

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

has been lodged, transferring the permission to the W.A. Goldfields Timber Supply, Limited, but is not yet registered. 5 (a.), Yes. (b.) Through the Hon. the Commissioner of Railways. (c.) In cash. (d.) £13,242. 6, For freight, no; for supply of water, yes. 7, No, but a letter dated 26th January, 1900, was sent to Mr. Jobson, giving him permission to lay a temporary tramway during the pleasure of the hon. the Minister of Lands. 8, For carriage of firewood. The hon. member will obtain further information on the matter from the Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, Nos. 2 and 6 of last session.

QUESTION—PERTH ICE COMPANY FRAUDS.

HON. C. SOMMER asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, If it is a fact that, prior to the recent public disclosures with reference to the Perth Ice Company frauds, the Railway Department, or any of its officers, were informed that fraudulent practices were being perpetrated by the said Company. If so, to whom were the practices reported, and was any action then taken in the matter, or any communication made thereon to the said Company. 2, Does the Government intend instituting criminal proceedings against either the manager or the directors of the Perth Ice Company.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1 (a), Yes; (b.) to the Chief Traffic Manager; (c.) action was at once taken. 2, Not on the evidence at present before the Government.

MOTION—COMMISSIONER OF TITLES AS A SOLICITOR.

HON. R. S. HAYNES moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is imperative that the officer temporarily filling the position of Commissioner of Titles should abstain from practising as a solicitor on behalf of the Government, in violation of Section 12 of the Transfer of Land Act 1893 (56 Vict., No. 14).

It would be remembered that when the late Mr. J. C. H. James died, no successor was appointed to the position of Commissioner of Titles permanently, and that office had since been filled by Mr. Sayer. The duties of a Commissioner of Titles were wholly judicial: he had frequently to decide questions between conflicting

interests, and it happened frequently that solicitors and barristers appeared before him and argued cases. As far as possible, the Commissioner of Titles should be removed from the trouble and suspicion of taking either one side or the other; and a Commissioner of Titles should never, directly or indirectly, engage in a private practice. It was thought necessary, in framing the Transfer of Land Act 1893, to place the Commissioner of Titles above any suspicion; consequently section 12 provided as follows:

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

The object of that section was clearly to remove the Commissioner out of the arena of contested cases, and allow him to meet the practitioners of the Court and those persons who had cases, without any bias on his part. It was just as essential that the Commissioner of Titles, who exercised very important functions, should abstain from practice as it was that a Judge of the Supreme Court or a magistrate of the Local Court should do so; but at the present time Mr. Sayer filled the position.

HON. D. MCKAY: Permanently?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Temporarily.

There was another section of the Act which provided that the same rule should apply to a person temporarily filling the office. Once a person occupied the position he, as a matter of fact, acted as a solicitor on behalf of the Government. Without drawing the long bow it might be said that the Commissioner of Titles was both Crown Solicitor and Attorney-General, and the chief adviser of the Government. Every claim made against the Government was submitted to him; as was any prosecution undertaken by a private person. There were no proceedings in which the Government were interested—and by this he meant interested as against the public or some member of the public—on which Mr. Sayer's advice was not sought, and no prosecution was undertaken—and he (Mr. Haynes) spoke now with absolute knowledge of the fact—in which the Commissioner was not consulted. His advice, for example, was sought as to betting prosecutions, and on most minor matters, and the present Commissioner of

Titles discharged the duties of Crown Solicitor except, of course, in the matter of appearing in the Court, which was done very ably by another officer, Mr. Wood. But the Commissioner of Titles appeared in Chambers, though that had been denied—indeed he had appeared in connection with a case in which he (Mr. Haynes) was interested before his honour the Chief Justice.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: At the request of the hon. member (Mr. Haynes).

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Certainly not at his (Mr. Haynes's) request, and he was as much astounded at the Commissioner appearing on that occasion as any member of the House could have been. However he (Mr. Haynes) did not object in the slightest. Another counsel, Mr. James, was acting for the plaintiff; he (Mr. Haynes) was for the defendant, and Mr. Sayer appeared and interfered with the settlement. That was, however, a minor matter, and the chief objection was that Mr. Sayer acted as solicitor and legal adviser of the Government at the present time; and contradiction could be challenged to the statement that Mr. Sayer was acting in the capacity of legal adviser to the Government. The Government of this colony was not like the Government in England. Here the Government had embarked in private enterprise—for example, in railway management—which in England was in the hands of public companies, and in other matters the Government here competed with the public; and the solicitor who advised the Government came in almost daily conflict with members of the public, and might be attacked unduly and perhaps improperly in the conduct of legal proceedings, and might feel a certain amount of resentment. Against that resentment he might fight, and it was possible that he might allow feelings of bias or prejudice to actuate him as Commissioner of Titles. In no part of the Australian colonies where the Transfer of Land Act was in force was a Commissioner of Titles allowed to do a solicitor's work on behalf of the Government; and as it was unwise for such an officer to so act, this matter had been referred to over and over again by members of the bar. He said at once that Mr. Sayer was capable of filling either position, but he was not qualified to fill both; and while he (Mr. Haynes) did not

make any charge against Mr. Sayer, the fact of filling both positions gave rise to great uneasiness. Personally, he (Mr. Haynes) had no absolute cause for complaint, but complaint had been made by other members of the legal profession, and the proper course was to carry out the law, and not allow an ineligible person to fill the office. His own opinion was that it would be very much better if the office were abolished altogether, and the duties performed by the Registrar of Titles or the Examiner, who might be paid a certain fee for the cases brought before him. However, that was a little matter, and he submitted the motion in the hope that it would be carried, and that every member of the profession in the House would agree with him it was undesirable that one gentleman should fill both positions.

[A pause ensued.]

THE PRESIDENT: The motion had not been seconded.

The motion, not being seconded, lapsed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by **HON. H. BRIGGS**, leave of absence for one week was granted to the **HON. S. J. HAYNES**, on the ground of urgent private business.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

AMENDMENT BY **HON. R. S. HAYNES**.

AMENDMENT BY **HON. F. M. STONE**.

FOURTH DAY OF DEBATE—CONCLUSION.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the motion for adoption of Address-in-reply, and on the Amendment by **HON. R. S. HAYNES** to add a paragraph affirming that the Government no longer retained the confidence of a majority of the House.

HON. F. M. STONE (North): In speaking on the Address-in-reply, I do not propose to follow in the steps of the Speech in so far as its length is concerned. I shall endeavour to be as brief as possible, because to go through the Speech would be simply to go over what has been done in the past. But when we come to what is to be the policy of the Government in the future, which is I think the chief question the House has to deal with, we find it contained in paragraphs 16 and 17, and it is the old policy of borrowing and spending. To my mind it appears

that at the present stage we should not proceed to borrow any more money, for the reason that Parliament at the present time is a moribund Parliament in many ways. I agree with the opinion of certain learned gentlemen that Parliament really came to an end on the 17th August ; and with contrary opinion on this point, we find ourselves in doubt. One would have thought the Government, seeing there is that doubt, would not have proceeded with any further borrowing policy ; but from his Excellency's Speech we learn that they propose to do so. This is a moribund Parliament, because in another place there are certain members who, under the new Constitution, will no longer be members, and there will be others elected on a different franchise altogether. Under the circumstances it would be far better for the Government, instead of bringing forward a borrowing policy, to leave that policy to be considered by the country and by the Parliament which will be elected under the new franchise. Take the two Houses as they will be constituted in a few days. In this House we shall have six additional members, while another place remains under the old Constitution. That is a state of things which should not be allowed to exist. Parliament should have come to an end on the 17th August, and the country ought then to have had the policy of the Government before it, and, under the new franchise, have had a chance of saying whether the borrowing policy should be continued or whether we should stop increasing our indebtedness. For the information of members I have ascertained from a high financial authority, who has calculated these matters, that when the works now in progress are finished, the indebtedness of the colony will be somewhere about £15,000,000. When members consider that, is it not a question whether we should pause before we go further in increasing the national indebtedness? Should we not pause when we know that another place will shortly be elected on a different franchise altogether? It is for that reason I shall propose, before I sit down, an amendment to the Address-in-reply. I was almost sorry I could not support the amendment proposed by Mr. R. S. Haynes, but on thinking the matter over,

I came to the conclusion that if the House passed such a no-confidence proposal, we might be placing ourselves in a false position. If we pass the amendment, another place might not pass a similar amendment, and the Government need take no notice of us ; and what would our position be then? We would, by a resolution of the House, have agreed we had no confidence in the Government, and, therefore, we could have no confidence in any measures they brought forward, and it seems to me we should have to block any measure introduced by the Government. I do not think the House wish to do that. But it is a different matter in reference to the borrowing policy. If we pass the amendment which I intend proposing, it will be an intimation and a warning to the Government that we will not allow the public indebtedness to be increased until the people of the country have had a chance, under the new franchise, of saying whether or not there shall be any further borrowing. We are also now about to enter the Federation, and it is for the people to say whether they will, under these altered circumstances, increase the indebtedness of the colony. My amendment reads :—

We are, however, of opinion that in view of the approaching dissolution of the Legislative Assembly, it would be unwise, at the present time, to commence new public works, whereby the indebtedness of the colony is increased, until a new Legislative Assembly has been elected.

Any new works that can be constructed out of revenue will not be touched by the amendment, nor will it interfere with any works in progress or that have been passed by the House. The amendment only refers to increasing the loans, whereby the indebtedness of the colony will be enlarged. I hope hon. members will not object to the amendment, because, as I have pointed out, the time has now arrived when we should stay our hands, stay them at any rate until the colony under the new franchise has had a chance of saying yea or nay on the question of a continuing borrowing policy. As I said, I do not propose to address the House at length, therefore I now move my amendment.

THE PRESIDENT : Does the hon. member wish to move this as an amendment on Mr. Haynes's amendment?

HON. F. M. STONE: My motion is that the words of Mr. Haynes's amendment be struck out, and the words of my amendment be inserted in lieu.

HON. J. M. DREW seconded the amendment.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON (North): I would like to say a few words on that part of the Speech which principally deals with what has been done in the past. Some reference is made to what the Government are going to do in the future; and if the Government intend to bring in Bills for all the works mentioned in the Speech, I think we shall be here until Christmas. Paragraph 10 mentions the coal industry. My opinion is that the price of coal to the small consumer is too large altogether. Small consumers will never be able to use the coal. If I get a little coal at my place, I have to pay from 25s. to 30s. a ton for it. Paragraph 12, amongst other things, mentions a time-ball apparatus for Fremantle. I think that has been wanted a long time; it has been a continual source of annoyance that there is no uniform time kept at Fremantle. The time at the Town Hall and the Railway Station is always different. Paragraph 16 says that no new works of magnitude are to be entered upon, but the next paragraph mentions the extension of the railway from Cue to Nannine, and the Coolgardie-Norseman line. If these are not works of magnitude, I do not know what are. I am inclined to agree with the hon. member who seconded the Address-in-reply when he said that we should postpone any new railways until the new Parliament has been elected, that we should not commit ourselves to any new railways now. Of course there are some necessary works, and I do not say I am going to oppose all the new works proposed. I shall leave that an open question until the Bills are brought before us. Paragraph 19 says amongst the Bills to be brought forward is one to repeal the duty on meat. I do not think there is much objection to that. I am afraid the duty on live stock, if taken off, will not do the consumer much good: it will barely amount to a farthing a pound. One thing I may mention in respect to the duty, the Northern squatters have to pay duty on everything they use. People make a great cry about the duty on

meat, but they do not say anything about the duty which the squatters have to pay.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: They are all free-traders now.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: I do not intend to support the amendment moved by Mr. R. S. Haynes. In the first place I do not think that the Legislative Council is the place to move an amendment of the kind; and although I do not agree with all the expenditure proposals of the Government, that is not sufficient to warrant me in supporting the amendment, which I hope will be withdrawn. Another amendment has been proposed, and I am inclined to support that just now.

HON. C. SOMMERS (North-East): In speaking to the Address, it strikes me that a great deal has been made out of the proposals of the Government to go on with the works which are spoken of as of great magnitude. We must not forget that most of these works have been authorised by Parliament, and the Government are quite within their right in urging that the works should be carried out even at the present time. Take the railway from Cue to Nannine, that is a work that has been authorised.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: The other one has not.

HON. C. SOMMERS: The Government have a right to go on with a work of the magnitude of the Coolgardie-Norseman line. It is a work that is desired by the people on the goldfields; it is for the good of the colony, and the Government are quite right in mentioning a matter of this sort. They are within their rights in doing so.

HON. J. M. DREW: It has been passed already.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Then why not construct it?

HON. J. M. DREW: It should have been constructed.

HON. C. SOMMERS: It is "never too late to mend." I am glad to hear the hon. member say the line should have been constructed. Paragraph 16 mentions that a permanent water supply is to be provided for the whole of the metropolitan districts, including Fremantle and Guildford. Surely that is a work of necessity?

HON. H. BRIGGS: Hear, hear.

