we allow the ship of State to dash on the rocks of insolvency. In carrying out the public works policy of the Premier, who seems to be seized with a fever for public works, we know how easy and how tempting it is for the Premier to promise works in this direction and in that direction, and say to members of this House, "I dare you to oppose this." I say that is a weak kind of argument. There is no argument in it. To argue as to the merits of each separate proposal in a Loan Bill is not what we have to do in this House: we have to look at the proposals as a whole. The question of borrowing is not one to be settled by the people or the members interested in each of the several railways proposed; for I warn hon. members that they will be children in the game of politics if they follow that line, if they cannot see that by fighting the battle over the items separately, any member who has an item for his district cannot vote against similar works for other districts without endangering the particular work in his district. Who knows the game better than the Premier? He will say: "What! Do the members for Fremantle

vote against this work, when so much money is to be spent in Fremantle?" What does it all mean? What will people think of my voting against the Leonora railway line? The Premier will say to my constituents: "Here I am going to give you a railway line, and your member will not let you take it." He will say to me—and an awful effect it will have on me, too—"You are going against the people of Kalgoorlie and the Boulder." I will say: "Yes; the tender recollections of the past will give me a twinge of the heart on on that account"—like the tender recollections I felt the other day, when the Premier went to Kalgoorlie and received that magnificent ovation from 27 people there, when he spoke about me as being opposed to their interests. When I read the speech, I said: "This is the first occasion in my life on which I have been in complete accord, both politically and privately, with almost every man, woman, and child in my electorate." I say this forthcoming reproach of the Premier will be the unkindest cut of all. How it will stagger me! But I shall feel what a sweet and noble thing it is to do my duty, notwithstanding the tender affection I have for the best interests of my constituents. I know I shall triumph upon that occasion, by hard fasting and constant thinking; and when the vote comes along, I warn members in this corner that those will be the tactics adopted. Members will be led on from one public work to another; and we know what human nature is. A general election is coming on, some member's works will go through; and then will come the unholy grab for the whole lot. If one man gets his little line, everybody else will go for his—hands, feet, teeth and all. The Premier knows this well. He knows if once he can assuage such hon. members, if once he can give members a soothing powder by talking about the old recollections of the past, the old ivy that clings round the old tree, when he rouses up recollections of party and says: "Gentlemen, do not let those fellows get into power, for they have always been against you"—if it reaches that stage, the country is lost; and on the heads of those who allow it to reach that stage be the blame! May I be allowed to say a word or two on the actual political situation in regard to

members on both sides of the House? On this side we see direct Government; there a direct Opposition. Here we have an old party with all its tender recollections; there we have a newly-formed party, very determined at the present moment. But let both sides remember this: I ask my party: What is left for them to go to the country on? And what is the worth of the Opposition policy, if it be not the best one at the present moment—to save the country from further loan expenditure—that is their policy. Now here (Government cross-benches) is a small party—"the legion that never was listed," as I said before; free-lances at the present moment, roaming about the country without a leader. What are their political convictions? They are solid and sound. Here are eight good men and true, trying at all costs to stop public works expenditure. Each one in his heart knows it is his duty to stop the Premier from spending more money; but the eight are not prepared for a direct vote of want-of-confidence, after the information conveyed by the Premier that such a vote must mean a dissolution.

MR. GEORGE: That is another bogey.

MR. VOSPER: He has denied that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He says he never said it.

MR. MORAN: Those around me know whether I am telling the truth or not. If it does not mean a dissolution, the most direct methods must be adopted; but if it does mean a dissolution, neither the Opposition nor the "corner party" wants that. A dissolution has no meaning just now, immediately prior to a general election. It would mean nothing, because it would be followed immediately afterwards by another general election. Now, I am going to give my honest opinion. I had the best of reasons for believing that there would be a dissolution. I am loth to say, from information I have received, that the Premier is not speaking without his book on this occasion. I wanted him in the House to-night to say to the eight men on these corner benches, whether he meant them to have an absolutely free hand, or whether they were still to be afraid of a dissolution, still to be afraid of taking upon their shoulders the odium of throwing the country into the turmoil of a

general election just now. There is one course open to both parties. If the new Parliament were elected on scanty rolls, and we were to sit on for three years, the country would rise with a howl. We must have a general election in February or March next, whether we have one between or not: that is only fair to the large section, the women, who have just been accorded the franchise.

