

Bill. We shall have to watch that the powers of the boards are not made unduly stringent, but that the object which is intended to be secured—a high state of public health—is brought about. One hon. member mentioned that municipal councils as boards of health did not carry out their duties. There is power for the Government, Minister, or central board to carry out the provisions of the measure, so that there will be no excuse whatever for local boards to neglect their duties. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I have very little to say on this Bill, but I wish to congratulate the Government on having undertaken a work which was much needed. I do not know any Act which required simplifying more than the Health Act. It was introduced at a time when it was much wanted, and its initiation was the signal for an outcry on the part of a great number of persons in Perth and Fremantle. Unfortunately the Act only dealt with Perth and Fremantle, and the Central Board fell into conflict with the board at Fremantle. By-laws were made, and I say if those by-laws had been carried out the health of the city would not have been so bad as it was. The by-laws were very stringent, and people outside Perth did not like to submit to laws which they said at that time were made by foreigners. They were made by members of the Perth City Council. The colony has grown since that time and the present law is not sufficient to deal with the city as it now stands. I am sure the House will give the closest attention to the Bill because if we are going to make Perth a healthy city, and the home of a healthy people, we must have a board properly constituted, and we must have an Act thoroughly and effectively carried out. We must have a Bill in the first place effectually drawn so as to give proper powers to the Central Board, and to the local boards. I hope hon. members will take an interest in this Bill, and read it carefully through so that when we come to the committee stage we may be able to discuss clauses which may require amendment. I say this because I do not think there is any city in Australia which so much requires a Public Health Act as Perth; therefore

I think hon. members who desire to see Perth a healthy city should do what they can to make this Bill a good one. I shall do what I can to make the measure effective, and I hope every hon. member will do the same.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8.15 p.m. until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 22nd September, 1898.

Personal Explanation—Motion: Select Committee, Additional Power—Papers presented—Question: Inspection of Patent Slip—Land Bill, Select Committee: Report presented—Agricultural Lands Purchase Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Mining on Private Property Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Goldfields Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Motion: Leave of Absence—Motion: Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme, Acceptance of Tenders; Amendment, passed on Division; Further Amendment, negatived on Division—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I move the adjournment of the House, for the purpose of making a personal explanation. I suppose there is no member who regrets more than myself what took place yesterday evening, with regard to the difference of opinion between the Director of Public Works and myself. To men of my stamp,

who are always accustomed to judge of the situation according to the dictates of their manhood, there could be only one course to adopt, and which I did adopt last evening, although to men of slower blood it might be possible to sit down quietly under the insult which I received. The statement I made last evening was absolutely true, and in proof of that I propose to read the following letter, dated September 21st, from the Education Department, Perth, and signed by the Inspector-General of Schools:—

I have just received your letter of the 16th inst. re the Waterhouse Mill School. I can assure you that, as my whole object is to forward the education of this colony, and to bring schools, as far as possible, within the reach of all, it is with very great regret that I ever see any school refused. In the case of the Waterhouse Mill, however, it really does not seem possible for the department to build. As you are aware, the Estimates have been so much reduced that we cannot possibly erect any new buildings, nor, indeed, pay any further teachers. The Premier stated, in answer to a question the other day, that there was not sufficient money on the Estimates for the upkeep of the existing schools.

Then, with regard to the North Dandalup school, I will read the following letter from the same source, dated August 11th:—

With reference to your letter of the 2nd inst., I am directed by the Minister to say that he regrets, in the present state of the funds, the Regulations must be adhered to. The Regulations are, as I think you are aware, that where there are at least 20 children in a neighbourhood, if the settlers will provide a building free of charge, a provisional school may be established, and £5 a head on the average attendance paid to a teacher.

I may explain that I have in my possession, from the department, dated 18 months ago, a distinct promise to build that school, provided I could get a site for it. After considerable trouble and some expense, I managed to get a site conveyed to the department free of charge; and then, under the new regulations, because the Treasury of the colony is depleted, the department cannot build that school.