HON. C. SOMMERS: We know that the water supply has not been good, and

the city and suburbs are increasing in size. Surely that is a work, although of some magnitude, that will be remunerative, and it is desired by the people in these districts. The Government are warranted in bringing a matter of that sort before Parliament with the desire to have it pushed through. As to the proposal to bring in a Bill authorising the construction of the Coolgardie-Norseman line, I may say that an election will take place in the South Province directly, and all the six candidates who are offering themselves for election are pledged to support that line, so that within a few days we shall have three candidates pledged to see that the Coolgardie-Norseman line is constructed at its earliest opportunity, returned to this House. The district is languishing for this line, and there are very important goldfields in the district. The line was passed in another place by a large majority, something like two to one, and it was only lost in this House by one vote. I should think that pressure would be brought on Parliament to see that this line is constructed at an early date, bearing in mind that the Parliament of the country promised that the next session this line would be submitted. The Government are only acting up to their promise in bringing the line forward. It is a line that is badly needed; it will prove remunerative; it will not only supply the older portions of the goldfields—Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie—with a good supply of timber which will almost make the line remunerative, but it will develop all the fields in that part of the district which are languishing. As to the line to Leonora mentioned in paragraph 18, it is said that the line has been surveyed, and the survey is being extended to Laverton. I know that district, and I know the railway is required. It will be a cheap line, the country is absolutely flat and devoid of timber, therefore the line will be constructed at a small cost. The rate for haulage now charged is very great, and the whole of the gold mining industry there is suffering for the want of this line. There can be no objection to the Government bringing forward this line as it is wanted; it can be cheaply constructed, and it ought to be constructed without delay. The Speech also mentions that the duplication of the

Boulder railway is in progress. Everyone knows that this is the best paying line in the colony; it is only a short line, but if all the lines in the colony paid anything like the interest that this line does, the railway revenue of the colony would be one which we should be proud of. Then again there is the duplication of the line between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie; this has been advocated by the Press of the goldfields, and the members for the goldfields for two or three years. The Government cannot keep pace with the traffic, the duplication is badly needed, and I say that Parliament will only be doing what is just to the people of these centres in going on with the duplication of that line. There are other matters mentioned in paragraph 19, including the drainage of rural lands. I know that is a comparatively remunerative work; it is not a work of great magnitude, and it has been promised for years. With a small outlay this will bring in a considerable revenue, therefore no objection can be raised to that work. The repeal of the duty on meat has my entire sympathy.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: That will not benefit the consumer much.

HON. C. SOMMERS: We shall get a little benefit. There is one matter I should have been glad to see mentioned in the Speech: I would have been glad to see the Government bring something forward tending to do away with the scandals in regard to the audits of municipalities. Recently in the Leederville Municipal Council, disclosures were made which were not creditable, and I should like to urge the Government to bring forward legislation which will prevent a recurrence of such scandals. The Government contribute largely to the municipalities, and there is absolutely no check, or any attempt to check, the expenditure of municipalities. We do not even know that the amount claimed from the Government for subsidy is correct. No one takes the trouble to see that it is correct. As Mayor of the Municipality of Coolgardie, I have signed that a certain amount is due to the council, and without any checking on the part of the Government the money is sent to us. Nor is there any check as to how the money is expended. The practice in the other colonies has been that an

auditor is appointed to audit the municipal books, and the taxpayers elect another person: there is therefore a check on both sides. I hope the Government will see fit to bring about such a state of affairs here. We want a competent board of examiners, so that men able and competent to audit books of account are appointed to see that the accounts are properly kept. Another crying scandal which the Government might well endeavour to abate is the growing evil which is no longer permitted in New South Wales, Victoria, or Queensland: I am referring to "sweeps." I know money has been expended on the goldfields by children and women and by men who cannot afford it; and I have actually heard bells rung in the streets and seen men bring tables out into the light of day, intimating that sweeps on such a race were open and that tickets could be had on application. All the time the Government and the police stand idly by, and see this sort of scandal! These sweeps will be the ruin of the morals and the pockets of the people.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I hope the hon. member will be able to convince the House on that point.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Repeal the Totalisator Act.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Hear, hear; repeal the Totalisator Act.

HON. C. SOMMERS: I do not care what is done, but this sort of proceeding ought not to be allowed to go on year after year. It is not necessary to go past Perth to the goldfields to see this growing scandal, and I am sorry to see that no notice of the subject is taken in the Address-in-reply. This also would have been an opportune time for the Government to appoint a non-political board to manage our railways, which are our greatest source of revenue, and yet are still under political control. We heard of the recent frauds in connection with the Perth Ice Company, and there would seem to be no proper supervision on the railways, or such a swindle would be impossible.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The company paid £100.

HON. C. SOMMERS: The company paid £2,000, but how do we know that the sum is not £6,000? No interest was paid on the money, and no attempt was

made to prosecute the guilty persons; but the matter was hushed up, creating a perfect scandal; and I intend to move later on, if something is not done, that a special board be appointed to inquire into this and other circumstances which appear to me to be particularly "fishy." We on the goldfields have been promised Circuit Courts time after time, and yet no mention of these is made in his Excellency's Speech. At the first meeting of the House last session, I believe Mr. Matheson asked what action the Government intended to take in regard to Circuit Courts; and a promise was then given that the Government would bring in the necessary legislation. However, that promise has not been kept.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Yet you still have confidence in the Government!

HON. C. SOMMERS: I am pointing things out, and possibly I will not have confidence in the Government if these necessary matters are neglected. We will say there has been an oversight on the part of the Government, though I trust the Government will see their way to introduce legislation providing for Circuit Courts on the goldfields. I cannot support either of the amendments, because I think it would be inopportune to attempt to carry either proposal. It would not do any good; and knowing that the public works are of much urgency, and that some of them have been authorised by Parliament, and would no doubt be carried out by the Parliament to be elected on the wider franchise, we may safely leave well alone.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS (Metropolitan): I will not detain the House long in dealing with the Address-in-reply, but I would like to refer first to paragraph 7, in regard to the gold production of the colony and the returns of the Royal Mint in Perth. The mover of the Address-in-reply (Mr. Moss) and Mr. R. S. Haynes both seemed to be a little wrong in their facts and figures, and it is rather a pity that two gentlemen learned in law like these should be led astray by what they hear in the streets, for the Mint is of great value to the colony. I have no doubt those learned gentlemen will not agree with me, but I hope to convince them before I sit down that their views are incorrect. It is regrettable that misstatements like that should go forth in the Press in regard to

the Mint, because the Mint is of very great value to the colony; and in this statement I hope the majority of the members of the House will agree with me. In this connection I will give a few facts and figures which I have worked out very carefully. Mr. Haynes stated that 20 million pounds' worth of gold had been exported from the colony and only £1,700,000 worth coined in our own Mint; but Mr. Haynes forgot to state that that 20 million pounds' worth of gold was the gross total produce of the colony in fifteen years, and that the Mint, if I remember aright, has only been open for about a year.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: There was no gold return until 1885.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: I am speaking of the gold return during fifteen years, and small quantities were produced before 1895. Since the opening of the Mint from July to December in 1899 the proportion of bullion received at the Mint was 25 per cent., and from January to July, 1900, the proportion was 36 per cent., and hon. members must also bear in mind that most of the large Kalgoorlie mines prefer to send their bullion home direct instead of to the local Mint.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Why?

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: Because it pays them better, probably, to do so, and it suits their convenience.

HON. M. L. MOSS: And we are running the Mint at a loss all the time.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It was the mover of the Address who made those remarks, not I.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: All the other districts in the colony send either the whole or a very large proportion of their output to the Mint, and that the value of the Mint is being realised is shown by the following figures: In April, 1900, 36,000 ounces were received at the Mint; in May, 38,000; in June, 51,000; in July, 49,000 ounces; in August, to the 24th, 53,000 ounces. Mr. R. S. Haynes also stated that the price for minting in Perth is very much in excess of what it is in Melbourne.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I was so informed.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: Then I will point out to the hon. member where he is in error, and I am only doing this for the good of the colony. It may surprise hon. members to hear that the following are

the charges for minting at the three different Mints of Australia, in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth: For under 500 ounces the charge is, 6d. Sydney, 2d. Melbourne, and 2½d. in Perth; for 500 to 1,000 ounces, 4d. Sydney, 2d. Melbourne, and 2d. in Perth; for 1,000 to 1,500 ounces, 4d. Sydney, 1-5d. Melbourne, and 1-8d. Perth, or rather more in Perth than in Melbourne. I will not detain the House longer than to point out that for 2,500 ounces to 20,000 ounces the charges are: in Sydney, 2d.; in Melbourne, 1-5d.; and in Perth 1-5½d.; showing very little difference between Melbourne and Perth. The hon. member seems to have gone astray when he said that it is owing to the charges that gold is not sent to the Perth Mint. He forgot to reckon escort and railway charges from the mines, or is confounding these with the Mint charges.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Escort and railway charges would also apply to the Melbourne Mint.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: But there has to be added the charges from Perth or Fremantle to Melbourne.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: But the charges for bringing the gold down from the fields would be the same to Melbourne as to Perth.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: That is where the hon. member is premature. I am not quite so loquacious as the hon. member, and do not speak so often: if I did, I would probably speak a great deal better. The hon. member will find that the charges for minting and insurance between Fremantle and Melbourne come to about 2½d. per ounce; so that it costs as much to convey the gold from Perth to Melbourne as would pay the whole of the charges in the Mint here.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Better returns are got in Melbourne.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: Most people who send gold to Melbourne do so owing to the refractory nature of the bullion and to the cyaniding, such bullion costing, I understand, a good deal to treat here. I think I have shown the House that it is an advantage to the gold mines of this colony to send gold to the local Mint. It may be interesting to know that in the year 1899 the coin issued by the Mint was £690,992; and in 1900, up to the 9th August, the amount was £1,091,872.

In regard to the Mint charges I would like to put a few facts before hon. members. Here is a return—the last I received from the Mint—it is dated 21st August, and is a return for the treatment of 151 ounces of gold. The net value given by the Mint is £549 Os. 3d.: the net cost to the company, that is the actual Mint charges, was £1 11s. Do you think any company, or any person in the world would object to pay the Mint £1 11s. for turning this bullion into sovereigns? The bank charges came to £7 11s. 3d. Here is another return for 384 ounces of gold sent to the Mint. A net return of £1,307 8s. 11d. was received, the Mint charges being £5 15s. 2d. I would like to state that there was some mineral in the bullion which had to be got rid of, which caused an extra charge of £2 5s. 6d. The bank charges in this case came to £14 8s.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Is the hon. member master of the Mint? He seems to know all about it.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: He is a customer.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: I am one of the customers, or else I should not have these returns. I have one other return here for 1,201 ounces. I hope I am not wearying the House, but this is a very important matter, and I want the information to go forth to the world, as it will not do the country any harm. The net return was £4,330 ls.; the total cost for turning the gold into sovereigns was £9 8s. 8d., and the bank charges amounted to £45 Os. 9d. Members of this House will agree that the statements made by my friends are not altogether in accordance with the state of affairs and the facts, and I thought it was my duty as a member of the House to point these matters out in the way I have endeavoured to do. Before I sit down there are one or two other matters which I should just like to refer to. Paragraph 16 of the Speech refers to a water supply for the metropolitan district. It has occurred to me, from what I have heard outside, that so far no definite plans or site have been fixed upon; and it seems to me if either of the amendments is passed, the Government will be prevented from going on with the surveys and plans that are necessary; therefore some such scheme is absolutely essential, because we know locally that a new water supply is necessary for Fremantle and the

metropolis and the outlying districts, and we should not block this work. In connection with my late partner, Mr. Barrett, I went into this question, and we urged a new scheme for Perth; but we were laughed at at that time. I think we should not block the Government in going on with the necessary surveys for so important a work. I do not quite see my way to support Mr. Stone in his amendment, I am very much inclined to vote against both amendments, because I do not think at the present time that it is necessary to block everything, all future works for the colony. I very much doubt whether any amendment passed in this House will have any effect on the Government whatever, because I think this House—I will not say has no right to do it—but I think it is absolutely without precedent that an amendment of this sort should be brought forward on the Address-in-reply in the Legislative Council. I have nothing more I wish to bring forward.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): Speaking to the Address-in-reply, I may say at the outset that I intend to leave myself a free hand. There seems to me to be no need for any member of the House to commit himself to either of the amendments now before us, or to commit himself in any way at the present juncture. We shall have an opportunity later on of dealing with every item on its merits when they come before us in a proper manner.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You ought to disapprove of them now.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Then I should commit myself, and I do not intend to do that. We have found in the past that in every instance in which a railway has been constructed to the goldfields it has turned out payable, to be a good expenditure, and to have recouped the colony fourfold. It was only stated yesterday that the profits from our railways have amounted to a very small sum. I understand that the railway revenue has paid the interest for the whole debt of the colony due on the loans. In the face of these facts, it would be folly on the part of the House to oppose these works in any way, or to indorse an amendment of the kind before us. I cannot see for the life of me that because Parliament is going out shortly—I mean the Legislative Assembly

—that public works should stop still. It has been admitted elsewhere that the works will be carried on by whatever Government is in power, therefore I cannot settle in my mind how we can relieve ourselves of the responsibility by postponing these works now. The works will have to be constructed whether they are carried out now or in six months time. Some members are going round telling us that it only means a delay of six months. If the works are necessary, and the people want them, why should we not give the benefit of the six months. Whatever Government be in power, time must be taken to work these things up. Now we have a chance of giving the people this railway, and if it can be shown that the work is necessary, I think it should be carried out. Last session the Norseman railway was lost by one vote. There are members here who voted for that railway, and I do not know how they can take up any other position than that of supporting the action which they took in the past. I am not going to pick out the items one by one and deal with them, because when I started my speech I said that I intended to keep a free hand, therefore I shall not be able to support either of the amendments now before the House. I was very pleased to hear what Mr. Sommers said as to the Norseman railway, because a feeling has got abroad that the goldfields are indifferent in the matter, but Mr. Sommers has told the House that six gentlemen have been nominated for the three new goldfields seats and each of these gentlemen is pledged to support the construction of the Norseman railway. There can be no doubt as to the feeling of the people on the fields on this matter in the face of that statement. We have no right to carry either of the amendments now before the House, which will practically throttle the wishes of the people on the goldfields. Again, it may be necessary to postpone this matter so as to allow the three new members to come here and let us hear what they have to say.

