

with their constituents. This also applies to members of both Houses of Parliament, so that I think one is perfectly justified in making the statement that the Government and the Parliament at the present moment are very inadequately representing the country. I will go still further, and say it is my firm belief that the lack of proper representation in the country has caused the bad blood and the bitterness of feeling throughout the community to-day—a state of affairs which every member in this House, and every right-thinking man and woman in the country, must deeply deplore. The Government should have done what many members in this and in another place thought should have happened. When this House of Parliament threw out the Enabling Bill to refer the Commonwealth Bill to the people, the Government should have dissolved Parliament. If the Government had done that, a great deal of the bitterness of feeling which exists, and which has done so much harm to the colony, and which will take years to live down, would not have occurred. As the Government did not think fit to take the course which so many people inside and outside of Parliament thought the right one, at least we might have expected that in this session which has just been opened the Government would have presented a programme of only strictly routine business, and would not have attempted any fresh legislation whatever.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Hear, hear.

HON. H. LUKIN: What do we find? If we turn to paragraph 17 of the Governor's Speech, railway extensions are advocated which will commit the country to a considerable expenditure of money. I submit in any case that it were well for the colony to pause before going into any further railway extension or incurring any further debt per head of the population, as already the debt is pretty considerable; and, for a Parliament that many of us consider ought to have died last year, it is next door to indecent to come down now and ask us to sanction and pledge the country to further expenditure of money—hundreds of thousands of pounds.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Millions!

HON. H. LUKIN: It may be millions. I do not wish to detain the House further, but I beg to state it is for these

reasons, and these reasons only, that I intend to support the amendment moved by Mr. R. S. Haynes. I do not agree with a lot which Mr. Haynes and Mr. Maley have said about the Government, because almost anything may be said without being substantiated; but on purely political grounds I shall support the amendment.

On motion by HON. F. M. STONE, debate adjourned until the next day.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6:5 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 28th August, 1900.

Resignation of Commissioner of Railways: Ministerial Statement—Papers presented—Messages: Addresses forwarded—Question: Rabbits at Norseman—Address in reply to opening Speech. debate (Amendment), third day—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

RESIGNATION OF COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Before we proceed to business, I should like to inform the House that since we last met, our friend and colleague Mr. Piesse, the member for the Williams district, who occupied for four years or more the position of Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works, has resigned his portfolio. I feel that I ought to make this announcement to the House; and I can only say that, as far as I am concerned and as far as my colleagues are concerned, I make this announcement with the deepest regret. I can say with certainty that there is

no man who ever occupied office who has devoted himself to the duties of that office with greater zeal and a greater desire to do right than my friend, the member for the Williams; and I desire to express to him on my own behalf, and also on behalf of all his colleagues, our sincere regret that he should have felt it his duty to separate himself from us, seeing that we are so near to the general election.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Report of Chief Inspector of Explosives and Government Analyst, 1899; 2, Report on Rottnest Prison, 1899; 3, Report of Conference of Statisticians on the 1901 Census of Australasia.

Ordered to lie on the table.

MESSAGES—ADDRESSES FORWARDED.

Two messages from the Administrator were received and read; stating (1) that the Address from the Legislative Assembly to the Queen in relation to the death of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, and (2) the Address relating to Federation, had been forwarded to the Secretary of State for presentation to Her Majesty.

QUESTION—RABBITS AT NORSEMAN.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands: What steps, if any, do the Government intend to take with regard to rabbits at Norseman?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS replied:—The Government are awaiting the report of Mr. Inspector White (who arrived yesterday at Norseman), before finally deciding what steps to take.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

DEBATE (AMENDMENT), THIRD DAY.

Debate resumed from the previous Tuesday, on the motion for adoption of Address-in-reply, and on the amendment by Mr. Illingworth to add a paragraph affirming that the Government no longer retain the confidence of a majority of the House.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I have not had time to go through the numerous pages of *Hansard*

to discover how many votes of want of confidence in myself and those who support me in this House have been passed—(some laughter)—have been moved since the time we took office; but there have been many. I should think there must have been twenty, and sometimes we have had two or three in a session. I am glad, however, that on the present occasion we have been met by a straight-out challenge; and I congratulate my friend, the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), on his having taken this very straightforward course in regard to the matter. I hope that when we have all said what we desire to give utterance to, the political atmosphere will be cleared a bit; and that then, if the Government are successful, as I have no doubt they will be, we shall get on with the business of the country, and finish this session as quickly as we can—[MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear]—having consideration for the business that is demanded of us. An expression often used by my friend, the member for Central Murchison, in regard to this Parliament, was that it was “moribund”; which means, of course, that its term of life was passing away. No doubt that is the case. When you get towards the end of a Parliament, its life is gradually but surely passing away; but for all that, until its life has passed away its powers are in existence, and can be used as the judgment of hon. members desire they shall be. If a Parliament is to be considered to be “moribund” during the last session of its existence, I would like to know what business we are going to do when we get triennial Parliaments. In the first session we shall then have a struggle between the parties; in the second session we shall do a little work; and in the third session we shall be told we are “moribund,” and are not to do anything. I would like to know how long the people of this country would be satisfied with a Parliament which carried on its duties in that fashion. Of course it will be said this is a peculiar case, because we have passed an amending Constitution Act; but I submit that when we passed that Act we did it with our eyes open, and our intention was that this Legislature should be maintained to carry on the business of the country until such time as the new rolls were framed. It is impossible for the new rolls to be ready

until April; probably early in next year, anyway. I would like to say, before I go any further, that I am not going to stand up here to-day to say a few kind words: I am going to make some strong observations in regard to hon. members opposite. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I wish to say I hope they will take them in a political sense, and not in a personal sense.

MR. GREGORY: Tell us about the threatened dissolution.

THE PREMIER: I do not wish to attack anyone personally, but I intend, before I sit down, to attack, politically, several members opposite, and in pretty strong terms.

MR. EWING: You will have to take what you get in return, if you start those tactics.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member will treat me in the same way as I will treat him, I shall be satisfied. The words of the amendment by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) are quite clear. I hope hon. members will listen here, and laugh outside if they want to laugh, for I do not think we shall get on with the business if we have laughing interjections, so many at a time. Half-a-dozen at a time would be more than the House would like. The amendment moved by the hon. member is, shortly, that this House is of opinion the members of the Government no longer retain the confidence of the House; and he gave a reason for that which I will deal with in as few words as possible. The reason was that he was of opinion this Parliament would not be justified in spending one shilling on works other than those in hand. That, shortly, is the reason the hon. member gave for this House no longer having any confidence in the present Government. During his speech he referred to the Speech of his Excellency the Administrator, and he particularly objected to the construction of the railways which are named in the Speech. He went through the whole list of them—the Nannine railway, the Leonora railway, the Coolgardie-to-Norseman railway—and he was, in fact, opposed to every public work named in His Excellency's Speech, unless those works were in hand. In regard to legislation, he was opposed to

legislation except in regard to the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not say that.

THE PREMIER: He said they had been asking for that measure, and that everyone was in favour of it. They had, he asserted, been asking for years. I think that is about as inaccurate a statement as many others the hon. member made, because I would like to know when it was asked for in this House, and when he asked for it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: In 1894.

THE PREMIER: Did you?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes.

THE PREMIER: You may have made a chance observation, which I do not remember.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Again in 1895.

THE PREMIER: Until that strike at Fremantle, the question did not come within the sphere of practical politics, to any large extent. There may have been a feeling that something should be done, but the statement that everyone is asking for it and has been asking for it, is inaccurate.

MR. GEORGE: Why do you not give him plain Saxon?

THE PREMIER: We have the amendment of the hon. member as an Opposition amendment, assented to by the party. I want to emphasise that.

MR. VOSPER: We will emphasise it.

THE PREMIER: The platform of the Opposition is contained in the speech which the hon. member delivered to us last Tuesday.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You know that is not correct.

THE PREMIER: Is it not?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is not our platform. It is our objection to your platform.

THE PREMIER: I say again the platform hon. members have taken up and are prepared to substantiate before the people of this country is that nothing is to be done in regard to these projects, the few which are named in His Excellency's Speech. I will name them again to the hon. member. The hon. member urges that nothing is to be done with the Nannine railway, with the Northam-Goomalling railway, or the Leonora railway. I do not think I am very far wrong in saying that is the platform which the hon. member and his

party have adopted. Their platform is that they will do nothing with regard to these works at the present time. They also wish to prevent the authorisation of the Norseman railway. They all say "hear, hear" to that. I want to make what I call a good point in regard to this matter. Although it has been said this House is moribund at the present time, being in the last session, these railways were approved of by the House last year, when it was not moribund, but in full life and vigour. These railways were, I say, approved of by this House, and, with the exception of the Norseman railway, by the other branch of the Legislature. That took place when there was no cry that we were moribund, but when we had our full life and vigour. At that time the proposal for the Norseman railway was carried in this House. Most of the proposals were carried without a division, and this Norseman railway was carried by, I believe, 16 to eight—not, I say, when the House was moribund, but when it was in full life and vigour.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Changes have come since.

THE PREMIER: Yes, and very much for the better. We had a deficit of £250,000 then, whereas we have no deficit now.

MR. GEORGE: Not last month?

THE PREMIER: Do not interrupt like that. This is the policy which the Opposition have evolved from the recesses of their minds. They have brought forward this policy of doing nothing and standing still, refusing to carry out the works that were approved of and passed into law in this colony last session, when we were not moribund, but when we had, I again assert, full life and vigour. I will refer to those works pretty fully before I sit down, and I want to enumerate some of them. There is the duplication of the railway between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, and that is in hand to some extent. The earthworks are half-finished, I think.

MR. MORAN: That would not be affected.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member will, perhaps, speak when he gets up. I assure him that will be affected, because the work has not received the approval of this House yet.

MR. MORAN: Then what are you doing it for?

THE PREMIER: Because we consider it necessary in the interests of this country, and we take the responsibility of it.

MR. GEORGE: How much of the earthworks have you done?

THE PREMIER: I think there is about half done.

MR. GEORGE: How much does it represent?

THE PREMIER: I could not tell off-hand. Perhaps you will ask the question, and we may be able to answer it. There is the duplication of the railway up to what is called Kamballie. I think that is pretty well done. There are other works between Coolgardie and the Boulder which we desire to do if we can get authorisation; but they are not very extensive works, and will not cost an immense sum of money. They are small works, and we must stop them—what for? Is there no necessity for these works?

MR. MORAN: Yes; there has been for two years.

THE PREMIER: How can I go on with all these interruptions?

THE SPEAKER: Do not interrupt.

THE PREMIER: Surely, this is an important occasion, and I should be listened to for a little while. These are small works which are absolutely necessary at the present time. People are crying out for them, and the Railway Department insists upon having these works, in order to carry on the remunerative traffic which comes to the railway from these places. Why are we to stop these works now? I should like some explanation of that, by and by, from someone. What has happened in the colony that we should follow a different policy in regard to the opening up of our goldfields from the policy we have been hitherto carrying on, and different even from last year, when our position and circumstances were not nearly so good as they are at the present moment, as I will presently show? There has been a great deal of misrepresentation, I will not say wilfully made, but perhaps from want of knowledge or want of care, or some other such reason, there has been a good deal of misrepresentation in regard to the Governor's Speech and the policy of the

Government in regard to the public works contained in that Speech. I submit there is no new work mentioned in the Speech, that not one new work for which we are going to ask this House to provide funds during the present session is mentioned in that Speech, as I will show directly. We are therefore really, it seems to me, almost in accord, though not for the same reason—not because we believe the colony is not in a position to carry out works where they are necessary—but because there is no necessity for us to go into an extensive scheme of public works at the present time. We do not want to exhaust every work in the country: we must leave some to be constructed by someone else afterwards; and we do not want to embark in immense works at one time. We want to go on gradually, slowly, and carefully, in developing the resources of the colony. In that Speech what is stated? In paragraph 16 we give a reason that, as a dissolution is near at hand, the Government do not propose to recommend the construction of many new works of magnitude, more especially as there are a considerable number of works already in hand. We went on in the Speech to say that the Government hoped they would be in a position to consult the Legislature, this House and the other branch, in regard to providing a permanent supply of water for the whole of the metropolitan district, including Fremantle and Guildford; but we did not say in the Speech that we were going to carry out this work in the present session, but that we hoped to consult Parliament in regard to the best way of doing it; and what I had in my mind was, and what I intend if I remain in office is, to provide a water supply for the whole of the metropolitan area; and I thought we might appoint a select committee of members of this and the other House during the session to investigate this matter, for the purpose of assisting in obtaining information and making some recommendation to Parliament. I never thought we would be able to do more than that during the present session; but I did wish to assure the people of Fremantle who had recently been to see me on the subject, and to assure the people in all the suburbs within the metropolitan area, that the Legislature

were desirous of dealing with the question at the earliest moment. Then the Speech says the Government hoped to consult Parliament in regard to matters connected with the construction of railways in the future; and the reason for that was that the Government had received a great many applications for the construction of private railways throughout the country. Our policy in the past has been that all trunk lines at any rate should be built by the Government; but as the colony develops, the necessity for extending the means of transit also seems to increase, and it occurred to me whether it would not be wise, in regard to the construction of branch railways, that an opportunity might be given for building them on some terms other than constructing them directly by the Government. It is only an idea, and I wished to consult Parliament about it, and thought a select committee might be appointed during this session, so that we could get some information and some expression of opinion in regard to this question. There was no intention of doing more than this, in regard to these two matters. We went on to state in the Speech that the Government hoped that a dock at Fremantle could be constructed. We do hope that the construction of a dock may be commenced, and as soon as we are advised by the Engineer-in-Chief, we hope to proceed with the work. I now come to the railways mentioned in the Governor's Speech. What are they? The Goomalling railway: that is not a new work; it was passed for construction last session by both Houses, and the work has actually been commenced to a small extent. Is that a new work that we are undertaking? Are we embarking on great expenditure at this time, or are we only carrying out the different mandates of this House and the other branch of the Legislature, in proceeding with a work that has been fully and duly authorised? We come now to the Leonora railway: that was passed last session in both Houses, without a division; and although we had a financial deficit at that date of £250,000, yet money was voted for the construction of that work, and the money is available at the present time, very little having been spent except for rails ordered in England,

and the expenditure for that had not been charged against the vote in the public accounts up to the end of June last. That work was authorised by this House in the last session, when this House was not "moribund," but full of vigour; and is this House now going to stultify itself, to sit down and try to turn back, and try to undo the resolution it passed last year? I feel sure it will not do so, unless some good reason can be given for doing so. We have also the Nannine railway; and in regard to that we have between £40,000 and £50,000 available for the extension of the line to Nannine. We have had deputations out of number during the last four years, urging us to extend the railway to Nannine; and this is one of the grievances which the people of Geraldton think they have against the Government, for not having constructed that work earlier. In the opinion of the Government, the time has arrived when we ought to spend the money that was voted in 1896—to spend the remnant of it, because there was plenty of money then for carrying the railway right through to Nannine, but portions have been used for other purposes, and now we want to expend the money that remains in hand for the purpose.