MR. VOSPER: If we have a choice of two evils—financial ruin and a general election on scanty rolls—choose the least of the evils.

MR. MORAN: I am coming to that point. I say, if it means that this party around me intend to let the Government go on with their loan policy, then that will be a ten-times worse evil than to have two general elections in the next few months. That is absolutely the truth. But may there not be a way by which we can unite our forces to prevent both of these calamities? Have we not the power in this House, in the shape of sixteen Opposition members and eight in these Government cross-benches—24 in all—have we not the absolute fate of this colony in our hands as regards the public works policy? May we not fix this as our main principle: not to throw the Government out just now, but to leave them there with no money with which to carry on their public works? The Government have given myself and other corner members a free hand, and I suppose the Opposition will take a free hand. It appears to me that everything is plain, for the Opposition cannot carry a direct vote of want-of-confidence; and it will not be carried, after what has dropped from the Premier's mouth this evening. If I thought there was no chance of a dissolution, I should say: Vote for this no-confidence motion, and put any party in power, because the eight members on the Government cross-benches will still retain the balance of power. But I do not mind saying as regards my party, that my counsels in this matter would not be followed. We are all independent men, some of the party are older politicians than I, and I do not know what course we as a disintegrated party shall adopt. But I do see a way by which we can all be honest to the country. I should be sorry to say the Opposition are guilty of trying to get office. The usual

method is to have one party in and the other out. I know the Opposition do not want office just now; but they do seriously think we ought to stop this public works expenditure.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Will you guarantee your eight men?

MR. MORAN: If this no-confidence motion fail?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Will you guarantee the support by your eight men of your motion?

MR. MORAN: I will guarantee that it is a very hard matter for any of them to get out of voting for that motion. We are not allowed to talk about motions that are coming on; but it is a very hard thing for any man, when he knows that certain public expenditure by a Government is a bad thing, to explain how he will allow the Government to proceed with that expenditure without some motion of this kind.

MR. KINGSMILL: The Premier will threaten another dissolution.

MR. MORAN: The fault will be on his own head if he does. He will then have broken his word to his own followers. Those followers will then know that they have not the free hand they were promised in this matter, and they will see the mailed fist shining in front of them. We must carry a motion in this House forbidding any loan expenditure; we have the numbers to do it; and then we shall have done our duty. Let the Government remain in office to carry on the necessary executive work. Pass the Federal Act, send members to the Federal Parliament, make all preparations for the general election in February or March, and let us have the general election on a well-fought-out basis, and ask the country what are we going to do in reference to that sliding-scale. Let us formulate a tariff that will fall by easy gradations of a fifth every year, and then we shall have done the very best that can be done for the country. I make this appeal to hon. members on both sides of the House who agree with my sentiments on the loan policy. Let us remember the country's interests are at stake; and no matter what the consequences may be, let us do our duty. Men are going to be made or marred during this session: their independence will shine out or their slavish

dependence will be apparent. They must be men of independence and men of action now, or they must be branded for ever as men who saw what was the right thing to be done, and who had not the moral courage to do it. I am much obliged to the House for giving me such a patient hearing on this occasion, and I hope the outcome of this debate may result in the protection and salvation of Western Australia from future insolvency.

MR. EWING (Swan): I feel confident that everyone to-night hopes this debate will draw to a conclusion. After the adjournment that took place yesterday at an early hour, it is desirable in the interests of general legislation that this debate should be concluded to-night if possible. Unfortunately, I have to explain, before entering into the consideration of the question before the House, that, some little time ago, when the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn) was leaving for the old country, I arranged to pair with that hon. member during the next session of Parliament. "The next session of Parliament" I took to mean what it said; and therefore I felt that at the conclusion of the last session of Parliament I was free to act and to vote as I thought fit. I afterwards, in conversation with the Premier, found that he held a different view upon the matter: I found he thought that though I was legally free, yet I was morally bound. I explained to the Premier that I felt the moral obligation was just as heavy as the legal one, and that therefore I should submit the matter to certain gentlemen whom we named, and should take their decision. They decided I was morally bound to adhere to my promise to the hon. member, in the present as well as in the last session; and therefore my name will appear (though not in the division list) as being against the Government, while that of the member for Wellington will appear in their favour. I think many of the points made by the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) deserve the gravest consideration; and had they in the past as strongly commended themselves to the hon. member and to the other gentlemen sitting on that (Government) side of the House as they do now, I feel the result of the holding of such views by those hon. members would have