HON. F. M. STONE: Just what I want to do.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I say, postpone the debate on the railway, not the debate on the Address-in-reply: then we could let these gentlemen be elected, and we should hear what they have to say.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Let the six be elected to the other House, too.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: We cannot get the other six in. I believe the elections are taking place in the South and in the Metropolitan-Suburban Province to-day.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Only in the Metropolitan-Suburban Province.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: It might be good for the House to postpone the discussion on this railway until these members have been elected; they will come fresh from provinces which comprise half the population of the colony.

HON. J. M. DREW: What about the people's Chamber?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Then why not adjourn the railway debate for a fortnight? It is essential for hon. members to know that these members must be here in a given time.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What about the other place?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Never mind the other place: we have certain work to do in this House, to approve or disapprove of the acts the other House has performed. That is our work, and if we confine ourselves to that work we shall do much better than try to oust the Government, over whom we have no power. We can only annoy them, we cannot get them out of power, therefore it is a waste of time to discuss the amendments which are before us. Both the amendments are similar, only they have a different gloss on them. Mr. Stone's amendment is just as dangerous as that moved by Mr. R. S. Haynes: it will tie the hands of the members who support it. We have heard a great deal in connection with the past action of Parliaments. One hon. member who has just come here said it was a disgrace to Parliament to have to countenance the expenditure which has taken place in the past. That is practically what his speech amounted to. I want to know if any great work of magnitude has been carried out by the Government of the colony that could be done without to-day.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The Observatory.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: That is not a work of magnitude.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The Mint.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: These are not works of magnitude.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The Wagin railway station.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I do not call these works of magnitude.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: There are the public buildings throughout the colony.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The hon. member is one of those who take a pride in these public buildings, and when he gets a 'tothersider here he is proud of showing him the public buildings and the railway stations. I have seen this done repeatedly, yet the hon. gentleman is one of those who inside of the House twits the Government with wasteful expenditure.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I have not seen one member do that yet.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Not in that way.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I have. I shall be glad indeed if a member could mention one work of magnitude which could be done without to-day. One member stated yesterday that the work done in the past was disgraceful.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: He is your colleague, is he not?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Yes; he is my colleague. The returns from the railways alone have paid nearly all the interest on all our loans. I would like now to refer to the remarks of Mr. Sommers in reference to sweeps. I was told only last night by a gentleman who does not reside in Perth that he was thunderstruck to notice here children and even little girls going into places in the city and purchasing tickets for these sweeps. It is time this was seen into. It is all very fine for members to laugh, but these sweeps are a disgrace to the country, and something should be done to put an end to them.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Introduce a Bill abolishing the totalisator.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Abolish the Totalisator Act.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: If the hon. member (Mr. R. S. Haynes) would introduce useful legislation instead of bringing forward fairy tales about the purchase of land by members of the Ministry, he would do a great deal more good. If he would not cast slurs on a section of the community without giving the public an opportunity of knowing whom he means, he would better maintain the dignity of this House, which is

only damaged by such statements. If the hon. member can substantiate his allegations, why does he not give names, instead of leaving the public to surmise all kinds of things? I could almost fancy we were in another place. It seems to me that the speech of my colleague—I must call him my colleague, whether I like it or not—would be more fitting for another place than the Legislative Council; and the frantic efforts he made to blacken the principal figure in this colony were amusing in the extreme, though all his efforts only succeeded in blackening the boots of the gentleman he referred to.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I think this sort of speech more in keeping with what goes on in another place.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Is Mr. Piesse in order?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I am in order, because if a member makes remarks not in keeping with the dignity of the House, it is time for hon. members to take exception. I am not one of those who like to stand still, because it is the only time to stand still when there is no reason to go on; and at the present time there is plenty of reason to go on with public works, especially in connection with the railways. I should have liked to see in His Excellency's Speech some mention made of measures dealing with the lands of the Midland Railway Company. I should have liked to see some suggestion made as to how to force these lands under cultivation, because it is really regrettable to see them remain as they are year after year. So far as I can see, the company are as far from selling any land as they were six or seven years ago, and legislation could very well be brought to bear in this respect to the benefit of the colony. Regret is expressed in the Speech that the Midland Company have not improved their land, though no statement is made as to what is proposed to remedy this state of affairs. I should have liked to see some remarks in His Excellency's Speech on the establishment of a University. Mr. Hackett on one occasion some years ago brought this matter up, and it is due time some steps were taken.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Have a School of Mines instead.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Both would work in together.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: It is high time this matter was seen to, because our young people who are growing up and desire a University training have to be sent out of the colony. I now come to another matter of a parochial nature, yet not parochial, namely the question of compensating Albany for the removal of the mail steamers. Albany is in the province I have the honour to represent, and for a long time there has been a feeling of dissatisfaction, at any rate, at the manner in which the district has been treated by the Government. I am not going to say it was unwise to remove the steamers to Fremantle, or to argue the matter at all, but I do say that certain people have gone to great expense in Albany in catering for those who arrived by the mail steamers.

HON. M. L. MOSS: At Albany?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: What else built up Albany? I am not suggesting that the mail steamers should be taken away from Fremantle, although the people in Albany reckon a north-west gale will do that shortly. We can hope that will not happen; but at any rate some compensation should be given to Albany for the loss of the mail steamers.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: More sops.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: No; not sops. But I would suggest that Albany be placed in connection with the adjoining province by railway by way of Williams and Cranbrook, which would mean that people travelling from Albany to the metropolis would do the journey in a little over twelve hours. That would not only be a big advantage to Albany, but at the same time serve the district of the Williams, passing by the present old road and touching old centres. A line to the Williams will have to be constructed in the near future, and the surveys should be altered so as to take the line, as I have said, by way of the Williams and Cranbrook.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Where is the money to come from?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I do not think the hon. member quite realises how the people of Albany are suffering by the removal of the mail steamers.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: To what extent? We have never heard that.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: It is difficult to say to what extent, but the whole of the people are talking of leaving, and about the difficulty of selling their property. I know that the removal of the mail steamers affects people even along the Great Southern Railway, but I do not wish to speak any further on the matter. I mean to leave myself a free hand in regard to public works. I realise as well as any hon. member that it is just possible we are going a little fast, but if there has been need to go fast, why stop? If it can be shown to me, for example, that a railway to Leonora is necessary, as I have reason to believe it is, I will support it.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: That line is passed already.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: But it is proposed to stop all further borrowing; and there are railway extensions to Norseman and Nannine, which have been authorised by Parliament. As I say, I mean to reserve myself a free hand to vote for these works when they come before us, and hon. members will be wise to adopt the same course.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central): If I cannot congratulate the country on the quality of His Excellency the Administrator's Speech, I can certainly congratulate it on the quantity, although I think the Speech might easily have been condensed to at least one-third of its size. The Speech reads more like the statement of an insolvent debtor in the Bankruptcy Court than a foreshadowing of the policy of the Government of the day. Perhaps it may be my nature, but I cannot enthuse over the fact that a new water tank has been erected at Norseman, a police station built at Greenbushes, and a caretaker's quarters provided at Point Walter. The Ministry have taken credit for so much that the only thing which surprises me is, that they have not taken credit for more. There is one thing they have not taken credit for: they have not taken credit for the capture of Cronje. The Government tell us they do not propose to introduce on the present occasion any works of large magnitude. Still we find in His Excellency's Speech such items as a permanent water supply for the whole of the metropolitan districts, including Fremantle and Guildford; and the Government hope to consult hon. members in regard to matters connected with the construction of railways in the

near future, and also as to the improvement of defence.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: £500,000 for these alone.

HON. J. M. DREW: These items will involve an expenditure of many thousands of pounds. It is not right the Government should submit such a programme of public works at the present time, on the eve of a general election, when the people are entitled to have a voice in the expenditure. I shall refer to this matter at greater length later on. To anyone versed in the political history of the country, apparently one gross omission has been made in His Excellency's Speech: the Government do not tell us what they propose to do in regard to the question of payment of members. The Ministry are bound by a definite pledge in connection with this question. The desirability of payment of members has been affirmed no less than three times in another place, and on the last occasion the Government made a distinct promise that the question would be submitted to the people of the colony at the next general election. Is that pledge to be kept? It strikes me it is not. In the Administrator's Speech no provision is made to place that question before the people of the colony at the next election. One hon. member remarked that it is not wanted. How will the referendum be taken?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Does the hon. member refer to me? What I said was, we do not want a referendum. Let the Government bring in a Bill, and pass it.

HON. J. M. DREW: I agree with the hon. member there. If there is to be a referendum, an Enabling Bill will be necessary, and it will have to be introduced during the present session. That is a question upon which the Speech supplies no information, but it is a question on which the country will demand an early and emphatic reply. The people of the colony will not be gulled on the question. They clearly recognise that without payment of members there can be no perfect representation in the Parliament of this country. The present system of nonremuneration shuts out some of the best talent from the Legislature. In four-fifths of the electorates men were returned pledged to support the introduction of payment of members as early as

possible. Some persons contend that payment of members will lead to the introduction of professional politicians in the Parliament of Western Australia. That may be so, but we must remember that the choice rests with the constituencies, and if a constituency prefers a professional politician, no one has a right to quarrel with the decision. I hope we shall hear some explanation from the leader of the House as to what is intended by the Government on this question.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It will be submitted at the next general election, but not by referendum. That is a luxury we are not prepared to give.

HON. J. M. DREW: It was promised that the question would be submitted by referendum, and if so an Enabling Bill must come before the present Parliament. If it has been decided that the matter shall be submitted at the next election I shall not complain. There is one thing which the Government have not taken credit for in the Speech, and for which they deserve every credit. I refer to the initiation of the public battery system throughout the goldfields. The policy of the Government in regard to public batteries has done a vast amount of good, certainly in the Murchison district.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is a difference of opinion on that point.

HON. J. M. DREW: None, as far as I am concerned. The public battery system has encouraged and assisted the prospectors, and enabled them to make as large a return as possible from their labour. I hope the good work in this connection will be pursued by the Government, and that they will erect cyanide plants in connection with the public batteries. The Midland Company are referred to in His Excellency's Speech. It is stated that the action of the Midland Company in leaving their lands unimproved and unused except for pastoral purposes has greatly retarded agricultural production. This is a fact. There is no doubt that the concessions to this company are instrumental in marring the prospects of my district to an inconceivable degree. There is a large area of land that might be profitably employed. We have it on the authority of Mr. Throssell, for whom I have the greatest respect, because he is a man who has done a vast amount of

good, even in my district, during the last few months in helping on settlement, that there are two hundred thousand acres of land on the Irwin withheld from those desirous of settling upon it. This is an intolerable state of affairs, especially in view of the fact that there was a distinct understanding with the Midland Company that the land should be settled. The Government were given plainly to understand that the company would put the land to use. It was never intended that it should lie idle, or else the company would have had to pay a tax to the State. This is not the only ground for complaint which the Geraldton district has against the Midland Company. There exist very large coal measures which are lying undeveloped in the vicinity of the Irwin district. At one time these coal measures were held by a Geraldton company, and an amount of £435 was paid for the first year's rent. The coal from these deposits was used for steaming the "Rob Roy" from Geraldton, and in running locomotives between Fremantle and Perth. I have read the report of the engineers who used the coal, and they give it as their opinion that it is very good coal for steaming purposes. The history of the passing of these coal seams from the Geraldton company to the Midland Railway Company is very brief. The Government forfeited the leases on the ground that the rent was not paid, and transferred them to the Midland Company. The Government felt bound to do that on account of the lease having been drafted wrongly by the Government. The fact remains that the coal measures remain to-day undeveloped, whereas they could assist largely in the prosperity of the colony. I should like to see some provision made for deep boring in connection with the Northampton mines. Last session I elicited from the Colonial Secretary that between the years 1873 and 1883 no less than £230,000 worth of lead ore was exported from this colony. All that lead ore was produced in the Northampton district. It was produced by poor men with primitive machinery, and without the aid of a penny of British capital. The mines were abandoned, not because the ore had run out, but because the price of lead went down one-half. The Government have now offered bonuses for the production of lead ore, which I am

glad to see. But I think the Government should carry out some deep boring because we want to know whether lead exists at a depth, and if it is an established fact that lead ore exists at a depth of a thousand feet, capital will be forthcoming and a great industry will be revived. The water supply for the metropolitan districts and Guildford is mentioned in the Speech. The manner in which Perth and Fremantle have been pampered by the Government is a matter of constant talk in country districts. Geraldton has been clamouring for a water supply for years, but the Government have turned a deaf ear to its entreaty, yet the town is in real need of a water supply. Much of the landed property cannot be utilised for building purposes owing to the absence of such a supply, and it is costing this country thousands of pounds to supply the locomotives used on the Murchison railway line with water owing to the absence of a water supply at Geraldton. Guildford is mentioned in the Speech to receive a water supply. I do not know that Guildford has any greater claim on the Treasury chest than Geraldton, and the people are not in as great need as Geraldton for a water supply, but it seems that the policy of the Government is to help the metropolis at the expense of the country. The feeling in the country districts is that that is so, which is the cause of a great deal of the hostility that is shown in the country districts to the Forrest Government. The Cue-Nannine railway was introduced four years ago, and the authority obtained in 1896. Why the line was not undertaken I do not know. There have been greater reasons since that time for the construction of the line than there were before 1896, and the output of gold has been increasing. Yet no attempt has been made to construct the line. It has been persistently reported in the Geraldton district, especially at election times, that the reason the line was not constructed was that an Oppositionist was returned to Parliament in 1897. I do not believe the statement, for I cannot conceive that any Government would stoop to such a level of political degradation.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You know that gentleman disapproved of the line.