MR. GREGORY: Now that they have returned a Government supporter.

THE PREMIER: I do not think I shall notice that.

MR. JAMES: No; it is too *apropos*.

THE PREMIER: I do not think it is. I think I might say something quite as rude, if I liked. The Nannine railway has been asked for so often; the people of Geraldton have asked for it over and over again, and they have made it a cause for complaint that we were not carrying out the work which had been authorised by Parliament years ago. Things have changed in the district during that time. The place is improving; the Nannine mines are developing; Tuckanarra, which is half way to Nannine, has been discovered; and we think the time has arrived when we may fairly do this work for the good of that part of the colony. Then we have the Fremantle Harbour Works, which have been in hand for the last seven or eight years: is it desired they should stop, too? Because there is no more authority for continuing

the Fremantle Harbour Works, indeed there is not so much authority as for some of the works I have enumerated? There is not money enough at the present time to carry on the Fremantle Harbour Works much beyond the present year, unless a further sum be voted this session. Are those members for Fremantle, who are opposing the Government, prepared to deny the money which we shall have to ask this House to grant this session for carrying on the Harbour Works? I have referred to the duplication of the railway from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie, and from Kalgoorlie to Boulder and other places. I now come to the Norseman railway: that railway was passed the year before last for a survey, and the authority for that survey was not denied by the other branch of the Legislature. This House authorised the work, not for the construction of the railway, but voted £60,000 on account of the work, and that vote was passed by a majority of 16 to 8 in this House, and in the other House it was lost by only one vote. That was done in a time when the finances of the colony were not in so healthy a condition as they are now. These are the works; and I ask again with confidence, these being all the works enumerated in the Speech—I cannot see any other work there mentioned—these being the whole works mentioned in the Speech, I ask what work is there in the Speech that can be called a new work? There is not one that anyone can call a new work. All these works have been authorised by this House, and some of them have been authorised by the other House. The Norseman railway is the only work in that list not authorised by law, and that has been carried in this House by two to one—not for authorising the work to be done, but for providing money to go on with it. An extraordinary thing, one of the most extraordinary spectacles we have seen in this House, is the attitude that has been taken up in regard to this question by some members representing the goldfields. We have generally thought the complaint was, as the newspapers have often told us, that the Government have been desirous of taking all the revenue they could get from those goldfields, and giving nothing to them in return. That

has been the burden of the song we have heard so often; but what do we find now? We find six members representing goldfields constituencies arrayed on the Opposition side of the House, desirous of stopping the Government from doing works for the development and advancement of the goldfields!

MR. MORAN: And one on this side.

THE PREMIER: I have not said anything about the hon. member, up to the present. I may have something to say, after he has spoken. I say it is an extraordinary action that we should find arrayed against us, on a motion such as this, a motion which has for its object the stopping of these works on the goldfields, it is extraordinary that we should find six members representing the goldfields opposing works which the Government have proposed to construct on those goldfields. Let it be known throughout the length and breadth of this colony, let it be known especially throughout the goldfields, let it be known to all the constituencies which send representatives to this Parliament, that the desire of those six members opposite who represent goldfields is to stop the works which the Government wish to carry out for the advancement of those goldfields.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You know that is not correct.

THE PREMIER: I say it is literally, it is absolutely true, on the basis of your speech.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is not correct. We do not desire to stop them for ever.

THE PREMIER: I do not mean to say you wish to keep them back for ever, but I say you desire to stop them for twelve months. That is the least delay that can result from the action you are taking, if it be successful.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We wish to wait till we get the authority of the people: that is what we want.

THE PREMIER: The people! The people are all in favour of these works.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Are they?

THE PREMIER: I think they are; and I am quite willing to stake my political existence on it, anyway. I say the hon. member's amendment, if it be carried, can have only one effect, and I hope the goldfields people will take notice of this—it must have the effect of stopping for twelve months, at any rate,

the goldfields railways I have enumerated—probably for two years, and I will certainly say for twelve months.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You cannot do anything for a year from now.

THE PREMIER: Oh, well, the sooner we commence the better; and most of these works are in hand. The Leonora railway is in hand; the Nannine railway can be put in hand almost immediately; the Goomalling railway is in hand; the Norseman railway can at all events be surveyed, and everything be got ready for its construction: and none of these things can be done if the hon. member's amendment be carried. Let the people of Central Murchison know that their member is opposing the Nannine railway, that he is opposing all these railways for the goldfields; and let the people of North-East Coolgardie know that their great member (Mr. Vosper), the champion of the people, is opposing the development of the goldfields whose interests he has, in this House and out of it, so often and so ably advocated. Let them know that those six members sent here to represent the goldfields are the very men who are trying to block the facilities for transit which are the life-blood of those fields. Let the people of Yilgarn know that their representative (Mr. Oats) shows, by voting with his party, that he desires to stop the building of these railways; and let the constituents of the members for Yalgoo (Mr. Wallace), for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill), and for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory), know too, and let it be blazoned forth, that it is not the Government who are hostile to the interests of the people of the goldfields, but their own members who, for no reason whatever, are trying to block the progressive works which the Government have in hand.

MR. GREGORY: Have you any more railway concessions to give away in my district?

THE PREMIER: It is not a very good thing to foretell or even to guess; but so far as I am able to judge, these members do not represent their constituents at all on these points—[Mr. GEORGE, hear, hear]—and if any of them likes to go up to any of the larger centres on the goldfields and there advocate the views he advocates here, I think he will have, not a cool reception, but a very warm one.

MR. VOSPER: Do you think Kanowna cares anything about the Bonnievale line?

THE PREMIER: I look upon you as representing the goldfields, and not particular parts of them only. The interests of the goldfields are identical: we do not care whether you represent Kanowna, Coolgardie, or Menzies. The interests of those places are the same: they want all the facilities we propose to give them; and if they at Kanowna do not benefit by the Bonnievale railway, their fellow colonists who are engaged in the same industry will benefit by that line.

MR. GEORGE: Why not say the goldfields members represent Western Australia?

THE PREMIER: And what reason is there for delaying these works? Take the Leonora railway. What reason is there for this Parliament to take upon itself the responsibility of reversing the decision unanimously arrived at last session? Have we any right to do so unless we have good cause? I say there is no cause whatever. Speaking from experience and knowledge of these things—and I know, perhaps, just as much about the goldfields and their resources as the members who represent them—I say there is no reason at all that can be devised in the mind of man why the Leonora railway should not be at once continued. During the last two and a-half years that goldfield has turned out three-quarters of a million of gold; and this year, as far as I can see by looking at the statistics, it will turn out half a million of gold. This railway does not tap the Mount Margaret district for more than 30 miles—the district misrepresented in this matter by the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory): half of that 30 miles is in his district.

MR. GREGORY: All of it.

THE PREMIER: Yes; but it will not be so under the new constitution. I should like to see the reception the hon. member would get from his constituents at Mount Margaret to-morrow morning.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He had a gold medal presented to him the other day for his action.

THE PREMIER: He did not then talk as he talks to-night. He did something else. He sang another tune. And, had he done otherwise, he would not have got

the medal, but something very different. The railway will go to Mount Margaret and to the township of Leonora. This district at the present moment is the second-best gold-producer in the colony. It has just outstripped the Coolgardie goldfield, and in the opinion of those best able to judge, and from my own opinion of what it is worth, I say the development of that district is only in its infancy.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We are glad to hear it.

THE PREMIER: The rails have been purchased; the surveys have been made, or nearly made. They are made, but there is a deviation. [MR. GEORGE: Ah!] I think something is being done in connection with that at the present time. Perhaps the hon. member interjecting knows as much about that as I do.

MR. GEORGE: I think I do.

THE PREMIER: This deviation is not yet finished. It is being made to see whether a better line can be marked out; but the survey has practically been completed. The Legislature authorised the work last year, and I should like to know what reason there can be why we should on this occasion reverse, not our decision only, but the decision of Parliament. Are we to reverse our decision for political purposes only, and for the sake of party tactics? because there is no reason whatever for doing so as regards this railway, save the desire to gain some political advantage, which I tell you you will not get. You will not get it; and what will you get? You will injure your cause, you will regret your action, you will injure your party throughout the length and breadth of this country, especially on the goldfields, in trying to upset the decision arrived at a year ago, when we were not in such a good financial position as we now occupy, and when we had a large deficit. There is no reason whatever for such action, seeing that a railway is much more necessary now than it was then.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We will settle that at the general election.

MR. GREGORY: Give the goldfields representation—not public works.

THE PREMIER: If hon. members go so far as that in their interruptions, I will say something that will not be very polite, and then I shall regret it. This railway was extensively advocated, but I

believe the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) voted against it last year.

MR. GREGORY: No; he did not.

THE PREMIER: Not in detail, but voted against it in the Loan Bill, and he has proposed to stop it on this occasion. I do not know what reason he had then for voting against it: perhaps he can tell us.

MR. GREGORY: He told you then. You were giving sops all around Western Australia.

THE PREMIER: A remark of the hon. member's just now about the North Murchison district reminds me that he at that time had an idea that he would not seek re-election in the Mount Margaret constituency. That idea may have influenced him a little bit, though I should be very sorry to say it did.

MR. GREGORY: He did not know then of the intended division of the electorate.

THE PREMIER: I think you knew it.

MR. GREGORY: No.

THE PREMIER: In regard to the Nannine railway, there is £42,606 available for that work. It was authorised in 1896.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How far will that take it?

THE PREMIER: I think to Tuckanarra, or somewhere about there; but there is no reason why we should not go further. I think, if we undertake to carry it as far as Tuckanarra this year, that will give confidence and hope to the people of that goldfield. Personally, I am prepared to take it the whole way. A few days ago the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Oats) told me he had been to Peak Hill and all round Nannine; and he came to me with a deputation, urging me to construct this railway to Nannine as fast as I could, telling me I should never regret it, for it was a work which would benefit the country immensely. I think he introduced the deputation. What, then, shall I think of the hon. member's coming to me with a lot of fellow colonists, urging me to construct a work, and a few days afterwards joining a party to stop that work? I am sure the hon. member, when he comes to think of it, will see that he puts himself in an altogether wrong position.

MR. OATS: I will come again.

THE PREMIER: And I, of course, complain of any member who comes to

me and asks that a work be done, and then not only does not support but in fact opposes that work when the Government are willing to go on with it.

MR. HOLMES: The object of the motion is to get rid of the Government, not to stop public works.

THE PREMIER: It does not say so.

MR. HOLMES: Yes, it does. There is nothing in it about public works.

THE PREMIER: The reason was given when the motion was moved. Your *Hansard* is on the table, and you will see the reason given in the mover's speech.

MR. HOLMES: We will give you more reasons before we finish.

THE PREMIER: I have not yet done with the hon. member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes).

MR. HOLMES: Nor have I yet started on you.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

THE PREMIER: For the Nannine railway we have available £42,606. Its construction was authorised in 1896. The Murchison district has produced nearly £3,000,000 worth of gold. I wish hon. members to recollect that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And it is still in its infancy.

MR. MORGANS: Quite right.

THE PREMIER: And we propose that this railway, which was authorised by Parliament in 1896, and for which money was allotted, shall be carried out at the present time.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why did you not carry it out in 1896?

MR. GREGORY: No funds.

THE PREMIER: As I said before, I have been asked by the people of Geraldton, people of the Greenough, the Irwin, and the Murchison districts, to give them this railway extension; and the only reason why it was not carried out was because, until the Peak Hill goldfield had been discovered and the Nannine goldfield resuscitated, there were evil times in that centre, and it was generally admitted by everyone in this House that a delay was necessary: in fact, I do not think the project has ever hitherto been brought forward by anyone. It was on all hands admitted that this railway should wait awhile until things improved in those localities. That state of affairs has now arrived, by general consent; and recently the member for Yilgarn (Mr.

Oats), after a personal experience—and we all know his knowledge of mining matters—came to me and told me not to hesitate a moment, but to go on with the line. From information I had received, from my own knowledge, from the gold returns, from my visits to Nannine, and from my visit to Tuckanarra not very long ago, I came to the conclusion that we should not wait any longer. I should like to know where is the member for Geraldton (Mr. Hutchinson) in this matter?

MR. GEORGE: In his seat.

THE PREMIER: Has he, too, joined the Opposition in trying to stop the Nannine railway? Does he wish to commemorate his entry into the Parliament of his country by voting against the interests of his district, the first time he gets an opportunity of voting at all? That is what he will do if he votes with the Opposition now: he will do his best to prevent the construction of this railway at the present time; and it will be well, I think, that his constituents shall know that he it is, and not I—although I have been blamed—who is trying to prevent the extension of the railway in the direction for which they have been clamouring for years. Then we come to the Goomalling railway. Why should we stop that? I do not know why we should. We authorised it last year. Why, I again ask, should we want to stop that? I now come to the Norseman railway. Who have been asking for this railway for years and years and years? Have not all the goldfields members in this House, or at any rate those sitting on the Opposition side of the House, pledged themselves to have this railway constructed as soon as possible? I never yet found a man get up and ask for the support of the people of the goldfields, and make it a part of his programme that he was opposed to this railway to Norseman.

MR. VOSPER: I have.