been conducive to the welfare of the community. The hon. member explained that it was the duty of members of this Legislature at the present time to sink party interests for the interests of the State. Surely that maxim, being a true one now, applied in the past as it does at present; and it is truly a pity that the hon. member, and some of those gentlemen sitting on the same side, did not long since see that they were doing wrong to vote for party, and party alone, as they often did last session, and for session after session since I have been in this Legislature. The remarks of the hon. member are well worthy of consideration, and I still commend them most strongly to members of that (Government) side of the House; for, after all, it is clear that we are here not only to legislate in the interests of a party, but to vote as we think proper in the interests of the general community. That they form an illustration of the blind leading the blind is, I think, the gravest charge that can be laid at the door of this Government. I think, in considering whether the retention of office by a Government is desirable or undesirable, one of the first things we should consider is, who are the persons following that Government? And if we see hon. members sitting behind that Government who are day by day exercising that discretion and that wisdom in legislation which we look for in members of Parliament, then we see a Government with a party behind it which will keep that Government on proper political lines, and we see that the community's safety is guaranteed. But what has been our experience in the past? Have we not found that in the case of almost every measure introduced by the Forrest Government their followers were packed on the Government benches in a solid mass? Notwithstanding, I undertake to say, the divergence of their individual views, notwithstanding the fact that many members who voted for such measures did not wholly believe in the action of the Government, we always found when the bell was rung that there was a party of gentlemen on the Government side of the House who very often did not know what the question before the House was, or what the division was about.

MR. HUBBLE: Nonsense.

MR. EWING: Nonsense? The hon. member has seen, and I have seen, members walking into this Chamber on a division, looking about to see where the Premier and his followers were sitting, and then deliberately walking over to join them.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Just the same may be said of your side. You have seen it yourself.

MR. EWING: I say the Government may be bad, but the party supporting it may be good; and therefore the Government itself will be kept in order by the political solidity of its party. But here we have no conditions of that kind. Here we have a Government which, as the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) said, is to a large extent followed blindly by its supporters. He says that, having in the past been one of those close supporters of the Government; and I think we can take the remarks he has levelled at Government supporters as having a fair and reasonable foundation. This is the reason why I, upon this occasion, if I were free, would vote against the Forrest Administration. I believe that a Government which is supported by a set of men blindly and irrevocably, is bad in the extreme for the interests of the community. The next reason why I should vote against the Government is because we have found that the Premier has, on various occasions, expressed himself, and the Government have expressed themselves, as opposed to certain broad political principles, principles of vital importance to the community. I would refer first to the question of payment of members. In this House we found the Government as a body solidly fighting against the principle of payment of members; but when brought face to face with the fact that the majority of this House was against them, what did they do? They did not say: "We will stand or fall by our political principles"; but they said: "We will submit the question to the people, and if the people say it is right, we will grant the privilege, notwithstanding that we think it is wrong." This, surely, is a dangerous Government to hold the control of affairs! This surely is a Government acting as it thinks the people desire it to act, and not as it thinks the interests of the community require. Again, we turn to the

question of women's suffrage, and find that the Government fought bitterly against the principle. Session after session as a body the Government and its supporters opposed this measure of reform. What did we find at a later date? Apparently without any reason at all, the Government and its supporters in a body turned round. They advanced no reason to the community why they changed their front. Did the hon. members explain why on a former occasion they opposed the principle of women's suffrage and afterwards supported it? Is this the class of Government in whose political principles we can have faith? Does this lead one to the conclusion that there is a strong and determined body of men resolved to carry into effect the principles they believe to be right? Then we turn to the question of reduction of taxation. One of the first things I saw when I entered this House was that the Premier was faced with a vote of censure. He accepted the motion of the then member for Albany on the question of taxation as a motion of censure. He proceeded with the debate on the lines of a motion of censure. Ultimately, when he came to make out his division list, he found there was a majority of one against him, and what was the result? He deliberately, within twenty-four hours after having made a speech against the principle, turned round and said that at the end of the session of Parliament he would be prepared to do what was asked. I say with the utmost confidence that is not political honesty, and the action of men whom we desire to see, whether we are with them or against them, holding control of the affairs of the community. One may think that a government is wrong, or that a party is wrong, and one may feel that individuals and governments are justified in changing their minds, but we certainly expect good reasons for the change of front, and I, for one, cannot regard as any reason for a change of front the fact that the Government would be ousted from its position if it persisted in its policy. Surely on broad principles like those I have mentioned the Government has a duty to perform. It has a duty to discharge, whether it is on one side or the other, and it should not, immediately the slightest pressure is brought to bear upon it, give