HON. J. M. DREW: Is it not a fact that the rails for this line were imported in 1897? There seems to be no justification for the delay in the construction of the railway, and it is very mysterious that the line was not undertaken. No Government should be permitted to play with the decrees of Parliament for four years. Mr. Sommers has referred to the municipal affairs at Kalgoorlie, and he has stated that he wished State auditors appointed. I can give him some valuable information on that point. The administration of the Roads Act in the colony is a matter of grave scandal. The appointment of inspectors has become necessary as to the manner in which the large sum—£60,000 or £70,000—is spent, and some investigation should be held as to the manner in which this money is expended. In many cases the money granted to roads boards in the colony is ignorantly spent, and in some cases it is illegally spent. It is not often that I dive into the recesses of the *Government Gazette*, but recently I turned up the balance-sheet of the North-East Coolgardie Roads Board for the year 1897. It appears in the *Government Gazette* of April, 1898. During that year the North-East Coolgardie Roads Board received from the Government £400. How was that spent? Of the amount £140 was expended in salaries, and £22 7s. 6d. in travelling expenses; the members putting money into their own pockets, which was an illegal expenditure—they had no right to take the money; £84 11s. was expended in valuation fees, and £6 1s. in sundry accounts; £275 17s. 7d. of the £400 was spent, and not a solitary bit of road work done. What rates were secured as a set-off against the £84 11s. valuation expenses is not shown. So interested was I in that discovery that I turned to the balance-sheet for the succeeding year, and I found that the total amount of the grants received was £1,274 16s.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: For what place?

HON. J. M. DREW: North-East Coolgardie. Of this amount only £749 18s. 9d. was expended on roads, while £242 14s. 4d. was expended on salaries, and £100 11s. 6d. in travelling expenses. Members put the money into their own pockets, which was an illegal expenditure, and in direct contravention of the Roads Act. These members should be compelled

to refund the money. A balance-sheet appeared on the 31st December, 1899, of the same board. The revenue was set down as £346 9s. 4d., while the expenditure amounted to £173 6s. 8d. appearing under the head of salaries, and £20 for travelling expenses. I turned to the Kalgoorlie Roads Board balance-sheet for the 31st December, 1898. The receipts amounted to £3,789 17s. 4d., and the salaries to £399. An amount of £20 was expended for audit fees, £16 10s. for buggy hire, driving the members around the country for the good of their health, and £32 6s. 6d. election expenses.

HON. M. L. MOSS: How much was spent on roads out of that?

HON. J. M. DREW: I cannot say: nothing, apparently. These quotations show, I think, to every member that the present administration of the Roads Act in the colony is, in some instances, a grave scandal; and what is occurring in these districts is occurring in many other districts of the colony. I know of some districts in which a worse state of affairs exists. The Government should appoint inspectors and auditors to go through the accounts, and see that the money which has been voted is expended in a manner consistent with the Roads Act.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government have appointed auditors.

HON. J. M. DREW: I know; we have a good man at Geraldton, luckily, but what kind of auditors can they have at the places which I have mentioned. In regard to the grants to progress committees, there is no check upon them. It would astound members to discover how the money is expended. I have had some experience, and know how many items constantly find a place under the heading of "sanitation." Regarding His Excellency's Speech, I may say I am grievously disappointed with it. It indicates that the Government propose to embark on great works which should be submitted to the people before the next general election. It also indicates that they do not propose to introduce the great reform they are pledged to submit to a referendum at the general election. It is decidedly wrong, in my opinion, for a Parliament in the throes of death, in the form of a dissolution, to involve the country in serious liabilities. I say that the Parliament does not represent the

people, and I will show you how. A new constitution came into force last May, and under that Act six new constituencies have been created and three old ones abolished. That fact implies a radical change in the constitution, and a material alteration in the machinery of the State. But despite these circumstances, we find the Government are prepared to increase the financial indebtedness of the country. I do not think that a Parliament existing merely on sufferance, as the representatives of the people in another place are, has any right to augment the public debt. To do so may be legally right, but it is morally wrong, and I protest against it. It is the peculiar right of this House to assert itself in such circumstances, and to express this opinion in an emphatic manner. What we have to ask ourselves is: Will the works contemplated in the Administrator's Speech be sanctioned by those who are returned to Parliament under the new Constitution? They may be, or again, they may not be. No one ungifted with the power of prophecy can tell, and we should not jump to any conclusion in connection with the matter. To my mind the Government are grossly abusing their position, and I have no hesitation in saying I for one have no confidence in the Administration; but I think it even better to support the amendment of Mr. Stone in preference to the amendment of Mr. R. S. Haynes, because the former seems to be the more constitutional.

HON. E. McLARTY (South-West): Having already addressed myself to the Administrator's Speech, my remarks on the amendment proposed by Mr. Haynes will be brief. That amendment, I think, will meet with very little support from hon. members; and it certainly will have no support from me, because my confidence in the Government is just as great as it was two years ago. I have seen no reason to alter my opinion, because I have watched the career of the Premier of the colony very closely, and I absolutely have not been able to find one blot on which I can place my finger. I am not going so far as to say that mistakes have not been made, and that perhaps in some instances things have been done which had better not have been done; but I have no reason at all to doubt the integrity of the present Government. I

feel sure hon. members will not support such a sweeping amendment as that proposed by Mr. R. S. Haynes; though the amendment of Mr. Stone does, I believe, to some extent express the feeling of the country generally. That amendment is couched in moderate language, and I do not think many will disagree with the intention expressed. At the same time I contend it is not a right course for the House, at this stage of the session, to carry an amendment of the kind, putting a stop to all public works proposed by the Government. The proper course is to wait until these proposals are brought before Parliament, when it will be competent for members, if they do not approve of works, to reject them, as has been done before. Only last year the Norseman railway proposal was rejected by the House, and probably will again be rejected; but I do hope hon. members will not make the same mistake they did a couple of years ago, and carry an amendment of this kind and so stop all works proposed by the Government. It is time enough when Bills are brought before us and reasons stated why they have been brought in, to consider and deal with them on their merits. I am in accord with hon. members who think we should not undertake any large works, but I may say at once that I should have to have considerable proof brought before me that the works were urgent and necessary, to induce me to vote for them. At the same time I reserve to myself the right to consider the matters as they come before us. I am to some extent in sympathy with the amendment of Mr. Stone, because, as I say, I believe it does express the feeling generally throughout the country; but at the same time there may be public works brought forward which we would be justified in carrying out, and I can see no good reason why, although there will soon be a fresh election, the whole of the public works of the colony should be at a standstill.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The Coolgardie Water Scheme will not be interfered with.

HON. E. McLARTY: That scheme will not be interfered with, but there may be further works which it may be desirable to carry out.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: A new bridge at Pinjarrah?

HON. E. McLARTY: A bridge is not asked for at Pinjarrah, because we do not require one. The metropolitan water scheme is a work which will have to be undertaken in the near future, because there are enormous numbers of people in the districts proposed to be served, and it has been conclusively proved that the present water supply is altogether inadequate to their requirements.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The ratepayers will have to pay for the scheme, not the Government.

HON. E. McLARTY: Quite so; but if the work be urgent, why should we at this stage refuse to consider that or any other works? I am most certainly not in accord with either of the amendments, and I shall therefore vote against both, feeling that the proper course is to wait until the Bills come before us, and then decide as we think right.

At 6:30, the PRESIDENT left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

HON. A. B. KIDSON (West): As there appears to be some disinclination on the part of hon. members to address themselves to the amendments and to the Speech, I must at this stage do so myself. But I do not intend to take up the time of the House at any great length, because such a course is hardly necessary. With regard to the Speech which the Administrator has read to Parliament, I can only say that I think it is a matter of regret that the Government should have seen fit to advise His Excellency to place a Speech of such inordinate length, and containing very little of real importance, before hon. members. In my experience of the House, I think this is the longest Speech and contains the least of any Speech I have ever listened to. Why the Government have taken this course I really fail to understand. Why it becomes necessary to place on record in the way they have done in print the works they have constructed during the previous year. I fail to understand, because the works carried out are a matter of notoriety, not only to members of Parliament but to the public. There is no necessity for entering into petty details, as the Government seem to have done, and I think I am right in saying

such a course is not adopted in any other part of the British empire. At any rate, I never heard of such a course, and why the Government have taken it I fail to understand, unless it be with a view to showing what a good Government they are, and what a lot they have done, and to endeavour—though I think it would be difficult to do so at the present time—to turn public opinion in their favour. Out of this lengthy oration I can only pick a few matters worth while referring to, and I need not refer to them at very great length because we shall have an opportunity of discussing them at a later stage. I should like, however, to refer to one or two of those matters, the first of which is in connection with the reference in the Speech, although I think an unnecessary reference, to the Mint. When I heard the remarks of Mr. R. S. Haynes and Mr. Moss, I had some secret misgivings, but after the very lucid and clear explanation of Mr. Saunders to-night, my doubts have vanished, and I remain of the opinion I have entertained all along, that the Mint is a very excellent institution and calculated to do a large amount of good to the colony. There is one other matter which has been repeatedly referred to on previous occasions, but it is a matter which cannot be referred to too often, that is the splendid work—I am one who likes to give credit where credit is due—by the Government at Fremantle in connection with the harbour works. I refer to this now because the practical consummation of all we have wished and hoped for has come to pass, namely that the mail steamers now call at Fremantle, and, so far as human mind can tell, will continue to do so. That work is one that will always be a standing monument to the enterprise and energy of the Forrest Government. I do not say I altogether agree, in fact I do not agree, with all the Government have done and propose to do; but that one work stands out over and above all others, and will so stand out for many years to come as a monument to the energy and enterprise of the present Government.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The works are still incomplete.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Mr. Matheson tells me the works are still incomplete; but I would like to draw the hon. member's attention to the fact, if he does not

know it, and it is a fact he ought to know as a member of Parliament, that the works are fast nearing completion, and before very long, probably before another session, will be complete; and it is a very necessary work, not only for the benefit of Fremantle, but a national work which in the end will benefit, and even at present is benefiting the whole of the colony. I would like to say a word in regard to our Government railways. It is stated in the Speech that the Government railways have had a successful financial year, "although during last summer the scarcity of water between Northam and Menzies proved a serious difficulty and necessitated a large expenditure." I am given to understand, on the very highest authority—and I mention this publicly—that the percentage of cost of running the railways is considerably higher than it should be. On the same authority I am told that when the present General Manager took full charge, the cost of running the railways was 50 per cent., and that at the present time the cost is 70 per cent., while last year it was 80 per cent. Hon. members will judge from these statements that the cost of running the railways is not being kept down as it ought to be, and I am told on the same authority that the percentage is higher than in any other place in Australia. If that be so, very serious attention should be given to the matter, because although the cost of working has been reduced from 80 per cent. to 70 per cent., yet when the present General Manager took over the railways the cost was only 50 per cent., and it is therefore 20 per cent. higher than it was, and consequently 20 per cent. higher than it ought to be. No doubt the answer will be that the cost of obtaining water is a serious burden, and the cost of working is increased; but I would point out that previous to the present General Manager taking charge, when the cost of running was 50 per cent., the water difficulty was greater—I believe I am right in saying this—than during the past year. There is one matter in the Speech to which I desire to refer particularly, and that is the reference to providing a permanent water supply for the metropolitan districts, including Fremantle. This matter was referred to by Mr. Maley and Mr. Drew, and the former gentleman wanted to know

whether it would be a crime to prevent these particular districts obtaining a supply of pure water. In reply, I can only say that I should like Mr. Maley to spend a month at Fremantle during the summer, when he would find how horrible is the water the residents there have to put up with.

HON. W. MALEY: I sympathise with you.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I am glad the hon. member sympathises with me, because, under these circumstances, I feel sure that when a measure is brought in for providing this important and necessary work, we shall find him voting for it. I can assure hon. members who spoke somewhat detrimentally of this work, that the water in Fremantle is almost undrinkable. It is brackish, and certainly not what can be called palatable water; indeed, it is scarcely fit for human consumption.

HON. J. M. DREW: The water is the same at Geraldton.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I do not say the water is not the same at Geraldton, but that is no reason why a proper supply of water should not be provided in the metropolitan districts. Mr. Drew seems to go on the assumption that two wrongs make a right, and to say that because the supply at Geraldton is bad, therefore the supply at Fremantle should be bad. That is no argument, and I feel sure the hon. member's sense of justice will lead him to vote for providing the districts mentioned with a pure supply of water. There are two or three measures mentioned in His Excellency's Speech to which I think it necessary to refer. The first of these is the Public Service Bill, an epitome of which I read, but cannot say I had the pleasure of reading, in the *West Australian* newspaper. After reading that epitome, the conclusion I came to was certainly not in favour of the measure, because it seems to me the framers have endeavoured to put into it everything they should not. I am speaking seriously when I say that if the Bill is as it appears from the epitome—and I have no reason to doubt that the epitome is correct—it is absolutely colourless. There is nothing in the measure; and were it to pass into law, the position in connection with the public service, with one solitary

exception, would be practically the same as it is to-day. The only alteration the Bill provides is that in certain branches, and only in certain and very few branches, there shall be public competitive examination before candidates can be admitted. If the Government had in this Bill provided purely for that, they might have left all the other provisions out, because, so far as I can see, the Bill provides for nothing more than what at present exists. There is one other Bill I desire to refer to, namely the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, and I am glad the Government have seen fit to introduce this measure. No doubt it has been an excellent move on the part of the Government at the present time to intimate their intention of introducing this measure; but at the same time, the measure is one that will commend itself to hon. members in both Houses. We have had sad experience in the past of the ill effects of strikes in our midst, and anything we can do to moderate the conditions and to do away with these conflicts, every hon. member in both Houses will gladly assist in doing. We have not yet had an opportunity of seeing what the provisions of the Bill are, but I feel sure the measure will require very close and careful scrutiny on the part of hon. members. We must be careful when a Bill of this nature is brought forward, to see that it is as good and perfect in every detail as it is possible to make it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Fair to both sides.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Certainly, fair to both sides, for I do not believe in a Bill which is in favour of one side more than another; and I say it will be necessary to scrutinise most carefully every detail so as to see that the Bill is made acceptable to both sides and to the country. It is very peculiar at the present time to see the situation in which both Houses stand. The Legislative Council is really constituted, or will very shortly be constituted under the new Act, and yet we shall find the other place going on under the old system. That to me appears a very extraordinary and anomalous state of affairs, and whether or no that state of affairs has come about from the bad drafting of the Constitution Act, it is a set of circumstances which certainly ought not to exist.