THE PREMIER: I think you advocated the other side hundreds of times.

MR. VOSPER: I wanted the line from Esperance, and I am going to keep on opposing the railway at present advocated.

THE PREMIER: You have a right to go on doing so. Members must not be annoyed because I tell them what I think.

I am not personally angry about it: I am only stating my case as well as I can. Who have been asking for this railway? I say the people on the goldfields and their members have done so, as a rule. I will not say every one, because my friend opposite says he has not done it, though I guarantee he has written a good many articles in favour of the railway. He says he would have it one way and not another, but a railway from Coolgardie to Esperance is as good as a railway from Esperance to Coolgardie. My opinion is that, whichever way you look at it, the Norseman railway should be constructed in the interests of the whole of this colony. I am not going to argue very much now, because we argued the matter last session, and carried the question by two to one in this House. We passed £60,000 to build it, and it was the opposition of only one member in the Upper House which defeated it; otherwise the measure would have been on the statute book at the present time. The Norseman railway will give to the producers of the country, and to the traders in this country, whether in Perth, Fremantle, or anywhere else, any trade between Norseman and Coolgardie. It will open up all the country between these two places, which we know is auriferous in many localities, and we are aware that there is an enormous amount of timber, which is much required. I am quite positive that if we asked anyone to build that railway privately, we should get lots of people to do it. They would do it for the sake of the timber itself. Norseman has produced gold worth half a million, and it is now annually producing gold to the value of about £150,000. My object in advocating this railway is to try and do justice to people who live in isolated places such as Norseman. They have done good work there. There are 1,000 people at Norseman, and they are, I say, producing wealth amounting to £150,000 a year, and they have produced an amount equivalent to £500,000; so, if we can give them means of communication with the rest of the goldfields and the rest of the colony without loss to ourselves, we are justified in doing so. There are lots of other reasons, but I will mention one. I think we should use every effort we can to try and bind together the people of the goldfields with

those in this part of the colony. Bind them first of all by the iron road, and then bind them by showing that we have sympathy, and desire to be on the best terms with them.

MR. VOSPER: You had forty of them on an iron chain in Fremantle, not very long ago.

THE PREMIER: I think you had as much to do with that as I had. I have sympathy with Esperance, but I cannot consider Esperance against the whole of the colony. I have had to do very many things against my own inclination, but when it comes to what is best for the whole of the colony one cannot consider the interests of Esperance. I have not the slightest doubt that the project will injure Esperance; but which is best, to do good for the whole of the community, or not to do so because the work will injure one part? I say that if you have to make a choice, you must do that which will accomplish the most good for the largest number.

MR. GREGORY: And give them a railway to their nearest port.

THE PREMIER: I wish hon. members had been with me the other day when I was at Kalgoorlie, and had seen the immense crowds of people there were in those streets, and also on the race-course. There was an immense concourse of people, about 10,000 I suppose, all well-dressed, and appearing comfortable and happy. During the whole of that time I never saw a man who was the worse for drink, nor did I hear one coarse remark. I am glad to take the opportunity of saying that. There is not another place in Australia from which I could have returned and have said, with truth, what I can say in relation to my visit to Kalgoorlie—that I never saw anyone intoxicated, and never heard a coarse remark. I say if members had been there, and I wish we had been there all together, I am sure no one would have hesitated to do his little, whatever it may be, to promote the building of railways in those districts and assist in developing the great auriferous resources of the colony, which give prosperity not only to those I saw there and the tens of thousands all round the country, but assist every other industry, no matter what it is, throughout the length and breadth of the land. In regard to this

railway, all I propose to ask the Legislature, or at least this House, to do on the present occasion is to authorise the railway. We have on previous occasions followed a plan which does not obtain in any other colony, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is not a good plan. We have asked for money to be authorised first, and having got that authorised, sometimes all our labour has been in vain; whereas the plan adopted in the other colonies, and which I propose to adopt on this occasion and every other occasion, is to ask for an authorisation of the work first, and if Parliament approves the work first—with a special Act, as we call it, authorising the construction—then come and ask for the money. We then shall have on the statute book an authorisation of the construction, and if we do not get the money when we first ask for it, perhaps we shall get it next time. We have made one step forward, and the plan saves all the anxiety and all the trouble in the event of defeat in another place, or even of a defeat in this place, which of course is much more serious. It saves all the trouble of bringing forward the financial transactions, which really may not be required. The first thing we have to do, I say, is to get an authorisation of the work, and, if Parliament approves of it, we proceed to obtain the money, and the Government will consider when we have authorisation of the work how much money will be required for it this year. I may say I do not anticipate that, in the event of Parliament authorising it, the amount asked for will be very large. I would like to point out to members with regard to this railway that it seems to me that a better feeling and a better understanding is being arrived at between those living in the older parts of the colony and those on the goldfields. I must say I noticed a great change, and there is a better feeling than used to exist amongst those I met the other day. I hope that we will do all we can to encourage the growth of that good feeling. I see no reason why we should not get on far better in the future than in the past; and if we show, as we have done hitherto on all occasions, I maintain, that it is the desire of this House to promote the wishes of the goldfields, giving them good tramways and water supply;

if we continue that good work, and let them see that we intend to assist them, I believe good will result. We must look at matters from their point of view. What do they say? They say that the Legislative Council the other day threw out the proposal for the railway to Norseman, though the gold mines in the district are yearly producing £150,000 worth, and have produced gold worth half a million. They say "The Council would not pass the Norseman railway, yet they passed the Goomalling railway—why is this?" The Goomalling railway is a good railway to open up the country for 30 miles, they say, and will give assistance to struggling farmers and do a great amount of good for them, but it will not do as much good for the whole of the colony as would be done by this Norseman railway; yet they say the Norseman railway is rejected, and this railway for farmers is passed. That is how they look at it, and it is not an unreasonable view to take. Therefore I say if we have a chance, let us keep up the prestige we have of never refusing anything in this House which is being continually asked for, and pressed upon us by the people on the goldfields. I say that this railway has been pressed upon us; it has been asked for, and this House has approved of it on two occasions; first the year before last by voting money for the survey, and last year by passing, by a majority of two to one, £60,000 to commence the work. I now come to the Fremantle Harbour Works. Are they going to be stopped? In the year that has just gone we spent on the Fremantle Harbour Works £132,000. We have £48,000 at the present time authorised for this year, and I think that £48,000 will last till about Christmas; it certainly will not last any longer.

MR. SOLOMON: How much has been reappropriated for other works?

THE PREMIER: From the Fremantle Harbour Works? None at all. The hon. member ought to know that. We have been reappropriating from the Coolgardie scheme and other schemes, so as to give money to the Fremantle Harbour Works. The hon. member must watch the current of financial operations of this country very closely, when he asks whether we have taken

away any of the money from the Fremantle Harbour Works!

MR. HOLMES: What about the dock?

THE PREMIER: That has nothing to do with the question. I am talking about the Fremantle Harbour Works, exclusive altogether of the dock.

MR. HOLMES: The vote of £150,000 has gone, and we have not the dock.

THE PREMIER: We have £48,000 available for the Harbour Works. That has nothing to do with the dock. The amount will last no longer than till Christmas, and I want to ask members opposite whether they wish this work to stop then, or do they desire to proceed? We have £65,000 available for rolling-stock. A large quantity has been ordered already. I want to know whether we are going to have any more rolling-stock in this colony. Are we to tell people that we cannot have any more trucks, because we will not vote any more money for them? I assert that the two members opposite, the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) and the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes), are bound by the reason given by their leader, which is that no new works shall be commenced.

MR. HOLMES: Are the Harbour Works a new work?

THE PREMIER: They are, so far as the money is concerned. I do not believe the hon. member cares twopence whether the Harbour Works are stopped or not. Last year members on the Opposition side of the House tried their best to stop the work, and, if they had had their way, it would have been stopped: there is no doubt about that. If it had not been for myself and the friends I see around me, those Harbour Works would have been stopped long ago, and we would have had no mail steamers here. The hon. member opposite (Mr. Holmes), opposed the Loan Bill, and, had that Bill been lost, the Harbour Works would have been stopped.

MR. HOLMES: An expenditure of £25,000 for sheds was authorised, but it was not spent last year.

THE PREMIER: £132,000 was spent last year on the Harbour Works.

MR. HOLMES: Money was voted last year to build transit sheds, and you have not built them yet.

THE PREMIER: Then there is the dock. What about the dock? Does the hon. member want it proceeded with? Is that a work that can stand over?

MR. WILSON: It should have been constructed now.

THE PREMIER: Perhaps the hon. member will answer that question.

MR. HOLMES: Two years ago we had a promise, I said.

THE PREMIER: I want to ask the hon. member about the Fishrock lighthouse, which is to cost £20,000: is that a new work?

MR. WILSON: We will do them all, if you will only get out.

THE PREMIER: Those hon. members will do all these things when they get on these benches; but at present they are opposing all these things. The Fishrock lighthouse is to go by the board. As far as those two members for Fremantle are concerned, I cannot bring myself to believe that the position they are taking on this question is a genuine one. They are not genuine in regard to opposing these works—they cannot be. They believe, like the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), that if they can only get on these benches they can carry out these works, although opposing them now. What they say is this: "We know very well the Premier and those members who are supporting him think so much of the advantages to the colony of the Fremantle Harbour Works, that they will never give them up;" and these members say "we may safely oppose the Government, knowing full well that notwithstanding this opposition the Government will carry on those Harbour Works." That is their view, and I should like to know whether that is generous treatment. Those two members have accompanied deputations to me—I think they have been with three deputations, though the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) excused himself from attending the last deputation, saying he was too busy; and those members have joined with others in urging the construction of a railway to Coogee, in asking that the Government should provide a water supply for the whole of the metropolitan districts, including Fremantle; and they want a railway constructed from Fremantle to join the South-Western line at Armadale; yet now they tell us here,

through their leader, that no works are to be commenced for another year or two. I understand the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) does not want any works commenced for the next two years; for if it takes a year before a work can be authorised, and another year before the construction can actually be commenced, he does not want any more works for two years. It may be that those two hon. members have some other object. Perhaps their nature is obtuse, and they wish to show their appreciation of myself and those members who have supported me here, over the calling of the mail steamers at Fremantle: they may wish to show their appreciation of the great work we have done, and which I can tell them has made me very unpopular with friends I have otherwise been on good terms with for a lifetime, and this is because I have been fighting for the construction of this great work at Fremantle, and trying to do my best for that town and for the colony generally. In regard to two members in this House, I have absolutely lost their support through my action in pressing on these harbour works, and at the same time those two members representing Fremantle I have alluded to think this is a gentle, delicate way of showing to me the appreciation they have, as representing Fremantle, in regard to the labours of myself and others around me in carrying on this great and important work.

MR. HOLMES: Have you nothing else to recommend you but the expenditure of public money?

THE PREMIER: The action of those two members has been to stop these works, last year and this year; and if they had had their way last year these works would have been stopped, or if they can get their way this year these works will be stopped, unless they hold the view of my friend the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), that they can safely try to grab the Treasury benches and can afterwards carry on these works when they get here. Coming now to the point, what is the reason for all this? Is it that our financial position is such that we cannot afford these works, or is it some constitutional ground they are urging? I think we are practical enough in this House and in this colony, and if it is only a constitutional theory of my

friend the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), I think we will wipe that constitutional theory away and get to business.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Not the first time you have overridden the constitution.

THE PREMIER: I can assure hon. members that at the present time our financial position is an absolutely sound one. Last year we spent £220,000 on works and buildings, out of revenue, and we also paid off the deficit of £250,000. Last year our railways, which have cost about seven millions sterling, paid their way; and, after paying interest on all this money, there was a credit balance of £127,589, out of which the sinking fund had to be paid; and after paying the sinking fund, together with interest and working expenses, so successful has been the management of our railways, so carefully were they handled by my friend the late Commissioner of Railways (Mr. Piesse) and his officers, that we have to-day a result of which I am proud, and I am sure he also is proud—a result unequalled, probably, in any other part of Australia. The whole of the interest payable on our public debt was last year £440,000, roughly; and the profit on our railways was £372,000; so that the profit on our railways paid the whole of the interest on the public debt of the colony, with the exception of about £68,000.

MR. GEORGE: And how have you treated the man who did it? You made his place too hot for him.

THE PREMIER: I think this is a statement of results which should give great satisfaction and great confidence to the people of the colony. We have all this great railway system throughout the colony, giving life-blood to the business of the colony and providing all these facilities of transit, and yet this great railway system does not cost the people, by taxation, one single penny! When we remember that the revenue of the colony last year was £2,875,395, and that the expenditure was only £2,615,674, we shall see there was an actual saving on the year's transactions of £259,721; therefore anyone who thinks I have not good ground for asking this House to go on, surely and carefully, in the path we have trodden during the last few years in extending our railway system wherever

it was required and giving facilities wherever they would pay, I say such person has no faith in our country. As for cash in hand, we are not without that. We have at present to the credit of the Treasurer £600,000 in the banks here and in London; and, in addition, I as Treasurer have over £400,000 of Savings Bank moneys available also, although we should not think of expending the whole of them. Then, looking at the gold yield in the colony and dealing only with the last seven months, we find the yield has been greater during the last seven months than during seven months of last year. The figures are, for seven months of this year £3,330,244, and for seven months of last year £3,221,366; the two sums being nearly equal, and showing at any rate that we are not going back but holding our own, and this at a time when we know what difficulties there have been at Kalgoorlie in regard to the gold mines, and that a great deal less gold has been got in many mines that are in more favoured localities than was obtained in the same period some time ago. Besides that, I heard only a few days ago that in one mine, at the 1,200 feet level, the assay was three ounces to the ton; and this surely should give us hope and confidence in the future of our mines! In regard to the financial position, I have had troubles during the ten years I have been in charge of the Treasury, but I have no trouble now—everything is going on smoothly; and surely this is not a sign that we are less able at the present time to carry on works that have been authorised than we were previously. I do not say we must not be careful. If we had not been careful in the past, where would we have been by this time? I do not want to unduly hurry on works at the present time, for I think we have enough works in hand, including those to be carried out, to occupy us during the year; and these are the works I desire to carry out.