way to a majority of this House, or a majority of the electors.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They always climb down.

MR. EWING: The Premier has often said he has never been defeated on a motion of censure. No, because he will never accept anything as a motion of censure where he sees the result is likely to be defeat. He will submit to no defeat. What indignity could have been greater than that which the Premier experienced during the last few weeks. He is met by Government supporters, who take the Administrator's Speech in their hands and say, "This is your policy, and being your policy we are against it." What does the Premier do and say? He says, "You can do what you like with my policy; you can kick me; you can do whatever you choose as long as you do not pass a direct vote of censure, whereby I shall have to leave the Treasury Bench. You can move motions which are in effect motions of censure, and as long as you leave me a loophole so that I can retain office, I hold you to no allegiance; but do not turn me from the position I have occupied so long. Kick me, and do what you choose with me politically. I will suffer any indignity, any disgrace, politically or otherwise, so long as you render it possible for me to retain office." That is what has been said quite lately. If anyone can put any other construction on the words of the Premier, I shall be glad to hear it, because it is hard and difficult for me to believe that the Premier of this country, or any other country, so dearly loves office that for the retention of that position he is prepared to be politically degraded. I do not intend to detain the House at any length, because I think it is desirable that this matter should be concluded as early as possible, but I should like just to say a few words with regard to the remarks of the Premier himself. The Premier in the course of his speech adopted tactics which, if adopted in this House in general would, in my opinion at any rate, be a disgrace to the House and to the members actuated by the principles enunciated. The Premier told us—and he told a meeting at Kalgoorlie the same thing—it was desirable that members from the goldfields should support him, because he was doing public works in

their districts, and practically he said it was their duty to do so. What is it that has degraded politics, and is daily degrading politics, throughout Australia? Is it not that members are allowing paltry parochial considerations to stand before the interests of the community? Is it not a fact that there are too many roads-and-bridges members?

MR. DOHERTY: Too many lawyers.

MR. EWING: Is it not a fact that a member is willing very often to sacrifice his political principles in order to gain some slight advantage for his district? Can any member in this House, or elsewhere combat the statement that this has a degrading influence, and that influence being applied to politics disgraces the individual who is actuated by such principles, and also disgraces the House which tolerates it? I hope the day is far distant when votes will be cast in this House on the principles which so strongly seem to commend themselves to the Premier. Then we turn to the threat the Premier has held out, that a dissolution will take place. I think very few members will take the slightest notice of his remarks. Surely we are not afraid to face our electors. If we are afraid to face them, then the sooner a political crisis comes about which sends us to face these electors the better, because every piece of legislation we pass provided we do not hold the confidence of our electors, is a piece of legislation wrongly brought into existence, and I think there can be little doubt from the result of the recent referendum that very few members are closely in accord with the views of their electors; upon some subjects, anyhow. It may be said to me that there was a majority against federation in my district—a small majority indeed—but I am prepared to-morrow to take the consequences of a dissolution, and I think that every member of this House ought to be prepared to take the consequence of voting for the political principles he believes to be right, whether the result is that he loses his seat, or is returned again. In any case I hope the day is far distant when members will vote either for or against the Government on the principles enunciated by the Premier, whether they are the outcome of fear of a dissolution, or of political advantages bestowed upon the individual districts.