HON. D. McKAY: What about the saving clause?

HON. A. B. KIDSON: It is the saving clause which has caused all the trouble and mischief. It seems to me extraordinary that such a state of affairs exists, and I have failed to ascertain that a similar state of affairs exists or has existed in any other part of Australia. It may be the fault of the gentleman who drafted the Constitution Bill, but, at any rate, it is a most anomalous position, and the sooner it is done away with the better it will be for everybody concerned. There is no doubt, to my mind at all events—though I may be wrong, and I am only expressing my individual opinion—that at the present time the public as a whole have lost confidence in the present Government, and that the present Parliament does not represent the country. If the Leader of the House is not above taking a little advice, he will come to the conclusion that it is to the best interests, not only of the country but of the Government itself, to recognise that fact, because the longer the present state of affairs is allowed to continue, and the longer the present Government insists in remaining in office against the express wish of the great majority of the public, the worse it will be for the Government at the next general election. At the same time I do not intend to support the amendment of Mr. Haynes, because, while I am not prepared to say the course the member proposes is absolutely unconstitutional, I do say it would be very inadvisable, because it would place this House in such a position that it might have to stultify itself in the future. If hon. members will consider for a moment they will see what an anomalous position we would occupy if a vote of no-confidence were not passed in another place, and were to be passed here. What would be the position of the House under such circumstances? It would be a most humiliating position, and I do not think any member would care to see such a state of affairs. With regard to the amendment moved by Mr. Stone, I do not think it would be advisable at the present time to pledge ourselves to support it, because the amendment really prevents for an indefinite period our authorising any further works to be constructed out of loan; and I would like hon. members to put it to themselves whether this is a reason-

able state of affairs to exist. It may be that some works of urgent and pressing importance may be brought forward, but if we pass either of these amendments, and any matter of importance is brought before the House, we should be obliged to vote against any new work if it was to be constructed out of loan. For my part I do not think that a desirable state of affairs, and we can attain the same object which the members who have moved the amendments have in view by dealing with the propositions to be brought forward by the Government as they come before us. That is the course I propose to take, and then I shall not be in the position of having to stultify myself at some future date. I do not desire to say much in regard to the remarks of Mr. Maley, because that gentleman is a new member, and it may be that we should give a new member a certain amount of latitude in the nature of the remarks he makes, but at the same time there were one or two matters which the hon. member referred to and one or two expressions which he made use of which I may be pardoned for drawing the attention of the House to, so that perhaps on a future occasion that hon. gentleman may see fit to modify the tone of his remarks. That hon. gentleman took it upon himself, and he is a very young member of this Chamber, to advise the House, which is constituted of members of many years standing, as to what they should do. His words were, "I advise you to do so and so." I think it would have been wise if the hon. member had not gone so far as that, because my experience of members in this House is that they are quite capable of thinking for themselves, and quite capable of acting for themselves, as the hon. member will probably find out after a little more experience, because the hon. member has not had much experience so far, and in time the hon. member may learn that fact. He stated he was not advocating Opposition in this House: then all I can say is that if the hon. member was not advocating Opposition in this House, it was a very good apology for it, because the whole tenor of his speech was in the direction of advocating the want of confidence in the Government which has been moved in this House and in another place. I do not propose to say more in regard to

the hon. member's remarks, but I think it was desirable to say that much because I, for one, certainly intend to do as I have done in the past—act and think for myself. And I think every other member likes to share the same privilege. I do not think it is necessary to say more. The matters mentioned in the Speech will have to be considered: they will come before the House in a concrete form shortly, and then all of us will have an opportunity of expressing our opinions upon them. Before I conclude, there is one matter I would like to refer to—the Dividend Duty Act which was passed last session. In connection with that, I do think it would be a good thing if the Government were to take into consideration the advisability of repealing the measure. If ever there was an unfair measure passed into law I think that is about the most unfair. It does not strike fairly in its method of taxation, and lately a petition from those persons particularly affected by the Act was presented to the House, and that petition is entitled to be treated with the respect it deserves. We all know the nature of the taxation which is inflicted by the Act is not fair, and that being the case, it behoves us as a portion of the Parliament of the country to express our views fully and fairly upon it. I regret somewhat the tone which was used by Mr. Drew with regard to the province I have the honour to represent. I do not think the hon. member in using the expressions he did had any particular ill-will towards the province I represent.

HON. J. M. DREW: None whatever.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: At the same time it seems to me he singled out the province I represent for special castigation. Why that is so I cannot understand, because all the time I have been a member of this House I can safely say that on every occasion a measure has been brought forward having for its object the advancement of the province he represents, the Fremantle members have never been backward in assisting in the passing of such a measure. Therefore it seems to me hard that the hon. member should have made the statement that Fremantle had been coddled, because I do not think Fremantle has had any more done for it than any other constitu-

ency in the colony, taking into consideration its size and importance.

HON. J. M. DREW : There are the mail steamers, and the preferential rates on the railways.

HON. A. B. KIDSON : The calling of the mail steamers is not a matter of preference particularly to Fremantle, but it is for the benefit of the whole of the colony. I do not know whether the hon. member will suggest, as to the mail steamers, that the harbour should have been constructed at Geraldton, because I think that is out of the bounds of practical politics.

HON. J. M. DREW : Certainly not.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : We could not carry on the work of the colony without the harbour at Fremantle.

HON. A. B. KIDSON : I do not think it would be carried on in the way in which it has been carried on in the past, or that it will be in the future, if it was not for the harbour at Fremantle. I think if the hon. member (Mr. Drew) persists in carrying out his intention of voting in the way which he has mentioned, one railway which might benefit his district may be thrown out. It is a matter of grave consideration for him to see whether he should not change his mind and vote another way.

HON. J. M. DREW : I am not to be bribed.

HON. A. B. KIDSON : I do not suggest that the hon. member should be bribed, nor do I think any other member in this House is to be bribed, neither do I think it would be a bribe, because I believe myself—I do not say that I will vote for the railway—from what I can judge, when the proper time comes and when the finances of the colony will warrant it, there is probably not a railway which is required more than the one which I am referring to. I think that before laying the proposals which have for their object the construction of such large works and involving the expenditure of a large sum of money, before Parliament, it would have been better for the Government to have waited for the verdict of the country upon them. It has been stated over and over again that this Parliament is practically dying.

HON. F. M. STONE : Then why not vote for my amendment ?

HON. A. B. KIDSON : I shall not vote for it because there may be some works which require to be carried out.

HON. J. M. DREW : He wants the water supply.

HON. A. B. KIDSON : I want it very badly, and the sooner we get the water supply the better it will be. I do not hide that fact, because it is absolutely necessary, and from what the hon. member has told me a water supply for Geraldton is necessary too. It would be better to be spending money in this direction than in frittering it away. I am not going to vote for Mr. Stone's amendment because there may be some works of pressing necessity brought forward, although they are not mentioned in the Speech, which we may find are necessary, and if we vote for Mr. Stone's amendment we shall be precluded from voting for those works. I do not intend to take up the time of the House further, but I shall deal with each measure as it is brought forward fully and freely.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell) : I think I may as well speak at the present stage and not defer my remarks to a later time, although there are one or two members who wish to address the House on this question. My embarrassment at the present time is that I have so much to reply to. Members can deal with the question as it affects their own individual constituencies, but I have to listen to the arguments and to the speeches made by members who come from different parts of the colony, and it is difficult to give my remarks in a small compass. I believe that members are desirous that a division shall take place to-night, therefore I shall be as brief as I can. I propose, first of all, to deal a little with the Speech itself, which has been so freely, and I may say fully, criticised, somewhat hostilely by some, and by others favourably. I do not think we shall ever get 18 or 20 gentlemen to look at anything from the same point of view, and it is not to be expected that the members of a House of Legislature will look at the subject from the same point of view as the Government do. We get an advantage from the criticism of those who view the matters from their own particular districts, and who approach the subject from different points. Therefore, I thank members

who have spoken for the assistance they have given to me and the Government in the discussion of the matters embraced in the compass of the Speech. I may refer to the fact which has been mentioned by several members, that this Speech is a very long one. I am not sure that it is the longest. I heard the same complaint two years ago about the Speech of His Excellency the Governor.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: But this is much longer.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think the length of a Speech is any great disparagement to it. It has been stated that it is not the custom in other parts of the world to hear long speeches, but I am informed that in the colonies the practice is growing up of the Government informing the country of the works which have been executed during the year, and I think this is very useful. I doubt if Mr. Kidson knew that a school was being built at Wedgecarrup; yet the hon. member said that everyone knew that these works had been executed by the Government. The hon. member happened to know there was a cottage being built for the caretaker at Point Walter because that is in his province. It is as well that the works which have been executed throughout the colony should be mentioned, so that the public should know of the progress which has been made in material development, and in that direction it is a useful practice to give this information in the Speech. Perhaps if those who were responsible for the Speech had to draw it up again they would not make it so full. We should be thankful for the works which have been executed, and which show the progress which has been made throughout the colony. Take the schools, for instance. Very few members were aware of the fact that fifteen new schools had been erected, and that enlargements to a very considerable extent to school buildings in other parts had been made and were progressing. I think if hon. members knew all the facts of the case, they would find the information as to the additions to the post offices and telegraph communications throughout the colony, and which give conveniences to the people of the colony in the way of encouraging development, is very useful. Many of these questions come before me from

time to time—some applications the Government have refused because we think, perhaps, that the place which the application refers to has not reached that stage of development when the work should be executed. Members would be surprised if they knew the number of applications which are made for telegraph offices, post offices, and schools in districts in which development is going on. I might read a little statement as illustrating what I mean, and which is only a specimen of what is taking place in other parts of the colony:—"The telegrams from Menzies to Mount Malcolm number 186,000, and the revenue derived from the telegraph office there is £5,245." There are no members in the House, not even the members for the goldfields, who are aware of the development which has taken place in that remote district which it is proposed the Leonora railway shall pass through. The information I have given is only a specimen, not perhaps a good one, of the development which astonished the Premier himself; and the duplication of the line is demanded in consequence of the immense increase of traffic on the telegraph lines. These are some of the things embraced in the Speech, and I most certainly differ from hon. members when they say those details should not be given. I feel sure no hon. member of the House is fully acquainted with all that took place in the progress of the colony during the past year. In 1898 we were of course unable to undertake very much, and members will recollect the attacks that were made on the Education Department and the Government for not providing schools here, there and everywhere. These schools could not be provided because of the shrinkage of the revenue at the time; but immediately the revenue began to increase and show we were on the upward grade, schools were granted and established, and teachers, in the face of great difficulty, obtained and sent out to distant parts of the colony; and I am sure from the speeches I listened to two years ago that hon. members will be quite in accord with the Government in giving the schools to these remote and rising districts. I must thank Mr. Saunders for the way in which he has alluded to the Mint. Mr. Moss fell, I am sure, into an inadvertent error when he stated that only one million

sovereigns had been coined at the Mint, leaving out 782,864 sovereigns; but the hon. member made the statement, and that is why I refer to it. But I think Mr. R. S. Haynes, who is not in his place just now, should have been aware of the charges at the Perth Mint, because these charges were reduced a considerable time ago, and were advertised in the *Government Gazette* and in the newspapers of the colony, and were also issued in the form of a comparison, similar to that given by Mr. Saunders to-night. I am very glad the latter member referred to the matter, because I should be very sorry if it went out to the world that at the Mint here the charges are so high that the mine owners and others are debarred from sending their gold here. Such a statement would have a very bad effect, and I am very glad Mr. Saunders has made his lucid explanation and cleared the matter up. We have the Mint here, whether we ought to have it or not, and it should be the duty of the people of the country as far as possible to support it, and make it a success. When Mr. Moss was speaking, I interjected that a million of those sovereigns had been coined at the Mint in the last six months, showing a constant up-grade. Of course, the Mint has had to contend with difficulties. As hon. members are well aware—at any rate those members who are in business are aware—that it is not easy to divert a stream of traffic or business from one direction to another. Vested interests have to be considered, and vested interests, generally speaking, are well able to take care of themselves, and I believe they did so in the case of the Mint; and these are some of the reasons why, perhaps, a greater amount of coinage is not carried on there. Mr. Saunders has shown clearly the progress made; and when we remember that the Mint was started only about fifteen months ago, we should not be altogether dissatisfied with that progress. Owners of mines, as well as small miners, are availing themselves of the opportunity afforded of having their gold converted into the coin of the realm at the Perth Mint.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How long will it last?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am afraid the hon. member must answer his own question, because I cannot tell

him how long it will last. Let us hope, however, that it will last a very considerable time. I do not share in the opinion that because we have joined federation, the Federal Government will close the Mint in Perth. Such a step is not very likely, and, at any rate, the Federal Government would have to reckon with this Government before they did it, and I think we have some means left at the present moment for defending ourselves from acts of injustice, which, however, I think will not be attempted. I hope the hon. member will soon get over the disappointment which he as well as I experienced only a short time ago. I, at any rate, intend as far as possible to do my best to see that no injury results to this colony, although I held a strong opinion it was very desirable we should remain out of federation for some years to come. However, we are now in federation, and it behoves every public man to do the best he can to get good out of the union. Paragraphs 17, 18, and 19 of His Excellency's Speech have come in for a considerable amount of attention from some hon. members, and there seems to have been some mistake because the Fremantle water supply is not put down as if it were a work distinctly promised to be undertaken, but as a work to be submitted to the consideration of the members of the Legislature.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Throw it in as a "sop" at the next general election.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think there is any "sop" about it, because in my opinion it is one of several very necessary works, and I regret exceedingly the state of the Fremantle water supply.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Guildford supply is nearly as bad.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have not had the happiness or the pleasure of drinking very much of the Fremantle water, and from descriptions given to me I have no desire to do so, though I have tasted it with a view to satisfying myself of its qualities. For a large population like that of Fremantle, where there is a large amount of shipping constantly coming in, it is absolutely necessary there should be, if possible, a pure water supply; and

there are two sources, both admirable, from which that supply could be obtained. The expense would not be very great to get the water from either the Helena Hills or the Canning Hills, and Fremantle with intervening districts must be supplied. I believe Mr. Maley lives at Cottesloe, and I fancy he will be very glad to share in a supply when it is established.