MR. MORAN: That does not include the construction of the Norseman railway, then?

THE PREMIER: We will deal with that when we get the authorisation of the work passed by both Houses, for we shall then have to ask this House for money to carry out the work. We shall have to

make a survey this year, and to order the rails or part of them; and this would be as much as I am inclined to ask the House to provide for at the present time. Comparing the position of the Treasurer to-day with what it was four years ago, I may remind the House that in 1897 we had passed Loan Bills to the extent of about £6,500,000; being $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions for the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme and $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions for the General Purposes Loan, and we had provided £1,100,000 for the purchase of the Great Southern Railway. Comparing our position then with our position now, and if we exclude Treasury bills, which give me no anxiety at all—we have less than £1,000,000 in Treasury bills authorised at the present time—

MR. MORAN: What is the amount due on Treasury bills?

THE PREMIER: The total amount is £1,500,000. We hold ourselves, on account of Savings Bank funds, £300,000 of these bills, and the bills do not come due for the next twelve months.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Eight hundred and eighty thousand pounds.

THE PREMIER: That is it; less than a million of authorised loan.

MR. MORAN: How much is outstanding in Treasury bills?

THE PREMIER: At present there is £1,200,000 worth held by the public, and the Savings Bank holds £300,000 worth. There will be no difficulty whatever in regard to these bills: they do not fall due for a long while yet, not till next December twelve months as regards the million, and the £300,000 does not begin to fall due until between June and December of next year; so I say there is no difficulty whatever, and I think I ought to know something about it, having had on my shoulders the burden of financing this item since 1897. I have not had any difficulty in the past, and we shall have no difficulty so long as we are in a solvent condition; and we are more solvent and in a better position now than at any other period of our history. I do not believe that is the real reason: I believe it is only a subterfuge, if I may say so without giving offence—for saying we do not want these works carried out which Parliament has authorised. The people of the colony want them, and ought to have them. I have never yet heard of such an argument for turning

back once we have set our hands to the plough; in fact, it seems to be almost a waste of words to argue that after we have passed Bills authorising works, we should, at a time when the colony is prosperous, when there is no cloud whatever on the horizon, be confronted with an Opposition vote on the ground that none of these works which have been authorised should be proceeded with. Our gold yield for the last seven months of the financial year just concluded was three-and-a-half millions; we have a trade of eleven millions sterling; we have a splendid revenue; we have railways managed with such care and economy that they pay nearly the whole of the interest on our public debt; and above all that, we have just had a splendid season, and everyone throughout the colony is rejoicing at the prospect of a good harvest and good returns generally. I may say I am sick and tired of having to fight these non-progressive croakers, as I call them. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] Year after year the same old story is told, the same old song is sung from the Opposition benches: "Ruin and disaster, and disaster and ruin"—that is about the general tenor of the songs sung by the Opposition, "You are going too fast; you are going to bring ruin on the colony." But it is a curious thing that we seem to fatten upon ruin. Instead of going back, the colony is jumping ahead—[MR. MORGAN: Hear, hear]—and is progressing better than we ever anticipated in our wildest imaginings. I say again, this action of the Opposition is unnecessary and inopportune.

MR. VOSPER: You are an authority on opportunism.

THE PREMIER: It is a waste of valuable time, and it is mischievous: there is no other reason that can excuse the action of this small number of people representing the Opposition proper—this very small number—I can find no other reason why they should depart upon a policy such as this, and should try to oust this Government on the plea they have set up—no other reason but a hunger for the Treasury benches. I have to complain, too, that efforts have been made by some hon. members to try to get members on this (Government) side to do this and that.

The Opposition have used whatever tactics they could. I should like to see myself going to members on the benches opposite, and asking them to be away, for instance, from a certain division.

MR. VOSPER: Have none of your party done it?

THE PREMIER: No; I do not believe they have.

MR. VOSPER: We believe the contrary.

THE PREMIER: Not with the direct Opposition bench—those ten of you there: certainly not.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There once were only three, you know.

THE PREMIER: The action of those gentlemen sitting on the two principal Opposition benches admits of only one excuse, that they are actuated by hunger, they are hungry for office. But why then cannot they wait until the people of the colony have had an opportunity of saying whether this Government does or does not possess their confidence? After a few months we shall be before the people of the colony, and that will be the time for hon. members opposite to try to change their places from those (Opposition) into these (Government) seats, and they can then be satisfied, should the country decide in their favour. The general election is close at hand: the extended franchise will be in operation in a few months. But no; they do not care what happens. "You can stop all public works; you can delay all legislation; you can go to the country without the extended franchise; you can do anything; but do hand us over those Treasury benches. We are getting very hungry."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why do you not go for a dissolution?

THE PREMIER: I do not know that it would cause me any great regret to be relieved of the cares of office at this moment; but a change of Government at the present time, even apart from commercial considerations, would do harm all round to the country, and, as far as I can see, would do no good. Parties are too equally divided here, even if the Opposition got some assistance. Parties would be too evenly divided for any Government to be able to carry on satisfactorily. If I did not get an appeal to the country in the event of a change of Government,

hon. members opposite would have to get it, for they could not be allowed to govern on sufferance.

MR. GEORGE: They could go slowly.

THE PREMIER: I say, let us get through our work as quickly as possible, and then prorogue. But I tell hon. members opposite that I am not prepared to allow them to dictate to the dominant party in this House what we are to do and what we are not to do; and I tell them we are not prepared to hand to them the government of the country until the people have declared that we no longer retain the country's confidence.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I am pleased that the Premier went back on his own words, and instead of attacking in what I may call a rude way hon. members opposite to him, spoke in terms which, at any rate, he cannot grumble at if they are retorted on him. What is the meaning of the whole tirade which we have heard this evening? It is simply a re-hash of what we read in the newspapers of the Premier's deliverance at Kalgoorlie—[SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear]—and a re-hash of such a character as is hardly likely to be palatable to this House; and I make bold to say, if the right honourable gentleman appealed to the country at the present time, it would not be palatable to the people of the colony. Very little that he has stated in his speech really calls for a reply from me, and I will therefore proceed with the notes I made before coming to this House, and will leave those hon. members who have been attacked by the Premier to reply to him in their proper places when their opportunity comes. What is the position of Western Australia to-day? We occupy perhaps the most unique political position which Western Australia, at any rate, has ever seen, and I think I may perhaps be correct in saying that no Australian colony has witnessed such a position before. At the present moment we have two motions of censure under discussion, one in the Upper Chamber and one in this, stating that the present Government do not retain the confidence of the majority of hon. members. How could that state of affairs come about if Parliament were not a reflex of outside opinion? Is it not an absolute fact, brought before us by the newspaper Press and

in our peregrinations throughout the country during the late federal campaign, that the Government as at present constituted do not reflect the political opinion of this colony? Has that not been acknowledged by the fact that we have a new Constitution Act just assented to; and is it not clear, as stated by the Premier, that this Parliament is sitting simply for the purpose of getting the ladies and other people upon the electoral rolls? It seems to me that we may perceive in the late struggle for federation a most significant fact for reflection. Where are the Premiers of the different colonies who retained office after Federation had been passed? Where? In the cold shades of Opposition. The only Premier who still retains his office is the right hon. gentleman who has just addressed this House; and he holds it only on sufferance from the members of his party, who have been cajoled to allow him to continue in that position a little longer.

MR. VOSPER: Members he formerly threw over.

MR. GEORGE: What does it mean? It means that the Premier, in dealing with the subject of federation, dealt with it as he has dealt with most things, dealt with as he is dealing with this motion to-night, simply as a question of retaining office, even when he knows that he has lost the confidence of the country; simply as a question of retaining office, even with the loss of perhaps the most loyal colleague whom he or any Premier has ever had. I make bold to say from my place here that I agree in a great measure with what has fallen from the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth). I certainly think this should be a short session, and that the matters dealt with should be such as are not likely to breed contention or contentious debate. For instance, we must pass the necessary federal legislation: that goes without saying. That is not likely to be contentious, and the matters to be brought before us concerning federation could be gone through, both in this House and in the Upper Chamber, with very little trouble or waste of time. There are the Estimates; it is absolutely essential that the Estimates be placed before the House and properly and quietly discussed. We do not know what matters are on those

Estimates, but we do know with regard to them that whether or not the Forrest Government go out and the Opposition go in, there must be the necessary funds provided for carrying on the necessary work of this country until the next Parliament comes into being; therefore the Estimates must be discussed and passed. And there is another matter to which the Premier has referred, the question of conciliation and arbitration; and I must say I agree with him as to the necessity for passing that Bill during this session, because we do not know what the present times have looming in the dark clouds that are around us in connection with labour matters.

MR. VOSPER: The Government could have passed that Bill last session, had they liked to do so.

MR. GEORGE: Those are three items which, from my point of view at any rate, could fitly have been brought before this House, fitly considered, and fitly passed after proper debate. Any other matters could very properly have waited, for reasons I will give later on, until the new Parliament met next session. For myself, I claim that for the last three or four years, at any rate, and I believe for the whole of my parliamentary career, the Premier cannot stigmatise my opposition as having been in any way capricious or in any way unpatriotic. I have tried my little best according to my lights to do what I thought was for the good of the country which has been good to me, and I intend, so long as I remain in this Parliament, to pursue the same course; therefore I hope the Premier will consider I have some reason for the position I am taking up. I have not until now joined myself to hon. members sitting in Opposition, and I would not have joined with them on this question were it not that I feel I have strong reasons for so doing, and these reasons have for their main principle what I consider to be the thorough and ultimate good of this colony. With much that the right hon. gentleman has said I find myself in agreement—not agreeing grudgingly, but agreeing because I believe he has reason on his side. For instance, I know from my personal observation and from frequent visits I have made, that the duplication of the line from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie and of the Boulder line, also the conveniences

up there, are absolutely necessary, and there should be no delay whatever with regard to them. Why do I agree with that, and disagree with the Government in relation to some other works I shall name? For this reason, that looking at the matter from a commercial point of view I know the railways are hindered and hampered, and that the people are hindered and hampered, for want of facilities. Looking at it from a commercial point of view, I say these matters should be carried through, and this House should never grumble, or at least I do not think the House would ever grumble, to find the funds for things which are of so much importance to the everyday life of people on the fields. Again, there is the Leonora railway. I know that place from personal observation, and I believe the right hon. gentleman has the right policy in connection with the Leonora railway. Although I do not profess to be a gold expert or anything of that sort, I believe most of that Leonora district is bound to go ahead, and, in my opinion, it will outshine Kalgoorlie before many years are over. Therefore, I say we are perfectly justified in building that line, more so, perhaps, than the right hon. gentleman was when he made the line from Southern Cross to Coolgardie some years ago. But when I have passed these matters I am no further at one with the right hon. gentleman. I did not believe in the Norseman railway, and I did not vote for it, nor do I intend to vote for it. The reason I do not believe in it is that from information given to me by persons whom I believe to be, at any rate, very reliable, I think Norseman is very much overrated, and that the places between Coolgardie and Norseman itself are practically played out. The class of persons from whom I gathered my information are practical miners who have been there, and who have spent their little all in trying to prospect; and they are not the class of men to throw up a district unless they have very good reasons for doing so. From what I understand from them and judging even from statements by men of better standing, the Norseman district is at the present time not worth the expenditure of the large sum of money the right hon. gentleman proposes to devote to it. With

reference to the Nannine railway, I do not know much about that place. I only say what has been told to me. I understand that the Cue line hardly pays for the expenditure upon it. To my mind that does not convey very much dolefulness, because I hold there are many things which have to be done in a country like this. For instance, the educational matters, postal matters, and telegraph matters, perhaps do not directly pay in certain districts with which they are connected; but taking the country as a whole, those parts which do pay, and pay well, can afford to pay some little portion to help districts that have yet to be developed. But why should we proceed with regard to this Nannine railway? Have there been any new developments in gold-mining?

MR. MOORHEAD: Yes.

MR. GEORGE: Has there been anything which leads one to suppose there will be a Leonora or Kalgoorlie, or anything of that sort? I think that at Peak Hill, and so forth, the bulk of the machinery has already been carried, and where is the traffic to make the line pay?

MR. MOORHEAD: What about the stores for the mines?

MR. GEORGE: It is absolutely certain that stores must be carried up there, but I think the stores bear a very small proportion to the total quantity of the revenue that should be raised in connection with the successful working of the railway. If that is not so, let us take the Cue line and its present position. We know that the contract for that line, taken by Messrs. Baxter and Company, was taken on the assumption that by the traffic on the Cue line they would make a considerable amount of profit, as much as Messrs. Wilkie did in relation to the railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie. Were the expectations of that firm realised? If you ask those gentlemen, you will find their expectations were not realised. They made something out of the traffic, but nothing like what they had a reasonable hope of making out of it. What does that point to? It has reference to the point I have tried to make, that in connection with this line, at any rate, the great bulk of the machinery required up there, which would give the greatest revenue to the railway, was carted long ago.

MR. MOORHEAD: No, no.