Those being the views that the Premier holds regarding political morality, can any member in this House, who holds higher and broader views of our duty to the community, support him? If the head of the Government enunciates such views as these, what are we to expect from the rank and file of members? It is dangerous to allow in power, in this House or any other House, a gentleman who can possibly be guilty under any circumstances whatever, whether in this Assembly or in the township of Kalgoorlie, of enunciating to the public and to members the principle that they should vote where the interests of their districts lie financially, and from a public works point of view. I have given very shortly the reasons which actuate me in opposing the Government on this occasion. They are, shortly, that there is, and has been for a long time, a blind following which in the past has never endeavoured to exercise upon the powers that be that influence which it is undoubtedly the duty of hon. members to exercise, whether Government supporters or Oppositionists. It is a serious charge to level at a Government, that it is a Government supported through thick and thin, whether right or wrong. Such support is a danger to the community. I say, further, as a reason why we should defeat the Government on the first possible occasion, that the Government has not been strong-backed in its politics. It has always been prepared to purchase its political life at the sacrifice of its political honour. It has always been prepared to sink principles, and great national principles, for the retention of office. I say, further, that the Government has threatened hon. members in a way in which no members should be threatened by this or any other Government. If these are not three reasons why the Government should be defeated, we will have to look long and far before we find any substantial reasons for defeating the Government in this or any other community.

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved that the debate be adjourned.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	20
Noes	16
			—
Majority for	...		4

AYES.
 Mr. Darlôt
 Sir John Forrest
 Mr. A. Forrest
 Mr. D. Forrest
 Mr. Harper
 Mr. Higham
 Mr. Hubble
 Mr. Lefroy
 Mr. Locke
 Mr. Mitchell
 Mr. Monger
 Mr. Morgans
 Mr. Pennefather
 Mr. Phillips
 Mr. Quinlan
 Mr. Rason
 Mr. Sholl
 Mr. Throssell
 Mr. Wood
 Mr. Doherty (Teller).

NOES.
 Mr. Connor
 Mr. Ewing
 Mr. George
 Mr. Gregory
 Mr. A. Y. Hassell
 Mr. J. F. T. Hassell
 Mr. Holmes
 Mr. Hutchinson
 Mr. Illingworth
 Mr. Kingsmill
 Mr. Moran
 Mr. Solomon
 Mr. Vosper
 Mr. Wallace
 Mr. Wilson
 Mr. James (Teller).

Motion for adjournment passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10-20 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th August, 1900.

Petition (Private Bill): Electric Supply, Cottesloe, etc.—Papers presented—Question: Great Southern Railway and Status of Officers Transferred—Address-in-reply, fifth day of debate, Amendment (no-confidence) negatived, Division, adjourned—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4-30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION (PRIVATE BILL)—ELECTRIC SUPPLY, COTTESLOE, ETC.

MR. MOORHEAD presented a petition from the Electric Supply Company of Western Australia, praying for leave to introduce the Cottesloe, Buckland Hill, and Peppermint Grove Electric Lighting and Power Bill (private).

Petition received and read.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: 1, By-laws of Southern Cross

General Cemetery, also of Bulong Roads Board and Nelson Roads Board (additional); 2, Regulations under Lands Act, prohibiting cutting of timber in State forests in certain localities, also Timber Regulations.

By the PREMIER: Correspondence as to alleged irregular issue of voters' certificates (referendum) at Kalgoorlie, etc.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—GREAT SOUTHERN RAILWAY AND STATUS OF OFFICERS TRANSFERRED.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL asked the Premier, Whether, for the purposes of promotion and standing in the Public Service, the date of entrance of those servants taken over by the Government from the W.A. Land Co. would be counted from the date of entrance into the service of the said company.

THE PREMIER replied:—No; the promotion and standing in the Public Service of late servants of the W.A. Land Co. is governed by the position which they now hold in the service, the date of their service with the Government being counted from the date of their entrance thereto.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

DEBATE (AMENDMENT), FIFTH DAY.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the motion for adoption of Address in reply to the Speech of the Administrator, and on the amendment by Mr. Illingworth affirming no-confidence in the Government.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): The amendment which is now under the consideration of the House certainly contains one of the gravest charges that could be brought against the Government of the country. I think it is the gravest charge brought against the Government of the colony during the last ten years, that it no longer retains the confidence of a majority of this House. The question has been dealt with at length by those who support the amendment, and in many cases not in terms that can be called moderate by any means, although I will say the member who leads the Opposition approached the subject in a dignified and moderate manner, a manner in which I trust all