HON. W. MALEY: Quite so.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The water even in Cottesloe is somewhat hard, if not as bad as that at Fremantle; and I hope members will keep their minds free in dealing with this important subject, and will not run the risk of stultifying themselves when further information becomes available. I hope, therefore, that hon. members will not vote for the amendment moved by Mr. Stone, because I remember distinctly the last occasion of the kind, and it did not reflect very favourably on this House. Some hon. members, at any rate, have regretted that resolution because it produced no effect, and to a certain extent I think damaged the reputation of the House for statesmanlike qualities. I hope hon. members will carefully consider before they adopt an amendment in the direction indicated, and for the reason which Mr. Kidson has stated so clearly, and which need not be repeated. I would like hon. members not to pledge themselves in regard to some of the other works also, because we shall have an opportunity, as Mr. Kidson has said, of discussing them in concrete form, or when they come before us in the shape of Bills, and when we ask for money to carry out the works. We shall then be able to approach the subject with a fair mind, and deal with them as under the circumstances may seem right to our best judgment. There is one important work which I believe is not intended by Mr. Stone to be touched by this amendment, namely the Leonora railway. From knowledge which has come to me from various sources of the importance of this district, I think if there is a work which should be undertaken at the earliest possible moment it is this one. I have already read the statement as to the development of the telegraph traffic from Mount Malcolm, which is within a very short distance of Leonora; and when we remem-

ber that there are Laverton, Euro, Mount Weld, and other places to be served in the immediate vicinity, and that there is an immense area of gold-producing country, probably as rich though not perhaps in the same compass as the mines at the Boulder, we should be ready to support the commencement and completion of this railway at the earliest possible date. I will not refer to the Norseman or Nannine railway proposals further than to say that I hope hon. members will keep their minds open for any information which may be furnished at a later date. I, however, notice that there is a difference of opinion between two of the representatives of the Central Province, Mr. Drew and Mr. Haynes, as to this railway. If I caught Mr. Haynes's meaning correctly, he ridicules the idea of continuing the line from Cue to Nannine, for what reason I do not know; but if I rightly interpret Mr. Drew, he considers the railway ought to have been built long since. I have no doubt development has taken place there, and I know several mines in the district would be greatly advantaged by this line, the construction of which I believe would very much encourage the people between the two places. These places are very remote from the centres, and it must be exceedingly difficult, and probably almost impossible, to obtain profit from the working of mines owing to the distance from railway communication. And it would be a pity if we should arrive at a conclusion that because the Legislative Assembly is about to expire by effluxion of time, or that it has not been recently to the country, we should stop public works in the colony. Acting on the same principle in the state of affairs which will prevail as soon as the new Constitution comes into operation, what would be the result? We should have just one year of work: there would be firstly the year when Parliament assembles when we should have, as we usually have, a considerable amount of argument and discussion and very little work. In the second year perhaps the Parliament might settle down to steady and good work; but in the third year it would be in just the same position as we are in now: members would be thinking about the turmoil of another election. Therefore, on this principle we should have only one year's work.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You would not have a redistribution of seats and a new franchise every three years.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Though I voted for triennial Parliaments, I may say it is short enough for the life of a Parliament in which to do good and useful work for the country. I do not believe it is good for a country for the Parliament to go too often to the people, for the reasons which I have just stated. We have provided for triennial Parliaments in future, and I believe to a great extent what I have said will be the result: we shall not get such useful work as we should in a Parliament with a longer life. True, the representatives may come into touch more with the people, but it is usual for members to address their constituents and to confer with them on events which arise from time to time, and on the necessary legislation desirable to be adopted. The argument, as far as I gather, is not a good one that the Legislature is not in touch with the people. The representatives are certainly seized of the wants of the colony very fully. Many members talked about suspending works of importance and works of necessity, but they got on to ground which is not acceptable to a large portion of the electors in the colony. I do not know that I need deal much more with the Speech itself: I think it is a splendid record of services rendered by the Government, with the assistance of both Houses of Parliament of this country. I believe it has assisted us in the path of progress to a large extent, and I think we shall have to follow that course whatever Government is in power. I do not think there is any member who thinks that we have come to the end of our progress—I do not think there is any member, however pessimistic, who thinks that. We are only just starting on the path of progress; we have only just cleared away the obstacles, and we see the way to further progress in population and accumulation. What we want to see in this country is a considerably greater accumulation of wealth than we have at present. There are plenty of avenues for its application, and if we can by wise measures, realising the responsibilities resting on us, induce people from other parts of the world to come into our midst and invest their

capital and develop the resources of the country, it is our duty to do so. I shall refer as briefly as I can to some of the remarks that have been made by members and repeated by others. I do not propose to deal very much with the speech made by Mr. Maley, for the reason stated by Mr. Kidson, that he is new to the House and has not yet become acquainted with the methods adopted here in addressing one another on important questions of State. From the experience he will gather in this House, no doubt he will develop into a useful member for the country at large. I trust he will realise that there are other places in the colony besides Albany. I may assure him there is no real intention of injuring the town of Albany. The people of Albany must accept the inevitable course of events. Albany is not going to suffer so very much from the absence of the mail steamers at that port. I believe there will be opportunities given to the people of Albany to develop their business concerns. At the present moment the Phillips River goldfield is giving evidence of great development; the population is gathering there at a great rate, and Albany will be the port at which they will deal. That to some extent will be a compensation for the absence of the mail steamers. I believe there are enterprise and pluck enough in the people of Albany, and that they will not weakly succumb to the trouble which has come to them in the ordinary course of events. An immense sum of money has been spent on the harbour at Fremantle, and few people, I believe, will regret that we have converted that port from a dangerous roadstead into a port capable of taking the largest steamers afloat at a safe anchorage. Mr. Whitcombe objects to that statement, but I may tell him that we have had steamers of 10,000 tons burden in the port, that the "Omrah" came into port the other night without the aid of a steam tug, and so far as I can gather the three captains of mail steamers who have visited the port are satisfied with the attention they received and the provision made for them. We may hope that the whole colony will benefit more or less by the arrival of steamers at this port of the colony, because of the greater resources there. Albany was settled in 1826, the first

people landing there in that year; this colony was supposed to be founded on on the 1st June, 1829; so the progress of the town of Albany has not been very great. I believe we have not far to seek for the cause. Although the town has had connection by railway with Perth and the settled parts of the colony, the town has not progressed simply because in the immediate vicinity of Albany there is not much good land that lends itself to development. But I must pass on from that. I only wanted to raise the spirits of the hon. member, Mr. Maley, as to the future of that town. I think the people will rise to the occasion, and anything that the Government can assist them with which is fair and reasonable to the other parts of the colony, I believe they will do. There are several matters to which the hon. member, Mr. Maley, referred which are of such a nature that it is better I should pass over. They are not matters of a character which require to be discussed in this House. I would like to refer to a few of the remarks which fell from Mr. Sommers, who has put his views before the House in a straightforward manner, so that they will be understood by members. He has referred to one subject with which he opened his speech—sweeps. Legislation has been attempted to some extent in this Parliament to prohibit gambling in the country; but this House has not seen its way to fall in with the views of members like Mr. Sommers, who look on the question as an important one, and if only we can by legislation prevent or minimise it, that will be an advantage. The gambling spirit is injuring the population of the colony, and something ought to be done, and I hope something can be done, so that the question will be taken into consideration. Some efforts should be made to arrive at a conclusion on the matter to prevent the lamentable effects which I believe abound not only in Western Australia, but in the Eastern colonies. Every newspaper and every magazine from the Eastern colonies, which I have read, speak of the increase of the gambling spirit, especially among the young people of the colonies, and the same song is sung in the old country. There seems to be a wave of the gambling spirit going over the world. Possibly it may be a consequence

of the gold discoveries. Young people wish to become wealthy quickly and easily.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: There is the dullness of life, too.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It arises from the defects of education, but I do not think any intelligent person will make life dull. I have not had a dull life myself, and I have been in the colony for fifty years.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: But you never knew the other kind of thing.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Anyone who honestly desires to labour to secure the means by which he can properly and rightly maintain himself, cannot make life dull. It is only the man who has nothing to do who calls life "dull." I do not believe the hon. member who interjected has a dull life: he has too much to do to occupy his mind, unless it is from another reason. In regard to the municipalities it will be noticed in one of the paragraphs of the Governor's Speech that it is intended to bring in a Municipal Bill, and there is no reason why the principle which Mr. Sommers advocated should not be embodied in the Bill. I think it is unwise to jump to the conclusion that because the Leederville Municipality have found irregularities existing, that every municipality has adopted the same course of dealing with its accounts, and I would point out to the hon. member that this is a rather difficult and delicate matter to interfere with. Municipalities are independent bodies: they are elected by the people.

HON. C. SOMMERS: It has been found necessary in other parts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: My experience is that municipalities are a very touchy lot of people to have to deal with: they think the Government somewhat beneath them, and they can "ride the high horse," if I may use the expression, when dealing with the Government of the country and considering questions which crop up from time to time. There is no reason that the matter referred to should not be provided for during the passage of the Municipalities Bill. I am inclined to think that the provisions for a Government auditor would be a wise one in the Municipalities Bill. I received a letter recently from one clerk of a municipality requesting that such a provi-

sion should be made for the sake of the clerks themselves, and for the Government who find such a considerable sum of money. This letter points out that it is very desirable that an independent audit of that kind should take place. Mr. Sommers has already referred to placing the railways in commission. That question has had some little consideration, and personally I am very much inclined to the view the hon. member expresses, because it is very desirable, in the light of recent events which have transpired, that the management of the railways of the colony should be relieved from political pressure at any rate.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What has transpired?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The question of the recognition of railway employees' associations.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That question would not be affected by the appointment of a commission.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think it would. A commission would place the railway system of the colony beyond political pressure, and members of either House would be relieved of a good deal of the trouble and anxiety which I dare say they experience at times in being interviewed by constituents on questions of the sort, because it would be known such questions would be dealt with by the commission. It is desirable that the head of a large department coming into contact as it does with the interests of almost everybody, either as passengers, merchants, traders or farmers, should be relieved from the pressure of members of Parliament.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: It is a very debatable point.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am informed that the plan has answered in some countries, though not in others. I wish, however, to say as little as I possibly can on the question on which, as Mr. Kidson says, there is a great deal to be said on either side. I do not want at the present moment to say anything further, except that I regret extremely Mr. F. H. Piesse has found it necessary to resign his position in the Ministry of the colony, of which he was one of the most earnest and able members. He was a strong man, and it required a strong man for the position he occupied;

and, as hon. members have said, they admire him for his strength of character, resolution, and for refusing while holding the opinion he did, to retain his position in the Ministry. His resignation was a wrench to him, I am sure, as it was painful to members who have been associated with him for several years in the administration of the affairs of the country. I have nothing to say in regard to the Circuit Courts to which hon. members have referred. There was, I know, a distinct promise, and why that promise had not been carried out I cannot tell. The promise was that an amendment of the Act would be brought in to enable those courts to be established; and members know we have a Circuit Court Act, which, as has been explained to me, through some difficulty has not been operative.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: The difficulty is that the Government have not appointed anybody to administer the Act.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Both Mr. Drew and Mr. Sommers have referred to the question of payment of members. A distinct resolution was passed in the Assembly on this question, but it has never come before this House up to the present moment. We never have been asked to pass a resolution to the same effect; but there is no question to my mind that payment of members is a proposal which most people are now ready to accept. There are, we know, some people who still believe that it is better not to have payment of members, for the reason that, probably, it would give an opportunity for the professional politician to make mischief in the country.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Payment of members is coming.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am quite satisfied with Mr. Kidson that payment of members is coming. A very large number of people, and especially workers and mechanics, have expressed themselves in unmistakable terms in favour of payment of members, for the reason that it will give them to some extent political power, enabling them by the fee paid to members to send representatives who, though not necessarily working men, will represent the workers especially. I regret in one respect that payment of members is coming, because I am sorry to see anything like a division into classes

in this country. I would much rather see us all united to select the best men irrespective of their callings, and send them to Parliament.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You will not get these men unless you pay them.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know that the hon. member is quite right.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You will not get them in Australia.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is a reflection on the constitution of the House. There are 24 members of the House at the present time, and I think the hon. member would not be willing to say we have not got the best men in the country.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I am humble enough to say there are better men.