MR. GEORGE: My information may be incorrect, but, so far as it has been given to me, I believe it is accurate. Perhaps not. At any rate, we have heard already the leader of the Opposition, and we shall probably hear from other members who, perhaps, have a greater knowledge of these matters than I profess to have, what are the correct facts in regard to the Nannine railway. I shall be most happy, if it can be proved that I am incorrect in regard to the point I have raised. If proof be given, I shall be very pleased indeed, because it is not my mission, nor has it been so since I have been in public life, to run down this colony, and I am a bit too old to commence doing so. The right hon. gentleman has drawn some comparison between the former Parliament, the Parliament before this, and the present Parliament, and has spoken of what was done in that Parliament. I would point out to the right hon. gentleman that the circumstances are scarcely parallel. When the former Parliament was passing through its last session, what was the state of Western Australia? The state of Western Australia was booming. We were all booming. We were so booming that a lot of us never troubled our heads about how much we went into debt, until the boom burst. That was the state of affairs in Western Australia then, and that which applied to us in our private life applied to us in public life. We were prepared to do almost anything; almost to build a railway to the moon. If the right hon. gentleman had asked for it, I believe he would have carried the proposal. What is the present position of Western Australia? Western Australia is steadying herself—what from? From the over-speculation and the over-stocking caused by the boom. She is also steadying herself from the federation debate and the final settling of it on 31st July. People ask why are we steadying ourselves with regard to these matters? Surely the same rule which applies to us in private life, if we get a knock-down, applies in the present case? While we are steadying ourselves it is unwise to in any way increase our expenditure, and that is the simple point to which I wish to draw the attention of the right hon. gentleman. Then there is another

reason why the steadying process is as essential for nations as for individuals. It is an absolute fact that we are sitting in this Chamber on sufferance; we are sitting here when we know there is a Constitution Act, which has received the royal assent, and in relation to which there are to be elections of members of the other House to-morrow. We are, I say, sitting here on sufferance. What for? The right hon. gentleman says it is for the purpose of getting women on the roll, and of having the rolls extended. If that be so, is it right we should usurp positions which do not belong to us, even under the constitution under which we sit? There is another thing in connection with this matter. I feel considerable doubt in relation to the question of public works which the right hon. gentleman has referred to us. Until about two years ago, when gloom came upon Western Australia and we had that big deficit, which called upon the right hon. gentleman to pull himself together to fight for the country that gave him birth, it was my duty, at least I felt it to be so, to criticise the public works and railways as much as I thought necessary. When I found Western Australia had these dark days coming, what did I do? I simply kept quiet; but I have not ceased to think of the matter, and I wish to give the House just a few words in regard to it. I say that between the estimates prepared by the Public Works Department and the total cost of the works, there has been so great a disparity during the last few years that, if we had a tabulated statement placed upon the table, it would give hon. members very serious matter for reflection. It would cause them to think very strongly on this matter. Can the Government be right, can an individual be right, in coming before Parliament and asking for money, when he knows, or ought to know, that the amount he asks for is totally inadequate to carry out the works to be done? I ask if it is right for anyone to come before this House to ask for a certain sum of money, and give assurances such as will be found in *Hansard* that the amount will carry out the work, and then have to come here session after session and ask for more money, through unforeseen difficulties or some excuse of that kind? I know perfectly well that, so far as the right hon. gentleman and

his colleague not now on the Treasury Benches are concerned, they are to a great extent at the mercy of their professional advisers: it is only from their professional advisers that they can get their facts; and I say so far as these two gentlemen are concerned, and particularly the Premier, when year after year he has had to come to the House and ask for more money to carry out the work, this question ought to have come to him: "Are the estimates sufficiently reliable for me to come and ask for the money for this work?" Let us take the Bunbury Harbour Works. I was in this House when the question first came forward, and the first vote was for £100,000. *Hansard* will show that the right hon. gentleman gave me an assurance that £100,000 would make a safe and commodious harbour, and do all that was required. Has it done so? Certainly not. The right hon. gentleman shakes his head. My training has been in this kind of thing. I do not forget the figures, nor do I forget how to do my work. The right hon. gentleman gave that assurance to the House, but he had to come before us and ask for another £40,000 in the Loan Bill only last year, and that has not done the work, nor will it do it. For what do we find? We find by the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, which was laid upon the table of the other Chamber a little while ago, that the expenditure of £40,000 has not brought us safety. The Engineer-in-Chief tells us very particularly and clearly that there is a sand-travel down there, and that there are only two ways of dealing with that sand-travel. One of them is to build out a projecting groin, but it would cost an enormous sum of money. He says it would be such an enormous amount that he could not recommend it. The other way is to send out a dredger every year to dredge out about 80,000 cubic yards of sand. He tells us that at Fremantle the cost of dredging at threepence a yard is £1,000 a year, but at Bunbury it will be more: it will cost about £2,000 a year. Here in regard to the Bunbury works we have £100,000 asked for in the first instance, and £40,000 given afterwards, and we find that when we have spent that £140,000 we will have to incur an annual

charge of £2,000 a year at least, to make the harbour so that it can be used.

THE PREMIER: Jetties are put into it.

MR. GEORGE: The right hon. gentleman is not going to take me off the track by interjecting that, because I know what I am talking about, and he does not. I say that when the Premier comes down here and asks for £100,000 for work, and says that it will do, and then asks for another £40,000, and says that will do, and we then find the Engineer-in-Chief says it does not do what is required, and it will take £2,000 a year to keep the harbour open, the right hon. gentleman should have asked himself, "Am I right in relying upon these estimates when I ask for money?" And the question the House should ask itself is, "Are we justified in voting money for further works when we have absolute proof that the estimates are wrong?"

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. GEORGE (continuing): The Fremantle Harbour Works have been referred to by the Premier, and I ask who in this House can tell us the actual cost of those works? We know that when the project was launched on the country—a heroic project it was, and one that has led to good results, and will lead to a result still better—we were told by the right hon. gentleman that the total cost was estimated at £800,000. He told us that, when introducing the work in this Chamber. But what has been the cost up to the present day? The last time I referred to this question was some two years ago, and I made bold to say then that £800,000 had been actually spent on the work. But I was informed at that time by the Premier that the figures I had given were absolutely inaccurate, and that about £600,000 had been actually expended, and he had the rest of the money. Will the right hon. gentleman tell the House now that the figures I then stated were wrong? Even with the harbour not completed at present, the total amount expended is very little short of £1,000,000. I do not grudge the money, and if the country were booming I would not grudge a greater sum for this work to make the harbour what it ought

to be; but we have been asked, session after session, to vote money for works on estimates that are misleading. The Premier has admitted this evening that he has only enough money to carry on the works at Fremantle to the end of December next, and that he will ask this House to vote more money for the works. I do not object to vote more money, but the proper time to do so will be when the new Parliament meets. I say this is an absolute admission that even in the case of the great Fremantle Harbour Works there was an estimate placed before the House and the country which subsequent events proved to have been absolutely inadequate for the work that was contemplated; and if my point is right in regard to that, and I can give many more examples, then what are we to think of the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme? This House was asked to vote $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions of money for that scheme, and we were told at the time that $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions would finish the work. I say that example also shows these estimates, whether for small or large works, are made to suit a political end, or that they are made in ignorance, or that they are made by an engineer who is lacking in the rudiments of his profession. If the Engineer-in-Chief were here on his defence, he would probably be able to produce estimates showing more than the amounts stated in the figures which the Premier placed before this House.

THE PREMIER: No. We have always been pretty well right, I think.

MR. GEORGE: The right hon. gentleman knows that he cut down the estimates of the Engineer-in-Chief when that officer was managing the railways; that on referring to the records of 1895 he will find a minute of the Engineer-in-Chief, also a minute of the then Commissioner of Railways, and he will find a minute by the Treasurer, showing that the Treasurer stated he could not provide all the money that was asked for, and therefore had to cut down the amount. Therefore it is idle to say the estimates he has placed before this House have always been right. I can give him, if he chooses, the exact data on which I go; and I say if these matters are as I put them, that the estimates have been exceeded in instance after instance, it points

to one of two conclusions: either that the estimates have been framed to suit a political exigency, or they have been framed in ignorance of that professional knowledge which is required in the case. I am not one to try to damage the professional reputation of the Engineer-in-Chief in matters connected with the profession and the position which he adorns; and I am more prone to believe the fault lies with the sanguineness of the right hon. gentleman when he asks this House for an amount which will not be sufficient to do the work he desires to do. It is something like the estimates we have had wherein he has asked for a small sum to start a particular work, and then, when the money is found not to be sufficient, he has said, "What is the use of having started a job unless we finish it," and he asks for more money. The right hon. gentleman may, in regard to the Fremantle Harbour Works and the Bunbury Harbour Works, try to make this sort of reply, that they have got a jetty, or they have got this or the other. I tell him that the additional works and the further sums which have been asked for those works were properly estimated and forecast before the works were begun; and it would take a great deal to make me believe that was not the case in regard to the estimates for the Fremantle Harbour Works. The right hon. gentleman cannot make me believe that the Engineer-in-Chief did not foresee everything required for the scheme, and that everything which has been asked for since an addition was not provided for in the original estimate; but I say those parts of the scheme were not put before this House because of some political exigency in connection with the right hon. gentleman's finance. It is absolutely as easy to put down certain amounts for the purpose of obscuring matters, as it is for the re-appropriations that have gone on contrary to true business principles. In his speech to-night the Premier asked hon. members whether they would stultify themselves. Surely the right hon. gentleman was hardly serious when he was speaking. Surely a person can turn back from a course of action, if events prove such action would be dangerous and suicidal. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] Surely the Premier would not wish us to believe that if a man were galloping over

the country and saw a deep hole in front of him, he must not turn his horse aside. Such a rider must either go into the hole or change his direction; and it is simply because I think, and those who sit with me in Opposition think, that the people of the country do not know what course the Government have been taking during the last few years in regard to this colony's finances and the view we maintain with regard to work which has been commenced, that I say it is not right for the Premier to twit members on this (Opposition) or even on that (Government) side of the House with being over-prudent when they see what seems to them an imprudent course proposed. Surely if, two years ago, the Premier had in his private capacity decided, say, on some extension of his property, and had afterwards found his income getting less, he would not have allowed himself to run into debt just for the pleasure of doing it: he would not have refused to turn back. The right hon. gentleman has too much good sense. What is right for the individual is right for this country; and if the finances of the country do not warrant it at the time, it is right for members to say we are prepared to go back when we find the course we are pursuing is imprudent. Therefore it is foolish for the Premier to "slate" hon. members on this side because they say that caution is not an unsafe horse to ride when travelling in dangerous country.

THE PREMIER: The country is not dangerous.

MR. GEORGE: No; the country is all right: it is you who are dangerous. Your policy is like a little drop of whisky—not at all bad; but if you take a whole bottleful you will have a sore head the next day. Can the Premier plume himself with regard to the effects of his social legislation? A session or two ago the member for East Perth (Mr. James) introduced an Early Closing Bill. The hon. member, like most young legislators, introduced the measure without experience, and certainly not desiring in any way to harm the people of this country. But what has been the result of it?

MR. HIGHAM: Good.

MR. GEORGE: One hon. member says "good." I suppose if he thought the word "bad" would have disconcerted

me he would have said "bad." But can it be good when the effect of the Act has been to take away the means of livelihood of hundreds of small shopkeepers? Can its effect be good when it has thrown difficulties in the way of numbers of working men and women by preventing them from getting the necessities of life? Can an Act be good when it says one shall not open a shop before 8 o'clock in the morning, when many people who want to purchase provisions must go to work before half-past 7? I say it is bad.

MR. HIGHAM: I say "good."

MR. GEORGE: It may have been good for the assistants in some of the large shops; it may have been good for some of the capitalists who own those large shops; but I say it has been bad—indeed, if I were not in this House I should use a stronger term—bad for great numbers of small people eking out their incomes by keeping little shops in Perth and Fremantle. I ask the Premier why he did not take any of the warnings sounded on different sides of this House with regard to that Bill, which has interfered with the prosperity of the community in the way which I have stated? What about the Truck Act? The Truck Act was brought into this House, why? Because there were complaints, not only from the fields, but from the South-Western district and from other places, that workmen were not paid in money; and the right hon. gentleman, to court popularity, brought in what he called a Truck Bill, by which he imposed this or that penalty for certain offences until he concocted a nice little measure; and then, at the end of it he put in a provision which exempted his own particular friends, and left the law to apply merely to a body of men who were quite capable of taking their own part, and who wanted but one single clause to the effect that if a man earned a day's wages he should be paid in cash and not in kind. I wish, when legislation is brought in which instead of being intended to apply to the whole community is made to apply to certain classes only, the Premier would remember the duty that he owes to the whole colony and not to one particular section of the people. There is the Arbitration and Conciliation Bill: we can discuss

that this session, and I hope we shall pass it after fair consideration, and with a view to see justice done to the workers and those who employ them. If the question be approached in that spirit, the Bill, if framed on those lines, will do good; but what did we find the Premier doing when a similar Bill was brought forward last session? Any number of representations were made both by the Labour party and by employers. Amendments were sent to him by both sides, amendments which, on being discussed by this House, would have proved reasonable or unreasonable. What has been the result with regard to that Bill? Why, that the right hon. gentleman, in his desire to pander to the fads of a certain section of the community, has altered his Bill and brought in an amended draft with a view to please the Labour party only. He has absolutely ignored, not only in detail but in principle, the amendments suggested by the other party. This House was elected to legislate, not for capitalists nor for the labour men, but to try to strike a judicious mean between the two; and the right hon. gentleman, in his action in connection with that Bill, has alienated from himself the sympathy of a great number of employers of labour in this colony, men who do not wish to do any injustice to the workers, but who do say—and the workers will grant this is quite fair—that if any Act of Parliament is to give satisfaction throughout the country, it must do justice to both parties and not justice to one side only.

MR. GREGORY: But the Premier is not in earnest about the Bill.

MR. GEORGE: I expect he is as earnest about it as he is in regard to most things; but he is a politician, and I am not a politician, and therefore I make a mistake when I am always in earnest, while the right hon. gentleman only seems to be in earnest. Let us take another phase of the subject on which I differ from the Premier. What about the railway trouble we have had lately? It seems to me the Premier has been most particularly unfortunate with regard to two of his colleagues. He had as Minister of Railways the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn), but quarrelled with him, and sacked that hon. member, I believe, in his nightshirt. I believe

“nightshirt” was the term used at the time, though I do not know whether the hon. member wore pyjamas. At any rate, the hon. member was sacked in his night-shirt; and why? Because there was at that time a block in the traffic at Fremantle and throughout the country. And why did the block arise? Simply because of the shortage of trucks and engines—of rolling-stock. The Premier cannot deny this, and if he does deny it he is incorrect. I am not allowed to use a stronger term. The Premier cut down the estimates of his Minister for Railways, whose requests were based on the estimates of the General Manager of Railways. The case was put most fairly before the Premier, both by the Chief Traffic Manager, Mr. John Davies, and by the Engineer-in-Chief and General Manager of Railways, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor. The scheme was agreed to, and pushed forward by the then Minister for Railways, Mr. Venn, and the estimates were cut down by the Premier because he said he dared not ask the country for the money; and then, when there was a block in the traffic from that cause, the Premier, to save himself, found a scapegoat in the Commissioner of Railways, and sacked him in his nightshirt. Take the late Commissioner (Mr. Piesse), who has just resigned his portfolio. The Premier knows perfectly well, and if he does not he will soon know if he continues to hold the position of Commissioner of Railways and does his work thoroughly, that the late Minister was thwarted in his work, and that the member for the Williams (Mr. Piesse) has worked hard and intelligently and honestly to do the best he could in the position he occupied. And the Premier has done what? He has got rid of him. And how? By harrying him out of his position. Why has the Premier harried him out of his position? Simply because the Premier has yielded to political pressure on his own side of the House for the purpose of obtaining votes to keep the Government in power. If that is not prostituting the high office of Premier of this colony, then I have yet to learn what prostituting a high and respected office is. I know the Premier states he knew nothing of this trouble till a few weeks ago. Is it not absurd for the Premier to say that? Of course I am not likely to be cognisant of what

passes when the Premier is sitting in Council, or in caucus, or whatever you care to call those meetings of his friends; but how can the Premier say or ask us to believe that he was unaware of this trouble brewing when it was threatening for the last 18 months or so, when he was a daily reader of the papers? Could any of us go about the country and make the mistake the Premier asks us to believe he made? The men turned out on strike before one could say "knife," and then the Premier wants to tell us that, in connection with a matter which has agitated the whole of this colony, which led to a particularly big strike about Christmas time, and which paralysed the colony's railway administration—now the Premier, for the purposes of policy, says: "I did not know anything about it; and when I did know about it, I made the continuance in office impossible for my mate who had served me so well." As I said to the Premier, there are some things a man can do and retain his social position and the respect of hon. members; but there is one thing which no man in this House can do and retain the respect of members on this (Opposition) side, or even on that (Government); and that is to "turn dog on his mate."

THE PREMIER: Do not stop; go on.

MR. GEORGE: I am going on; never fear. There is another thing I think hon. members may fairly consider. I suppose I shall hear some sort of cry such as "Here is another financier come to judgment!" But I think in this matter it is our duty to try to look at the figures, and, as far as our brains will allow, to understand them; and when I come to look into figures which are open for any member to see, what do I find? Practically speaking, in round numbers, our present debt is £12,000,000. Of loans not yet raised we have £880,000. We find that, to fill up the gap caused by reappropriations, we want £956,000; which means that before we undertake any single work in this colony, if we are to pay our way and take the stand we ought to take as honest men and as an honest community, we must raise the sum of £1,836,000. That is not a large sum when we say it quickly, but it is a large amount of money for the country to raise, not for the purpose of doing new work, but simply to fill up gaps which have

been made in pursuance of a mistaken policy which some of us in this House have grumbled at, but which the majority have supported—the policy of reappropriating moneys from the votes in favour of which they have been originally granted. I know that various members on this (Opposition) and some on that (Government) side, when the question of reappropriation came up, spoke very strongly in regard to it; and here we are standing face to face with this question, and it is idle for the Premier to talk about our being prosperous as he does when, if we are to pay our debts without undertaking new public works, we must raise a loan of nearly two millions of money. If I am a croaker, I am not at all clear but what I am quite as likely to pull this country through as the right hon. gentleman, who is not a croaker; because I say, if a leader is in a position of danger, he is more likely to bring his followers safely out if he sees difficulties and disposes of them; and the man who ends in disaster is he who wilfully shuts his eyes to the prospects stretching out before himself and his followers. We have nothing to guide us with regard to the liabilities of the colony. How do we know what liabilities have been incurred beyond the amounts I have stated? We know perfectly well the Premier has referred to £400,000 worth of trust money from the Post Office Savings Bank as money he has already had from the Savings Bank; and to what has it been applied? Surely we have a right to ask that question; and if we have not a right to ask it of the Premier, surely we have a right to ask ourselves whether it is good enough, in the present state of affairs, to put our sign manual upon a *carte blanche* to the Premier who by estimates, as I have shown before, has deliberately misled this House. The Premier tells us he has £1,000,000 in the Treasury, £600,000 somewhere or other, and £400,000 of trust funds; and that he has paid off £250,000 of Treasury bills. Where did he get the money to pay that £250,000 worth of Treasury bills? Did he reappropriate from loan money without authority from this House? He could not take it from loan revenue, because he had not got it. Did he get it from the issue of new Treasury bills? We have

nothing to guide us in this House as to whether he may have done so or not. We have nothing to show where that £250,000 came from. I think the House has a right to be satisfied with regard to this point, but I am afraid we shall not be satisfied thoroughly until some change is made on the Treasury benches. Then he told us that the deficit was wiped out on the 30th June. So much the better for the country that the country was able to do it; but as soon as the 31st July came round we were faced with another deficit. I do not know how it is, and I ask the right hon. gentleman to say, through one of his followers, how that deficit came about. When we have a pretence of revenue being paid away, and then after the 30th June we are again faced with a deficit, I say we are at any rate doing that which is quite within our right and within our powers if we pause before we agree to a further expenditure of money in this way. I am only an amateur financier. If the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), who is a professional one, will show me that I am wrong, I shall be pleased indeed, for I am only too glad to hear nice things about the country, because I believe in the country, and that is why I am arguing as I do now. We have a little example before us to make us cheerful, when we get statements from financiers even so eminent as the Premier.

MR. JAMES: Do not be sarcastic.

MR. GEORGE: Sarcastic! I do not know how. We have an eminent example before us, a most prominent example too. What about the late Premier of New South Wales, Mr. Reid? "Yes-No" Reid. What did we find about him? We found that when Sir William Lyne took office and went into matters, he discovered that the finances of the country were not in as satisfactory a state—that is putting it mildly—as Mr. Reid believed. What did Mr. Reid do? He asked and eventually got a committee of inquiry into the finances of New South Wales. He was going to prove his case up to the hilt, and I suppose Sir William Lyne was to be kicked out of office; but Mr. Reid was proved to be wrong, and Sir William Lyne right. The financier of New South Wales had imposed upon his country. His financing was, at any rate, not such

as any discreet company would require; and without wishing to cast any reflection on the right hon. the Premier of Western Australia, I would like to suggest it is possible that his method of finance may not be found to be in accordance with thorough business principles. Therefore it would be well if there were a change of Government, if only to turn out a few of those pigeon-holes and find out some of those figures in relation to the Public Works Department which have been proved to be absolutely unreliable. Now we come to another matter. The right hon. gentleman has threatened his followers—so we understand from the newspapers, and I suppose it must be so, because he has said practically the same thing elsewhere—that if this motion goes against him—the "if" was written by him in very small letters, because he knows the motion will not go against him—but if it does go against him he will ask for a dissolution. What right has he to ask for a dissolution?

MR. GREGORY: He wanted to intimidate them.

MR. GEORGE: I suppose he will get a dissolution, or anything he likes, if he has servile followers enough; but has he any right to ask for a dissolution? A Premier who shields himself with the idea that if he cannot have his own way, but is defeated, he will obtain a dissolution, has lamentably fallen from the high position which he ought to occupy. It is simply coercing people. It is simply saying to those members who have supported him year after year, that he is just holding the rod over them. He knows perfectly well with regard to some of them that they could not come back again, so he dangles the rod over them, and says "If you don't mind I will lay it on to you and rub it in with salt." Is that the proper position for him to take up? It is absolutely wrong to ask for a dissolution; and if he obtains it, it will be in an unmanly way. He says, again, the reason he does not want a dissolution is that the present rolls are the old rolls. I tell the right hon. gentleman they are not the old rolls, not the rolls upon which the members of this House were elected. They are not the rolls of 1897, but the rolls of 1899 and 1900—those are the rolls; and if he will simply take the number of people on those rolls who will have the right to

vote in case of a dissolution, he will find that as nearly as can be there are about double the number of people who were enabled to vote in 1897.

MR. VOSPER: There were only 9,000 in 1897.

MR. GEORGE: How many are there now?

MR. VOSPER: About 44,000.

MR. GEORGE: There is a very much bigger proportion. The rolls which would be used if there were a dissolution to-morrow are not the rolls that were used in the 1897 election, and they more accurately represent the feelings of the people of this colony than do the rolls of 1897. Therefore it is idle for the right hon. gentleman to try to set that before us, for it is simply drawing a red-herring over the trail with the idea of frightening members.

MR. DOHERTY: Then you disfranchise the ladies.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member who interjected says it will disfranchise the ladies; but is that not absolute bosh, because members know that a dissolution would not place the ladies in any worse position than they are in at present. The interjector knows as well as can be, it makes not the slightest difference as far as the ladies are concerned, because even under our new constitution they cannot vote at the election next year. Therefore, is it not absurd to say that we disfranchise the ladies? I wish the hon. member would try and take counsel with his brain before he interjects. He has not much, I know, but what little he has he ought to take very great care of, to prevent his falling into such mistakes. We then have to look at a few lessons taught us through the late political struggle. What do we find? If we analyse the voting with regard to federation, we find that there are 21 members in this Chamber at the present time of whose constituents 9,697 voted for them, whilst those who voted against them numbered 32,022. That is to say, there are 21 members of this House who are proved by 23,325 votes to be absolutely out of accord with their constituents. That is one of the things that may be used by the right hon. gentleman as one of the thongs of his lash to lash up the gentlemen who are sitting on that (Government) side of the

House. Let us take the lesson a little bit farther. We find in regard to the other 23 members that the constituents who voted for them were 16,726, and those who voted against them were 5,052; therefore, the net majority for those 23 members was 11,674. Is it not idle for anyone to try to make out that this House is otherwise than moribund? Is it not absurd to make out that this House represents the constituencies of the country when, on a vital question like that of federation, in relation to which each member of Parliament went before his constituents and other constituents too, and according to his education and knowledge placed his views before the country, 21 members get a slap in the face by 23,000 people, who say to them, "We do not agree with you: you have not our confidence." At the present time in this House we are asked to accede to an expenditure when there is an absolute majority against the men who will vote for it. Let us go a little farther. There are 15 gentlemen sitting on that side of the House, and what is their position? With regard to those 15 members, their constituents to the number of 4,271 voted with them and in accordance with their views, but the constituents who said most unmistakably that those 15 members did not possess their confidence numbered 24,084, or a majority of 18,813. Then the Premier gets up in this House and talks about what he will do. I say he dare not dissolve Parliament, for the simple reason that, if he did, he would destroy at one fell swoop the vast majority of members sitting on the Government side of the House.

MR. A. FORREST: There are some on your side.

MR. GEORGE: I believe one member of this House got one vote. I am not sure whether it was a sheep or a bullock, but the number was one, or about that. I would point out another thing to the House in connection with this matter. We are faced with a new constitution, and, as I said before the adjournment, the first election under that new constitution will take place to-morrow, and what does that new constitution do? It wipes out three of the hon. members who sit on the Government side of the House. Three of them are wiped out, and

they ought to be dead and buried, and "*Resurgam*" not placed over their tombs; yet before they die we have a resurrection of them so that they may vote to keep the right hon. gentleman in power. The longer I remain in Parliament the more I see the possibility of twisting a mass of figures as one likes. Who is going to take the position of Premier, if the right hon. gentleman goes out of office? I cannot see any successor on this (Opposition) side; nor on the Government side, if it comes to that.

MR. HIGHAM: You will have to bring your looking-glass.

MR. GEORGE: I am speaking with good humour, and I know what I say will not be taken in bad part. What I say is that when I find the right hon. gentleman has played fast-and-loose with us in connection with this matter of public works, and is asking for more money to spend on them, and I am not desirous of giving more money to spend on them, I object, not for the purpose solely of putting the works on one side, but for the purpose of delaying them until we have a Parliament that has a right to interfere. I do it not for the purpose of hindering the works of the country, but rather for the purpose of steadying political matters and the finances of the country, and that is why I am against the Government. Possibly I may be mistaken, and the scales may fall from my eyes; but I say the members on these benches could not do much worse than those who are on the opposite side. Then there is another thing. I have the impudence, I was going to say, to suggest that if this motion be carried the members of this House shall simply pass federal legislation, the Estimates, and the Arbitration Bill. What harm could a Ministry do, if they went into power on these conditions? They could not get us into debt, for we are in debt already, and they could not borrow any money, because we have already borrowed all that we can get hold of, unless we can put a better offer before the British investors. They could not fill up vacancies, because vacancies are filled with friends of hon. gentlemen who, I presume, have the power to fill those vacancies as they like. The only harm they could do would be to effect a change, which would be the best thing they could do for the country. We have

had a Ministry in office continuously for nearly 10 years. Where are the apprentices in the art of government? Are they to be made in the same mould? If so, we shall have them with barnacles back and front, otherwise they will not be able to see into the dark corners of these Treasury buildings. In this colony we have not been training up men who can step to the front and take the positions of members who must retire in ordinary course of time. Are we to wait until the right hon. gentleman is dead? God forbid that we should wait for that; and God forbid that he should die, for we cannot spare him; but are we, I ask, to wait till he is dead before we train people to know something about government? Are we not to "give them a show," so that they may get some sort of training and knowledge? We have a right to let a new team come into office. We have no idea of finding out any dark schemes, or anything against the honour and integrity of the Premier and his colleagues—certainly not; but rather that we should bring new men, with new methods, and have new light upon things which have gone before, in the hope of bringing improvement into matters with which this Parliament has to deal. There is another thing, too, in connection with that subject. Taking a wide stretch of imagination, I can fancy the right hon. gentleman filling the second chair on the front Opposition bench, and filling it very worthily. I should say that, in the event of his doing so, the gentlemen then in power would have a nice time of it, because the present Premier knows the run of the ropes, and would be able to pull those gentlemen about practically as he pleased until they got used to it. I think, too, that the change would do the Premier himself good. He has been so accustomed to sitting on the Treasury bench, and to the adulation of the fifteen members who have no right to exist, that occasionally he actually forgets he is human. I remember a speech at Fremantle, when he almost usurped, if I may say it without blasphemy, which I believe I may, because he said it without blasphemy—he almost usurped the functions of the great source of life (that is about as neatly as I can put it), when he held himself up to the people of this country as being on a par

with those whom I think it would have been better not to have mentioned in any shape or form. This adulation which has been going on, and all this moral purblindness with regard to the views of the members of the Opposition in relation to the government of the affairs of the country, should cease at once. The scales may fall from the eyes of the Premier, and instead of calling people "croakers" and "do-nothings," and all that sort of business, he may see that the members of the Opposition are just as anxious as he is to promote the interests of the country, and just as desirous to follow if he will only lead rightly. When men are discontented—and for the last year or two members have been desirous of a change—it would do good to the country and the right hon. gentleman himself to have an alteration. Is there a member in this House who would willingly and knowingly do the Premier harm? There is not a single man who would do so. It strikes me that if one man stood up to do him an injury there are 43 others who would put that man down. But in talking of political matters we have no gloves on, but fight with bare knuckles, and the right hon. gentleman ought not to complain if he is hit. I believe that if the motion of the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) be carried, it will result not only in great good to the country, but in great good to the Premier himself. Even if some members on the Government side were to turn against the Premier, which is very doubtful, he could not blame them. How could he do so? Who has kept him in office all these years? Did he not tell the people of Kalgoorlie only the other day that from the farming districts he had received his greatest support, which enabled him to do what he had done on the goldfields. We find that when there came a question which affects the farmers and those old settlers—I refer to federation—the right hon. gentleman led them in one direction, then took a different course, and finally left them in the cold. The right hon. gentleman says he never changed his opinion, that he has been a federalist always. Well, we are all federalists. Some of us were federalists like the Premier when he sat on the Joint Select Committee to inquire into the Commonwealth Bill: we wanted