HON. J. M. DREW: The choice of members is now restricted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think so. If the people have a man of mark or ability, and he puts his views before the country, they have an opportunity of selecting him and sending him to Parliament, because it would not be a heavy tax on them to pay their representative if necessary. (A laugh.) Hon. members may laugh, but is there anything unreasonable about the position? It is the practice now prevailing in the old country for some constituencies to pay members.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Why are Ministers paid?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Burt, M.P., the representative for Morpeth in the Imperial Parliament, and one or two other representatives are paid by their constituents, and some people hold the opinion very strongly that all members of Parliament should be paid by their constituents.

HON. D. MCKAY: So they are, indirectly.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hon. members know that it is intended that these representatives shall be delegates.

HON. J. M. DREW: Why are Ministers not paid by their constituents?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Because they give their whole time to the work of the whole country.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Then why not pay members according to the time they devote to their work?

HON. A. B. KIDSON: It is no good arguing the point, because payment of members is coming.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not arguing the point, but hon. members raised the question, and I felt bound to refer to it, and in doing so I know hon. members will allow me to express a little of my own feelings. I recognise that payment of members is not coming but has come, and it is desirable effect should be given to the will of the people as soon as possible. I am not able, however, to make a promise, as Mr. Drew seems to desire, that effect will be given to the will of the people during the present session. We do not know what may happen, because the present Government may go out of power, and it is impossible to pledge their successors. In any case, hon. members may feel perfectly assured that when the next Parliament meets, this will be one of the first subjects to engage their attention, and payment of members will be an accomplished fact in the opening days of the Parliament.

HON. J. M. DREW: What about the referendum?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think that in an interjection during the hon. member's speech I gave my opinion about the referendum, which I regard as a luxury and an instrument not to be employed except on the most important questions, of which the question of payment of members is not one. The expense of a referendum for a territory so large as is presented by this colony is so enormous that hon. members would not be willing to bear it, except some such circumstance as the federal question should arise. So far as I am concerned, I was desirous of doing my best to make the referendum then taken as widespread as possible, and to make it as easy as the law allowed me for people to vote on that occasion. My desire was that there should be a large vote and the question once and for all settled, because if there had not been a large vote the question would not have been settled so satisfactorily as it has been. As it is, the result is such that nobody dreams for a moment of trying to interfere with it in any way; but to employ the referendum for the purpose of getting the opinion of the people on payment of

members would be out of the question altogether.

HON. J. M. DREW: The Government are pledged to it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Both Houses are as much pledged to payment of members as if a Bill to that effect had been passed.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Why not introduce a Bill?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Because it is desirable to get the opinion of the people, and that can be done during the general election for the Assembly.

HON. M. L. MOSS: The people adopted the principle in adopting the Commonwealth Bill.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not distinctly.

HON. M. L. MOSS: They sufficiently adopted it.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The motion in favour of payment of members was carried in the Assembly immediately after the general election.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Members of the Federal Parliament are to be paid, and we could not think of paying them without paying members attending the local Parliament; so that reason ought to influence hon. members, even if the expression of public opinion had not been so thoroughly in favour of payment of members. No doubt payment of members will be accomplished at the next meeting of Parliament, when hon. members will come back from the country charged with the introduction of a measure to that effect, because I believe every constituency in the country will be willing to adopt the principle. I think I have referred to all the questions raised by Mr. Sommers, except that of a cyanide plant.

HON. C. SOMMERS: I did not mention that.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; that was mentioned by Mr. Drew. I would like to say a few words in regard to the Midland Railway Company. Mr. Drew was very emphatic in the language he used in regard to errors of omission which he said had characterised the Forrest Ministry, and amongst others he mentioned the Midland Railway Company as a standing evil. I am much afraid the agreement entered

into before the advent of responsible government is the difficulty in the way. Many attempts have been made to bring about a better state of affairs, and I am afraid some unwise remarks have been made which will make it still more difficult for the Government to deal with the question in a satisfactory way. The company occupy a pretty strong position, which they are not likely to surrender; and the best counsel I can give to hon. members and the Government is to proceed carefully in the matter. The Government are seized of the position of affairs as much as is Mr. Drew himself, and recognise the desirability of altering the present state of affairs, if they can possibly do so; but the Government are not going to handicap the country with the expenditure of an immense sum of money for the purchase of the Midland Railway Company's property. The company is not the Midland Railway Company now, but is a land company, the name of which I forget. It was no doubt owing to our anxiety to secure railway communication at a time when the colony was unable to go into the money market and borrow sufficient for the construction of works, that the arrangement with the company was made. Hon. members will remember the instance of the Great Southern railway land. I was a member of a Commission that sat on that question, and I did my best and believe I succeeded in securing the best terms possible from the persons then negotiating in both cases, and but for myself and two or three others we might have got very much worse terms. We have no doubt given for the Great Southern railway more than it was worth.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It was a good bargain then.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: But the country is being developed along the line to a large extent, and in the end this development will recoup the colony. With regard to the Midland Company, I cannot speak with authority about the land owned by them, but I may say that some time ago their land was considered very poor country indeed. A Commission reported that the land was of the poorest possible description, and was not to be compared with the land along the Great Southern railway.

HON. J. M. DREW: The Commissioner of Crown Lands does not say so.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not set my opinion against that of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, but I say that these opinions which I express have prevailed. Mr. Drew has also referred to a water supply for Geraldton. I do not know anything about the situation of Geraldton as to the means of obtaining a water supply, or whether there are any hills in the district where the water could be stored up so as to be brought into the town. In regard to boring, I am afraid what has taken place in other parts of the colony will take place at Geraldton, and that bores will not discover fresh water suitable for drinking. If the hon. member at a later stage of the session will point out to the Government any matters in connection with this water supply, I can assure him the Government will take them into consideration, and see whether a water supply for Geraldton can be obtained at a reasonable cost. I have now occupied the attention of the House longer than I intended to do, but I would just like to refer to some of the remarks of Mr. Drew as to the expenditure of roads boards. As I interjected, the Government Residents and the wardens, as the case may be, have to audit the accounts, and these officers should see that there is no improper expenditure of the funds. I will take an opportunity of bringing this subject under the notice of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who has the control of this matter. I have been impressed with the fact that it is very desirable indeed to guard the grants which are made to these bodies, to progress committees, health boards, and other public bodies; and I think hon. members would be astonished if they saw the number of applications that are made to me from time to time by different bodies in the colony, some of which never ought to have been included in the question of sanitation. I have had to refuse some of these applications, and I take every precaution to guard against the Government being fleeced by these bodies, and I think I have done so sometimes with success. The question of the expenditure by hospital bodies and boards of health is one of the troubles of my life. This is one of the troubles that

makes me at any time ready to resign my position and again occupy a private position, because I often feel the "game is not worth the candle." I do not want to make a secret of it, and I will tell hon. members that I shall be willing to resign my position and not take it up again, if requested to do so after the election of another Parliament, whether the present Ministry is in power or not. I feel it is time for me to give it up, and I think it will be for the benefit of the country that someone younger than myself should take up the position and discharge its important duties. I have endeavoured to do my best, and I have not stinted myself in giving my time and attention to the matters brought before me.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is only right to myself that I should contemplate this step. I will refer as shortly as I can to some of the charges made by Mr. R. S. Haynes, and I am free to confess that I was astonished that the hon. member should have moved an amendment of the sweeping nature he did. It is not in accordance with the principles governing Legislative Councils in these colonies that an hon. member should base such a sweeping amendment upon the arguments which he presented to the House. I think they were utterly inadequate to sustain such an amendment. The hon. member dealt with abuses, he called them, which characterised the administration of this Government. I will refer to the question of his attack on the Attorney General, and I may tell hon. members although Mr. Haynes did not mention the name of the person who had purchased land with a view of profiting by the railway from Cue to Nannine, yet outside of this House I believe he mentioned the name of the gentleman to whom I refer. I am in a position to-night to contradict emphatically the statement, and to state that the Attorney General does not own one foot of land between Cue and Nannine. He holds an interest in two leases, but he has held this for some time. Still if the Attorney General held all the land between Cue and Nannine, I feel certain that such a thing would not influence the decision of the Premier one iota: he would only deal

with the line on its merits. I am sorry the hon. member should descend to such methods. If the hon. member wishes to attack another, he should do so to his face, and not here where the person has not an opportunity of replying to the strictures. As to the question of the failure to prosecute Henriques, which the hon. member says was a prostitution of his office or something to that effect, or compounding a felony, also that the Attorney General in opposition to the Crown Solicitor advised this course to the Government, it is utterly and entirely wrong. I am able to state, not from the Attorney General but from another person, that the Crown Solicitor suggested that it was impossible to secure a conviction in one case, and that it was exceedingly doubtful if another charge against Henriques could be sustained; therefore it was not without consultation with his officers that this course was decided on by the Attorney General. The case of the Ice Company I feel bound to refer to, because the matter has not only been mentioned by Mr. R. S. Haynes, but by Mr. Sommers, and there seems to be some misconception and some strong feeling on the matter in Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie on the subject. I have already supplied the hon. member (Mr. Sommers) with a reply which shows the case as it stands at the present moment. There is no reason to suppose there was a conspiracy between the manager of the Ice Company and the directors. This was done behind the backs of the directors, and so strongly have the directors resented the action of their manager that I believe there is not now a single individual director of the company in existence. I understand the property has been sold at a great sacrifice at as low as ten shillings a share: I do not know what the original shares cost. The directors have repudiated the action, and there is not the slightest ground for connecting them with what occurred. The gentleman who has purchased the company has made an offer to pay the whole of the money, not the £2,000, but the £2,300. He has paid the whole of it, and has offered £100 in lieu of the fines if a conviction could be secured, which amount the company would then have had to pay. There is a desire on the part of the Government not to condone any offence.

HON. M. L. MOSS: What has been done with reference to the officers of the Railway Department?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is no reason, so far as I can gather, to implicate any officer of the Railway Department in a conspiracy with the manager of the company.

HON. M. L. MOSS: It could never have been done without collusion.

HON. H. SOMMERS: What about the laxity, then?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: We may think that, but the proof has not been supplied. I may also again mention what I stated in reply to Mr. Sommers, that some information had reached the Railway Department, and steps had been taken by them. One of their officers was sent up to make inquiries and report, but during the conduct of this officer's inquiry information was conveyed to the newspapers at Kalgoorlie and published to the world.

HON. C. SOMMERS: The information I required referred to a time prior to finding out the frauds, I think some twelve months back. What I asked was whether some communication had not passed between the Railway Department and the Ice Company some time prior to the frauds, I believe twelve months ago. I am informed the Ice Company were carrying on the frauds twelve months ago, that they were discovered and certain communications passed between the Railway Department and the company. That is what I require the information about.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member did not state any time, and the answer is given evidently on the assumption that he referred to the present inquiry. I believe something occurred twelve months ago of the nature to which the hon. member refers, but I am not able to say definitely. Some report was made to the person who was in charge of the goods station—I forget his title just now—and he dealt with the matter at the time and did not report it to his superior officers. A further inquiry is still being made into the case, and further information may be elicited. I obtained the information that twelve months ago, or some considerable time ago, the matter came to the knowledge of Mr. Jaques, I think that is his name, and he dealt with it—I believe it was not a matter of

great importance—without reporting it to his superior officers, and they knew nothing about it until such time as this matter cropped up again. I cannot vouch for that information, as I have not obtained it from the General Manager or the Traffic Manager of the Railways.

HON. C. SOMMERS: May we expect further information about it?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I believe you may; I believe inquiries are still being made into the matter. Why the case was not reported to the General Traffic Manager, and through him to the Commissioner of Railways, I do not know. It is to be regretted that this has occurred. I am not surprised that hon. members and those outside jump to the conclusion that some mismanagement has occurred in the Railway Department; but, as the late Commissioner of Railways stated in the Assembly the other night, if members knew the whole facts of the case they would arrive at a different conclusion. There is no reason to suppose any collusion between the manager of the company and the railway servants; at any rate the directors are exonerated from any complicity in the transaction.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What about the manager's servants?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is no evidence at present in possession of the officers of the Railway Department or of the Commissioner of Railways that would implicate any other person in the employ of the company besides the manager himself.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Why do the Government not offer a reward for any evidence which will lead to the conviction of the offenders?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know what steps have been taken, but a thorough investigation has been made, and the company—or, at least, the person who has bought the business—is making further inquiries to see whether the railway authorities have arrived at a proper estimate of the loss sustained, and if he finds out, on going through the books, that the Railway Department have overcharged he will doubtless ask for a refund. I have inquired rather fully into this matter, because I think it of some importance. I need scarcely refer to another question raised, very unfairly I think, by Mr. R. S. Haynes in reference

to the Perth Public Hospital, linking my name, or my office as Colonial Secretary, with what he was pleased to call the "mismanagement" of the institution. That institution, I think I may say, has the respect and confidence of almost every individual in the colony, although Mr. Haynes said the management had not the confidence of the public at large. We have ample testimony that the institution is conducted on the best possible lines, and those entrusted with the management are performing their duties in an excellent and perfectly satisfactory manner. I would like to say that in the published evidence, taken at the inquest on the unfortunate man Rodgers, there is not one tittle to support the verdict given by the jury on that occasion; and I must express my hearty concurrence at the action then taken by the Police Magistrate of Perth. It is fortunate we secured the services of that gentleman to preside at the inquest, because he is above suspicion, and Mr. R. S. Haynes had just, in some previous remarks, referred in flattering terms to him. In my opinion the Police Magistrate was quite right in refusing to accept the verdict of manslaughter against Dr. Horrocks. There is not one tittle of evidence to show any defect in the arrangements made by the authorities at the hospital, and no blame can be placed on the shoulders of either the secretary, the doctor, or the orderly. The rules and regulations of the hospital were framed, after careful consideration, by fifteen gentlemen, some time ago, from rules and regulations in force in various hospitals in the other colonies; and these rules must be carried out while they are in existence. I refer to this matter because Mr. R. S. Haynes used the circumstances as an argument in charging the administration of my department, at any rate with being responsible for the mischief which has occurred; and I could say something very much more drastic in reply, but as the hon. member is not in his place I refrain. From my knowledge of the management, and as acting chairman of the institution for a time, and a member of the committee since its inception, I can assure hon. members and the country at large that the Perth Hospital is properly conducted in the best interests of those who, unfortunately, have to seek assistance there in time of

need. It would be impossible to refer to all the subjects mentioned in the course of the debate; but I have given hon. members as much information as possible, and I trust they will adopt my view, and refuse to pass either the amendment of Mr. R. S. Haynes or that of Mr. Stone. To pass either would not add to the dignity of the House or advance the country one single step, and we shall have every opportunity when the measures come before us of dealing with them as we think fit.