Federation, as he then said he wanted it, on fair terms. The right hon. gentleman seemed then to be in earnest, for he nailed his flag to the mast—with what? With tin-tacks, and the first "blow" that sprang up blew the flag away. When the Premier finds that amongst the farmers and the old settlers of the country he has lost some caste, what is he going to do? If you raise the devil, you must put up with it. What is the right hon. gentleman doing now? He has thrown over the farmers and the old settlers, spurning them in the way he has done; and now he is trying to pander to the Labour party, and trying also to pander to people on the goldfields. He is trying to catch votes in any way, and to do it at any cost. While the Labour party in this country are strong, or he thinks they are strong—perhaps they may be stronger than some of us suppose them to be—yet they estimate him at his true worth; and if he thinks he is going to fool the Labour party of Western Australia in the way he has fooled the farmers and old settlers, he is leaning on a broken reed, and when he does fall, great will the fall be! What is it that makes the right hon. gentleman cling to office so long? Are there any State reasons that make it desirable for the right hon. gentleman to continue in office for another year? Or is it the Nemesis of tricky finance that is pursuing him—is it the recollection of those figures he has got locked up in his pigeon-holes that makes him cling so anxiously to office? We cannot tell what his reason is, but it does seem strange that a gentleman who has proclaimed himself, publicly and privately, for years past to be tired of office, to be weary of the burden and the weight of power, should still cling to office in the way he does. He twitted my friend the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) this evening for desiring to get possession of those seats on the Government side. Did the right hon. gentleman wish us to believe that the member for the Canning was simply looking for the thousand a year or so that Ministers receive for their services? Cannot the right hon. gentleman credit the member for the Canning and other members on this side with at least as high and honourable motives as those with which we are willing to credit him? Who

would like to twit the right hon. gentleman in the manner in which he has twitted some members on this side? And if he would not like us to treat him so, what right has he to twit members on this side? If members on this side do take seats over there and do perform the work of Ministers, why should they not receive payment the same as the right hon. gentleman does? Is it not idle for the Premier to tell members on the Opposition side that, because they do not exactly agree with him on the present occasion, they are looking after the sweets and the pay of office? Why cannot he credit them with the high integrity, the personal honour, and the patriotic feeling which are proper to public men in Western Australia?—which is a good country, and which I hope to live in long enough to see it prosper far above what it has done already.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): The address of His Excellency, which is the subject before us, is a long-winded document, and a peculiarly empty document. It exhibits a species of genius in its composition and construction; but it is not the genius of the historian or the genius of the poet, but rather the kind of genius which devotes itself to the making of time-tables and directories and interesting literature of that kind. This windy document, throughout its whole length, is nothing but a long array of small public works: police stations, five miles of telegraph line here, a public well there, some other small work somewhere else, and so on throughout this long record of a past and ought-to-be-forgotten history. Passing over the greater part of the Speech, the whole of the legislation proposed is comprised in one paragraph, which clearly shows, as ever, that the policy of the Forrest Ministry is to borrow first and spend afterwards. I notice the Premier stated that on several occasions votes of no-confidence had been passed in the House against him. Inadvertently he spoke the truth, for it is true votes of no-confidence have been passed, but he would not acknowledge them as such at the time. He also told us he was glad to see that now there is a plain and direct issue put before the House; and I am glad to see that is so, because it is an issue which, with all his cunning, he cannot possibly avoid. The Opposition

have not brought this forward with a desire to hinder the progress of the colony or unnecessarily to postpone public works; but in bringing forward this amendment their desire is to voice the feeling of the country in regard to the present Government, and also in regard to the unrepresentative character of the present Parliament in view of the coming general election. The argument which the right hon. gentleman has put before us this evening is that if these works were authorised twelve months ago, they should be accepted by the House now, because when these works were authorised last year there was a deficit of £250,000, whereas now there is a surplus. If that is the case, the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues have the peculiar way of being able to fire off a deficit at short notice; for we were informed through the public Press at the beginning of August that there was then a deficit of £30,000 in the public finances. Therefore, if the present Government go on a few months longer, the effect will be to show that the disappearance of the deficit might as well not have occurred. We on this side are also asked to furnish other reasons for advocating a change of policy, and for desiring that there should be a stoppage in this system of continual expenditure. I say if there is a reason wanted, that reason is found in the fact of federation having been accepted by this colony; and it will be within the recollection of hon. members that the right hon. gentleman, on the 5th October, 1899, made a long speech on the eve of federation, and declared in this House, in the most emphatic language, that we were about to lose £300,000 a year in our revenue if we entered federation, that we should also have a restricted market for our loans and might have to pay a higher interest on the money borrowed in future for public works. He showed, in fact, that in his opinion this colony would suffer seriously by entering into federation. But since that time he has told the public, though he has not told this House, that all those things which he had forecast as being reasons against federation were light as air, that they amounted to nothing. So it appears from these two opposite views, expressed in so short a time, that hon. members can pay their money and take their choice. The fact remains that the right hon.

gentleman twelve months ago offered a warning that, if we entered the federation, the effect would be to greatly reduce the revenue of this colony and reduce the means of carrying on the Government of the country. Now federation is an accomplished fact, and if the results which were predicted twelve months ago were seriously believed in by the right hon. gentleman, this colony must now be on the eve of accomplishing the very results he then predicted. It is admitted on all hands that the future of this colony is more misty and dark than at any previous period; and in that belief we have a sufficient reason for calling a halt at the present moment, and considering our position most carefully. Besides that, we are heavily indebted for so small a colony. Up to June, 1899, our indebtedness was £10,348,000; and since that time, judging from the statement in His Excellency's Speech, the works described in it will increase that indebtedness considerably. Another three-quarters of a million will probably be absorbed in carrying on the Coolgardie Water Scheme alone, during the next 12 months; and, according to the works now proposed by the Government, we shall be nearly 12 millions in debt and shall have to borrow money, not to carry out new works, but to carry out those which have been previously authorised. Many people in the colony look forward to federation with rosy anticipations, and they may be justified in doing so; but at the present time we are in a mist, and are going into a series of uncertainties which behoove us to be cautious in administering the finances of the country, more especially when this House has ceased to represent the feelings of the people in the country; and when we are about to elect a new Parliament under a new franchise, we should especially refrain from entering into expenditure which ought to be deferred till the new Parliament meets. If we enter into expenditure by passing the proposed legislation in the present Parliament, there will be no hope of escape from the consequences; and in refraining from such legislation we shall be prolonging our existence long enough after our legal death has taken place, while not depriving the new Parliament of that control over the public finances which is

its constitutional prerogative. We are told by the Premier that there are no new works of magnitude proposed in the Speech; but surely we do not want anything larger than the Norseman railway, involving an expenditure of about three-quarters of a million, nor do we want anything larger than the continuation of the railway to Leonora. There is also the fact that we are contemplating a metropolitan districts water supply. Yet these things are described as being of no magnitude; and I suppose they are so exactly in the same way that the Premier's objections to federation were described by himself at a later period as having been trifles. I was twitted by the Premier this evening with having spoken at one time in favour of a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. The very contrary is the fact, for I have always denounced it, and I spoke against it at Norseman; for so long as the people of Norseman are compelled to bring their goods round by way of Fremantle, so long will they have to pay three or four times more than would be necessary if they had a railway by the shorter route. Therefore, so far from this railway conferring a boon on the people of Norseman, it will have the effect of putting a permanent tax upon them. Out of this proposal for constructing a railway to Norseman must arise the further question of route; and another result will be that there will have to be two separate sets of railway sheds, one railway centre being at Coolgardie and the other at Kalgoorlie, while a claim may also be made for constructing a line from Redhill to Norseman. All the questions involved in that railway are matters that belong, not to this Parliament but to the future Parliament, in which the goldfields will be better represented than they are in the present Assembly. I would like the House to clearly understand that this expenditure on public works is not the only question which is agitating the minds of the people of the colony or the members of the Opposition who have brought it forward. We on this side claim, and I think justly, that there are many actions of which the present Ministry have been guilty in the last few years, which deserve the censure of this House. I need not go over the details of the various malprac-

tices of the Government, but I may point to that fresh scandal caused by the frauds in connection with the Perth Ice Company and their transactions with the Railway Department. Here was a case in which as rascally a gang of thieves as ever disgraced commerce were banded together for robbing this country, and succeeded in doing it to the extent of two or three thousand pounds; yet, instead of those persons being prosecuted, they escape prosecution, and in such a manner as raises a suspicion throughout the country that they were allowed to escape by reason of their social position, and that the Government are accomplices of those thieves in defrauding the State. That is a serious position for the Government to be in, and every effort appears to have been made to condone the offence. The matter having been referred to the Attorney General, he has given an opinion that those penalties cannot be recovered. If the Attorney General knows anything about law, he will know that a master, whether an incorporated body or an individual, is responsible for the actions of his servants; and where a fraud has been committed, the Attorney General should be aware that the crime is punishable at common law. But, no; there seems to be a desire to hush up this scandal. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Pennefather) shakes his head; but I may remind him of the fact that his legal opinion is not held in high estimation amongst the legal fraternity; and if the Attorney General is acquainted with the law on these matters, and if there is any chance of prosecution in connection with these frauds, that prosecution should have taken place. The mere fact that it has not taken place is to my mind a proof of the connivance of the Government, and justifies the worst censures that have been passed upon them by the public and the Press of the colony. Not only was there a charge that the Ice Company had robbed the Railway Department, but, further, that certain railway officials had been persistently bribed; yet I have not heard that any of them has been censured or reprimanded; and even the man Hancock, who has been made a scapegoat in the affair, has not been prosecuted, but is still in the employ of the Ice Company, while his accomplices are still in the service of the Railway Department, and

apparently are not being interfered with by the Government of the day. A scandal of that kind would in itself be quite sufficient to justify the leader of the Opposition in this House in the position he has taken up to-night; and the desire of the Government evidently is to bury this piece of putrefaction out of sight, and let it be hidden for ever. I am sorry to have to perform the ghoulish task of digging up this scandal after it was imagined to have been interred; but so long as the memory of the Forrest Ministry endures in this country, so long will the record of that scandal be handed down as a blot on their escutcheon; and if they had any of that high-toned desire to maintain their personal honour intact and unsullied which they exhibited so largely throughout the Robson inquiry, they would not have stopped for one moment until the whole matter had been thoroughly investigated in a proper manner before a court of law.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I do not think the hon. member should make so many remarks on this question, before the papers have been laid on the table.

MR. VOSPER: At all events, I hope the country will benefit from my remarks in the course of a little while. At the present moment the whole thing has a fishy and bad look. Statements of the most drastic and damning character have been made in the public press, and not a single soul has dared to lift his finger to correct those persons by whom they were made. Does not that indicate something behind the scenes? I trust that in the course of a few days the Government will be able to place the whole of the facts before the House, and if there be then as much justification for a prosecution as there appears to be now, that prosecution should most certainly take place. And if we descend from these questions of high policy and of the corruption or honesty of the Government of the day to even the details of administration, what do we find in every direction? I need not quote a whole host of instances; let one suffice. Take the case of the present Commissioner of Titles. That officer, I believe, is also the Secretary to the Crown Law Department; and in the latter capacity we find him pleading in the courts, and carrying

on practice as counsel; and yet, under the 22nd section of the Transfer of Land Act—

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is not correct.

MR. VOSPER: The Minister assures me that is not correct; but is he prepared to state absolutely that the Secretary of the Law Department has not appeared in Chambers of late?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not on any private business whatever.

MR. VOSPER: I am informed, by counsel who is a member of one of the two Houses constituting this Parliament, that the Secretary of the Crown Law Department met him within the last week or two in Chambers, and argued with him.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I was informed by the Secretary that that is untrue.

MR. VOSPER: At all events, I believe the Secretary of the Crown Law Department still acts as legal adviser to the Crown; and that is quite sufficient for me, because the 23rd section of the Transfer of Land Act expressly prohibits the Commissioner of Titles from carrying on any such work.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No; from practising in the courts.

MR. VOSPER: No; pardon me! I will send for the Act. I say the prohibition goes further than that. I will test the Attorney General's memory or his law, as the case may be. I say there is a distinct prohibition, as far as my memory goes; and very rightly so, because the Commissioner of Titles is as much a judicial officer as the judges who adorn the Supreme Court bench; and that he should act as an adviser of the Government, or should appear in Chambers or in court, is nothing short of a public scandal. On referring to the Act, I find I quoted the number of the section wrongly. The section is No. 12, and reads:—

The Commissioner shall not, nor shall any Examiner of Titles under this Act, directly or indirectly practise as a barrister or attorney or solicitor, or participate in the fees of any other person so practising.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: He cannot take fees, cannot practise.

MR. VOSPER: Directly or indirectly. Well, is there any real difference between

paying a lawyer a salary for performing his work and paying him fees?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: He gets nothing for his work as Secretary of the Law Department.

MR. VOSPER: He is paid a salary as Commissioner of Titles, yet he does advise the Government. The Minister's arguments may be acute, and they are very learned too. But supposing I have a dispute before the Commissioner of Titles with the Government about selling a piece of land—

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Do not ask me conundrums.

MR. VOSPER: I am not asking the hon. gentleman anything. I know he is not an expert at answering conundrums, except when he gets a hypothetical case against the Government. I am not addressing the Attorney General: I am speaking of him in the third person, and would speak of him in the fourth if I could. The position I have put to the House is: Here we have the Secretary of the Law Department advising the Crown. We have A, or B, or C, who starts an action against the Crown or has a dispute to be settled before the Commissioner, who is also a Crown officer, and who settles the point in dispute. Is there anything just or straightforward in a position of that kind? The mere fact that the Government have, on their own confession, evaded this section of the Act is a proof that an abuse exists, which ought to be remedied. But that is only a fleabite amongst greater things that could be urged, and I mention it only to show the confusion into which the departments have drifted under the ten years the administration of Sir John Forrest of in this colony. We were told by the Premier that this motion was brought forward because the Opposition were hungry for office. Now, it would not be surprising if they were hungry for office. They have waited in vain for ten years for office, and they may reasonably have developed a considerable appetite for it. But I contend that the Opposition are not afflicted with that kind of hunger; they have not any particular craving to get into office at this moment; because, even were they to assume office at the present time, they could hold it only just about long enough to discredit themselves and make enemies throughout the

country. We know very well what short terms of office mean. Governments who experience them remain long enough to introduce a few reforms, and perhaps to make themselves unpopular in certain quarters; consequently, there is no great desire on the part of the Opposition to take office before the general election. But I think there is a series of things for which the Opposition are hungering now, and have been hungering ever since the time when three men represented the Opposition in this House. We are hungering for good government, for better government than we have hitherto experienced; we are hungering for common honesty to be exercised in such matters as those frauds to which I have alluded; we are hungering for political reforms which have been denied us on various pretexts, and which, when apparently passed, prove to be mere *simulacra*, mere shams, and not the substance which we hoped to get. We are hungering, also, for social legislation. We have no desire to see that social legislation used as a card-counter, as it has been used hitherto; we have no desire to pass sham Truck Acts, and to use them as an electioneering cry. Our desire is to have those matters passed into law, and to have our statute book, instead of so much waste paper, a living, real force in the community, which will have the effect of protecting the whole people, and not the working classes merely, against every species of injustice. We have declared, and we declare still, and no member of the House can deny the fact, that the Government have long ago forfeited the confidence of this country; and the mere fact that they are so anxious to evade the consequences of this motion goes to prove it more clearly than anything else could do. What has been the position of the Premier during the last few days? He has occupied a position the most humiliating, the most degraded, which has ever fallen to the lot of a public man in the history of Australia. No man has shown office hunger more than he. On one side the members of the Opposition are twitted with their desire for portfolios, while on the other, the right hon. gentleman is hanging on to his portfolio and to those of his colleagues with all the tenacity of a drowning man clutching at a straw. There is no kind of trucking, no kind of

threat, no kind of humiliating tactics which he has not adopted during the last fortnight in order to retain the empty show of a power which is fast passing from him. We find him, as of old, cajoling the Labour party, and telling a deputation from that party that if they want anything done they must give a consistent support to the Premier of this colony; that, if they once fall into the hands of that horrible Opposition, the last chance of labour legislation in this colony has for ever disappeared. And yet I ask, who have been the most consistent and persistent friends of labour in this House but the Opposition? Time after time we have moved and passed motions asking for legislation, asking for measures, in some cases, which our powers as private members did not allow us to introduce. We have repeatedly tried to induce the Government to pass the legislation for which they are now trying to get credit. Let us consider, for instance, the Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Bill, which was mentioned in the Governor's Speech last year, which was postponed again and again, and which, despite the protests which at almost every postponement were levelled against the Government by members on this (Opposition) side, was finally slaughtered with the other innocents at the end of the session. If there was evidence of anything at all in those continual postponements, there was evidence of design. The Government brought in the measure to placate public feeling just after the Fremantle strike. They desired to allay the storm which they themselves had very largely caused, and so they dangled before the electors the possibility of passing an Industrial Conciliation Act. Now we see the same Bill again held out before the Labour party, and the Labour party, as men of inexperience do, seem to be falling into the trap, forgetting all about the fact that they have been played with and humbugged for years past by the same Government which now proposes to give them a panacea for all the evils from which they suffer. We have a Truck Act on our statute book which is absolutely worthless, simply nothing more than waste paper. There is no single grievance which existed under the old system now remedied by the Truck Act, simply because of a series of exemptions which

were placed in the Bill, mainly on the motion of the Premier, and against the protests of the Opposition; and the exemptions are so numerous that, as a matter of typographical space alone, they occupy more room than do penalties and provisions of the Act, and as a matter of practice they absolutely override the rest of the Act, and make it, as I have said, utterly worthless. That is the class of labour legislation which the people have had in the past from the Forrest Ministry, and that is the kind which they must expect. Every labour measure introduced by this Government will be so full of exemptions as to be absolutely worthless, or will, on the other hand, be so drastic in its provisions that it will create a rebellion, and will have to be repealed. But the Premier is very safe in juggling with such questions; he knows perfectly well that even if he gets that Industrial Conciliation Bill through the House, and there are really no dissentient voices against it here, he knows he has a safe card to play in the majority of members of another place. It is almost an absolute certainty that the Bill will be rejected there; consequently he will go to the country with all the *kudos* of having passed that Bill here; he will lay upon members of the Opposition the blame of having attempted to prevent its passage; and then he will say: "The Legislative Council rejected the Bill which I was so very anxious to pass." That is the way in which the country is continually being deluded—deluded with what we may call a kind of mirage, which, the further we go, the further it retires. And then, too, we have seen Sir John Forrest, not content with that, flattering the goldfields—"smoothing them over." He has recently been rubbing the goldfields cat in the right direction. She has had her back arched and her tail raised for a long time past, and he has been trying to get her hump down if he can. Let me tell him, however, the goldfields do not believe in the sincerity of his conversion to Federation, nor do they believe in his sincerity in this matter. They say: "No; the Forrest Ministry, to a very great extent, have been our enemies. They have given us, it is true, large public works, but no more than our revenue and importance demanded, and no more than the develop-

ment of the country required; and they have not done that out of any desire to favour us, but simply because they had more revenue than they knew what to do with, and had to spend it somehow." The goldfields people know well that fair representation, equal political rights, the equality of man to man and equality of partnership between the coast and the goldfields, have all along been denied them by the Forrest Ministry; and no matter what the Premier may think to the contrary, a little cajoling and flattery will not win over the great majority of the people of those fields. The Premier went to the fields recently and got a reception from a few snobs and servile slaves brought together in the Municipal Chambers, at whom he squinted through a champagne glass, and to whom he paid a few compliments. But let me tell him, the first time he goes to address a public meeting there, as he did at Coolgardie some few years ago, he will find that public opinion in Kalgoorlie is not altogether confined to the "silvertail" faction. Depend upon it, the gentlemen who complimented him so strongly in Kalgoorlie are far more likely to look for favours from him than from the great mass of the populace. We have seen, too, the threats which the Premier at various times made use of. To-night he threatened this House with a dissolution; and yet we know well enough that at caucus meetings and elsewhere members have been told on all sides, and especially members on the Government side, that as soon as the Government are defeated on this motion they will ask for a dissolution. The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) has already shown that the Government have no constitutional right to a dissolution, and still less constitutional right to use a possible dissolution as a threat over this House; but still, they have done both. We are accustomed to breaches of the Constitution by the Forrest Ministry, for as a matter of fact the Constitution is to them simply a convenient machine to be used when necessary, and to be cast aside like a broom when it is not required; and so it comes about that where flattery fails we find threats used; and we have seen that policy carried out often on the floor of the House itself. The right hon. gentleman appealed to me a little while

ago, and to other members on this side of the House—to the members for Geraldton (Mr. Hutchinson) and Yilgarn (Mr. Oats)—and said: “What will your constituents say if you are the means of denying them certain public works? What will Kanowna, what will Geraldton say?” There is the same old thing that he has been doing all along. We know that as a constitutional principle the deliberations of this House are supposed to be carried on free from any fear either of the people or of the Crown; but look, apart from that, at the degrading position in which the Premier places himself by making an appeal of this kind. What does it mean? It means that because a member, in voting in furtherance of a great principle, may possibly be jeopardising his constituency’s getting some public work, that member is warned against doing so because his constituents are supposed to have so little public spirit that they regard their own interests before those of the colony generally. Is it a fitting thing for the Premier of a great colony like this, himself a great man, occupying a great position—is it at all a fitting thing that he should descend so low as to appeal to members upon such base and unsound grounds? I say it is an appeal to the very lowest instincts of the populace, and is the worst form of political jobbery for a politician in a country like this to make such appeals as turn politics into a mere selfish scramble for the loaves and fishes. I shall not further pursue this unpalatable theme. I earnestly hope and trust the various threats and bribes and intimidations offered to members both in and out of this House will not have their intended effect, and that, for once at least in their political existence, with the general election looming in the near future, hon. members opposite will vote according to their consciences, and will show the Premier that it is not safe to play fast-and-loose with political principle in order to thwart the will of popular majorities. We have seen how, as the member for the Murray (Mr. George) has shown, wherever his own selfish interests are concerned the Premier is willing to throw over a party, a principle, or a person. As he has thrown overboard his late Commissioner of Railways (Mr. Piesse), so he threw overboard the anti-federal

party; and the more faith and the more loyalty which are displayed in the present crisis, the more readily will he throw over those who support him on this occasion. The record of the Premier goes to show that the one and only thing he has considered has been how to keep himself in office as long as possible. That leads me to suggest, or at any rate, to listen to the suggestion that there may be very strong and cogent reasons why the Government are so eager to retain office. It is easy to imagine that just prior to a general election their only fear is that there may be such a general raking up of the official pigeon holes and so many ugly matters brought to light as to leave them no earthly hope as a political party, should those matters come out in time for exposure on the hustings. My belief is that when the ten years’ record of the Forrest Ministry come out in the full light of day, they will be such as have no parallel in history save the days of Mercier in Canada. That furnishes a very strong and earnest reason why the Government should retain office at all hazards, no matter what the loss of respect and honour. This amendment, so far from being inopportune, comes at a most opportune time; because it reflects the feelings of a great majority of the people and proclaims aloud that Parliament has ceased to be in a position to do business. It proclaims that Parliament has not only ceased to represent the people, but has ceased to represent their wishes; and there is only one mandate before the House, namely, to carry out the will of the people as expressed at the referendum, and pass the necessary federal legislation and then to let itself be buried decently. As a member of the House, I certainly protest against any further expenditure in connection with public works, or any active policy whatever. Let Parliament pass the Federal legislation and deal with urgent social matters, and having done that, let us frankly acknowledge we are no longer fit to represent the people, and go to the country in the hope that the electors may forgive our past errors and return at least some of the members of the old House. Be that as it may, members may be quite sure that if they do not do their duty on the present occasion—do not think I am following the example of

the Premier and using threats on the eve of a general election—but if hon. members do not do what they conceive to be their conscientious duty, free from personal motives or motives of friendship, the country will demand a reckoning from them when the time comes. I hope, though I do not trust, the amendment will be carried—it would be too much to expect the motion to be carried; but depend upon it, sooner or later this Ministry will fall, if not by the verdict of the House, by the verdict of the people. It would be better in the interests of the country and of everybody, not excepting the Premier, if the day should come when he can leave office with the satisfaction of having got Federation, and without time to heap fresh scandal and odium on his name.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): I move that the debate be adjourned.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What, at nine o'clock!

Question put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.5 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 29th August, 1900.

Papers presented Question: Arbitration and Land Resumption Question: Tramway Connection, Kalgoorlie Question: Perth Ice Company Frauds Motion: Commissioner of Titles, as a Solicitor (lapsed) - Leave of Absence - Address-in-reply: Amendment by Mr Haynes (negatived), Amendment by Mr. Stone (negatived), conclusion of debate - Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, By-laws, Southern Cross Cemetery; 2, By-laws, Bulong and Nelson Roads Boards; 3, Regulations under Land Act 1898.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—ARBITRATION AND LAND RESUMPTION.

HON. H. BRIGGS (for Hon. M. L. Moss) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, The number of arbitrations held under the Railways Acts and the Land Resumption Act, wherein over £100 has been claimed since the coming into operation of the Railways Amendment Act, 1897. 2, In how many cases has a Supreme Court Judge acted as umpire.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Seven cases under the Railways Acts and four cases under the Land Resumption Act; in all eleven cases. 2, In one case only.

QUESTION—TRAMWAY CONNECTION, KALGOORLIE.

HON. R. S. HAYNES asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, If a line of railway or tramway has been constructed so as to connect with the Kalgoorlie-Coolgardie railway line. 2, What is the length of the line. 3, By whose authority, and by virtue of what Act of Parliament, was the railway or tramway constructed. 4, Who was the applicant, and were others directly or indirectly connected with him, then or since. If so, the names of such other persons. 5, Were the rails purchased from the Government. If so, who conducted the negotiations on behalf of the Government. How were the rails paid for. What was the amount of the purchase money. 6, Has the owner of the tramway or railway received any money from the Government for freight or otherwise. 7, Is there any contract or agreement between the owner of the railway or tramway and the Government. If so, what is the date of such contract or agreement. 8, For what purpose was the railway or tramway constructed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes; a tramway. 2, About 17 miles. 3, The Minister for Lands, principle of such permission being approved by His Excellency the Governor in Council. 4, C. Jobson. A transfer