HON. A. P. MATHESON (North-East): I do not propose to deal with the Speech of the Administrator at great length, because in spite of the panegyric which has been lavished on it by the Colonial Secretary, I must say the matter contained in the Speech is practically an epitome of the reports which we receive from the Under Secretaries of each Department of the State. In fact, to anybody accustomed to read those reports with care, it is almost possible in reading the Speech of the Administrator to recognise the different portions which have been written by the various Under Secretaries and somewhat carelessly sandwiched together. Under these circumstances, if the Colonial Secretary only recognised the fact he would admit it would be very much better for the House to study the reports when issued, than to have matters of this sort placed before us in the Address of the Administrator. What I want to do is to criticise and to deal with the two amendments placed before the House; and first of all I propose, naturally, to deal with the amendment of Mr. R. S. Haynes, which amendment, however, does not require any lengthy treatment. Mr. Haynes practically asks us to make a statement to the effect that the present Government no longer enjoy the confidence of the country. Admitting that to be the case, and supposing we pass such an amendment, and supposing the present Government were to resign from office—which is an extremely unlikely contingency—what would the position be? There would then be one of two things: either a Ministry would be formed out of the Opposition, or the present Government would obtain a dissolution; and I would ask hon. members, on the identical argument used by Mr. R. S. Haynes, would a Government formed by the Opposition

enjoy the confidence of the country any more than the present Government? I say distinctly such a Government most certainly would not.

HON. J. M. DREW: What have the goldfields people been saying for the last two years?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not care what the goldfields people have been saying. I am now taking the argument of Mr. R. S. Haynes, with the argument Mr. Drew himself has used, and I say that if the argument be applied strictly to the present position of Parliament, only one conclusion can be reached, and that is that a Government formed by the Opposition would be absolutely without the confidence of the country, for the reasons which have been given by the supporters of the amendment. Then we are left face to face with the necessity for a fresh election, and I would ask members what would be the feeling of the country if the people were forced to elect members to a new Parliament on the present franchise, and on the existing state of the rolls? I should say the feeling of the country would be one of the most intense dissatisfaction, and instead of obtaining any credit from the country, and of being looked on as the protectors of the rights of the people, we should be unanimously condemned for our indiscretion in forcing out the Government and obliging a reference to the people. The country is not prepared to elect a new Parliament, for, at any rate, four or five months, until people who are entitled to be enrolled have been placed effectively on the rolls. At the present moment it is perfectly well known that out of some 60,000 people who voted in the referendum on the Commonwealth question, there are not 40,000 on the rolls. When I say not 40,000, I mean that though there may be 40,000 names on the rolls, these names to a large extent are those of people who have no right to vote, and who in many cases have left the colony, and I should say advisedly that if we place the effective voters at 30,000 we should not be exceeding the facts of the case. Under the circumstances, it is absolutely essential that the present Parliament should continue to exist for at least another six months, in order that the rolls may be properly filled by effective voters. When hon.

members weigh the position carefully they must see that it would be absolute folly to support the amendment of Mr. Haynes, and the very best proof of that lies in the fact that Mr. Stone has proposed another amendment. We all know as members of the House that Mr. Stone and Mr. Haynes to a very large extent work together, and the obvious inference we are bound to draw from the fact that Mr. Stone has proposed an amendment to that of Mr. Haynes, is that Mr. Haynes and Mr. Stone know perfectly well the amendment of the former cannot be carried, and, therefore, a milder amendment had to be suggested, such a one as Mr. Stone has brought forward in the hope that by its apparent innocuousness it might possibly be carried. What does that amount to? Mr. Stone's amendment is the more insidious, because it either means nothing or a great deal. What he proposes is that it would be unwise to commence new public works whereby the indebtedness of the colony would be increased. I should like to know what he means by the amendment? Does he mean that public works which have already been authorised, but not commenced, are not to be commenced, because of the contingency of increasing the indebtedness of the colony? If he means that, he means that the railway to Leonora, which is admitted throughout the length and breadth of the colony as necessary, should not be commenced; and he means that the dock which Mr. Moss is so anxious to see commenced at Fremantle should be barred. And there are any number of other works authorised by Parliament after due consideration, which would absolutely be stopped for the next twelve months—and they certainly would be stopped for the next twelve months—although Parliament has already authorised these works, and it is an absolute certainty that the next Parliament would also authorise the expenditure of money in these directions; and yet Mr. Stone submits this amendment simply in order that an apparent precaution shall be taken. Because that is the way in which Mr. Stone practically puts his amendment to us: he suggests that it is not desirable that fresh expenditure should be incurred in the present position of this Parliament. I want to deal with that on its merits. The con-

tention is that the present Parliament does not represent the people. I say emphatically the succeeding Parliament will not represent the people. The Parliament to be elected in the forthcoming year will no more represent this country than the present Parliament does.

HON. J. M. DREW: There are twice as many electors on the roll as there were in 1880.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is perfectly right, but what influence have these voters when we bear in mind the constituencies into which the colony is split up. One constituency with a hundred voters returns one member, and another constituency with three thousand electors on the goldfields returns one member also. I say the Parliament which is shortly to be elected will be as big a farce as the Parliament which sits at present. I should not include this House, because this is a fairly representative body. Why should we sitting here suggest that the Government should not go on with absolutely necessary expenditure, and authorised expenditure, because one House which does not represent the people has not been succeeded by another House which will not represent the people? I do not see any logical reason in the argument. To go further, supposing Mr. Stone says "Mr. Matheson is misunderstanding the drift of my amendment, which only applies to new works proposed to be authorised by the present Parliament." Let us turn to the Speech of the Administrator and see what is proposed to be brought before Parliament. Only two works—a permanent water supply for the metropolis and Fremantle, and the construction of the railway to Norseman. I maintain both of these works are and will be of the greatest possible public benefit. I maintain further that both works are bound to be authorised by any Parliament succeeding this one, and for that reason it would be absolutely foolish of the House to pass any such amendment as that proposed by Mr. Stone. Take the case of the water supply for Fremantle: the members who represent Geraldton and that district are unaware that the water supply to Fremantle is absolutely brackish. That water has a most peculiar effect on the human frame, and that water is the only water that it is in the power

of Fremantle to supply to the mail boats. Would these gentlemen really seriously suggest, when they know that to be a fact, that we should supply medicated water to the mail steamers? If they consider it for a moment they must see such a contention is impracticable. When hon. members realise the position of the Fremantle water supply, they will no doubt be convinced it is an essential work on the part of the Government to supply the very best and most potable water that can be produced.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: No doubt, but why should the Government be asked to do everything?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The Government are asked to do the work, but the cost of the work will fall on the residents of the two towns. The hon. member knows that, but for the sake of political discussion he ignores it. The rates have to be paid, and the ships are charged for the water supplied. In order that the hon. member may advocate a semi-vote of censure on the Government, he is prepared to hinder these essential works. Let us deal with the railway to Norseman. Every member is perfectly well aware that the railway to Norseman will be a reproductive work; members are perfectly well aware that the Norseman district only requires a railway to make it one of the best gold-producing mining districts in the colony, yet because of a desire to discredit the Government they will be found supporting the amendment of Mr. Stone.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It does not want our efforts to discredit the Government.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Taking it on that basis, to pass a vote saying that no further works whereby the indebtedness of the colony will be increased shall be carried out, means the defeat of these absolutely essential works; and these two works can only be carried out by means of separate Bills which must come before the House and be debated in the House, and the Bills can be thrown out if the House thinks fit. I do not think it is necessary to labour the question any further, but there are one or two topics on which various members have touched, and it seems to me in dealing with the Speech most of the members who have spoken have left the

Address of the Administrator far on one side, and branched out into topics which it is hardly necessary to touch upon in the circumstances. There is one topic in particular—the question of gambling—to which the Colonial Secretary and many other members alluded. I am not a member of the legal profession, but as far as I understand the position, there are Acts on the statute book of the colony by which these sweeps can be put down if the police propose to take action, and if that is the case I can only say that the position is on a par with the position in respect to many other Acts in this colony. We meet here year after year, and pass Acts which are put on the statute book, and they remain inoperative because it is no one's business to see that they are put in force. There is the Dog Act which comes up for discussion in this House frequently, but it is inoperative, because there is no one to put it in operation. There is the Width of Tires Act which is supposed to be in operation now, but it is never enforced, and carriages and carts are imported every day without the least restriction being placed on them at the Customs House or any other place. Then there is the Immigration Restriction Act which is inoperative. We passed an Act here not many sessions ago, in which we made it essential that aliens entering the colony should have a test applied to them. They were to write out fifty words in the English language, or in any language in English characters. I have no hesitation in saying that the Act is never enforced except on certain individuals on whom the police are put. I know that a number of foreigners were imported into Albany—any quantity—and not any of these foreigners was able to write a single line of the English language: these men were Hungarians.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: They are not prohibited. It is only the Asiatic and African aliens, and if they can read the English language they are allowed to enter. With reference to Syrians perhaps they may be natives of Alexandria, and there would be a difficulty in that case, but the Act was never intended to apply to them, only to Asiatics and Africans. I can assure the hon. member that the Act is administered with the greatest strictness. I have the administration of

the Act, and I can speak in reference to it, and I know that no aliens are admitted here unless the Act allows them, or unless they have been residents in the colony and have a certificate.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : Then I admit that I have made a mistake : I have been misinformed on the subject. I was led to believe the Act applied to all aliens, and that they all had to write fifty words in the English language. But there are a number of other Acts that are absolutely inoperative, and I have no doubt if the gambling Act was properly put in force the gambling by means of sweeps and consultations would easily be put a stop to. Mr. Drew waxed very eloquent on the question of the Midland Company just now. I thoroughly sympathise with his feelings on the subject of the land being locked up. I must go back because Mr. Stone has just called my attention to the fact that I was not wrong just now in reference to the Immigration Restriction Act. The Act Victoria 61, No. 13, reads :

The Immigration into Western Australia by land or sea of any person of any of the classes defined in the following sub-sections of this section, hereinafter called "prohibited immigrant," is prohibited, namely :—

Any person who on being asked to do so by an officer appointed under this Act, shall fail to himself write out, in the presence of such officer, in the characters of any language of Europe, a passage in English of fifty words in length taken by such officer from a British author, and to append his name thereto in his own language ;

I thought my memory was not so much in error, and I may say that my information comes from a person on whom I can usually rely. Nothing is said here as to Africans or Asiatics, and I must commend this to the Colonial Secretary, who is under a slight error. The admission of the Hungarians at Albany was thoroughly unjustifiable, and it was "winked" at by the Government officials. To return to what I was saying, I was dealing with the question of the Midland Company's lands, and I may say I thoroughly sympathise with Mr. Drew and other members, and the people who live in that district, in their dissatisfaction at the lands being locked up. I consider any step the Government can take to free the lands would be most desirable. But it seems to me an extremely

hard thing that member after member should get up in this and another House and use the language they do in regard to the Midland Company as to their lands. They seem to forget that the lands were offered to the Midland Company as an inducement to build the railway line, and when the land was offered it was never dreamed that the Government would give land away for nothing. The day the Government gave land away for nothing rendered it impossible for the Midland Company to deal with their lands in the way it was intended. Under these circumstances the Midland Company were left in a most invidious position.

HON. C. A. PIESSE : You are wrong, because people could then get land on time payment.

THE PRESIDENT called attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

HON. A. P. MATHESON (resuming) : No doubt land could then be got on time payment, but to-day land is given away free by the Government.

HON. J. M. DREW : With great restrictions, though.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : That may be ; but so long as a man can get land for nothing he will not buy it, because it would be absurd to do so ; and this should be taken into consideration when dealing with the matter of the Midland Company. If the company had possibly been able to sell their land at a price which would have justified their doing so consistently with their duty and their liability to the debenture holders, they would undoubtedly have done so, but they could not offer land for nothing, and as people will not buy, there is a deadlock. I agree that the Government should come to the rescue, but in all fairness it should be borne in mind that the company have been forced to their present position by the existing Government. Mr. Drew went on to deal with the question of the coal deposits on the land, and to say they were not worked ; but I can inform hon. members that I have looked into this question, and find that the Government of the colony are to a very large extent to blame for the deposits not being worked. It should be thoroughly well understood that the company were most anxious to build a

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

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

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

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

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Legislative Assembly, Wednesday, 29th August, 1900.

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

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

PRAYERS.

PETITION—DIVIDEND DUTY ACT (COMPANIES).

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

Petition received, read, and ordered to be printed.

QUESTION—LETTER CARRIERS OVER- WORKED.

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

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