THE PREMIER: Under the old regulations, I think. How many scholars are there?

MR. GEORGE: There are 24, whose ages range from 6 to 16 years, and those who want to go to a school have to travel over 10 miles to it; while such is the state of the public Treasury that, although we

are told that there is a million and a half of money not hypothecated—

THE PREMIER: No one said it was not hypothecated.

MR. GEORGE: Considering I am in a painful position, the right hon. gentleman might have a little consideration for me. I have also a letter, dated 19th September, signed by the Under-Secretary for Public Works, as follows:—

Adverting to your representations in regard to the drainage of the Serpentine Agricultural Area, I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that the locality has been inspected in accordance with your request, but it is regretted that owing to the state of the public funds the Government is at present unable to do anything further in the matter.

This matter, I may explain, was taken up nearly two years ago, and at some expense to me, for I bore the whole of it except paying the salary of the engineer. I got the engineer to go over the ground with me; and I had a distinct promise that £300, the amount required to do that drainage, should be provided for that work. Yet we are told now that, in the present state of the public funds, this small amount cannot be spared. Whilst I regret that it was necessary for me to rebut the accusation made by the Director of Public Works last evening, I regret still more that he has not up to the present moment shown any disposition to do what should be the *amende* to a man who has been grossly outraged. I move the adjournment of the House.

Motion not seconded.

MOTION: SELECT COMMITTEE. ADDITIONAL POWER.

On the motion of **MR. VOSPER**, moved without notice and by leave, additional power was given to the Select Committee on Immigration Restriction and Existence of Leprosy, to sit on days other than the sitting days of the Assembly.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the **PREMIER:** Postal and Telegraph Department, Reports by Messrs. Caldwell and Jenvey, as ordered.

By the **DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** Return showing expenditure on works in various electoral districts, as ordered.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION: INSPECTION OF PATENT SLIP.

MR. GEORGE asked the Director of Public Works,—1, Whether there has been any inspection of the patent slip built in connection with the Fremantle harbour works. 2, If so, by whom, and when. 3, Whether the Director of Public Works has any objection to the reports of such inspection or inspections being laid upon the table of the House.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piessé) replied:—1 and 2, There has, of course, been the usual inspection of the work by the officers in charge throughout its progress. 3, None of the existing reports, so far as is known, are complete in themselves as regards the work as a whole, being merely interim reports showing progress from time to time; but a report on the work as a whole, up to date, could, of course, be procured and published, if there is sufficient reason for publishing it. It would, however, take a considerable time, and involve the production of several drawings.

LAND BILL SELECT COMMITTEE, REPORT.

THE PREMIER brought up the report of the Select Committee appointed to consider parts 11 and 12 of the Land Bill.

Report received, and ordered to be printed.

Ordered, on the motion of the PREMIER, that on the resumption of the debate in Committee on the Land Bill, the report be taken into consideration.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, and read a first time.

MINING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER OF MINES, and read a first time.

GOLDFIELDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER OF MINES, and read a first time.

MOTION: LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On the motion of MR. KENNY, leave of absence for one fortnight was granted

to the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing), on the ground of urgent private business.

MOTION: COOLGARDIE GOLDFIELDS WATER SCHEME, ACCEPTANCE OF TENDERS.

Debate resumed on the motion by Mr. Holmes, "That, in the opinion of this House, no tender for the supply of pipes for the Coolgardie water scheme should be accepted without the approval of this House."

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): I expect it will be the privilege and duty of the Director of Public Works to speak as early as possible, and put the House *au fait* with the whole question. He will be able, possibly, to elucidate certain points that are doubtful, and to remove perhaps some of the objections which exist. It appears to me to be a proper thing for the responsible Minister to place the House in possession of all the facts in his knowledge, and prevent any beating about the bush by members speaking on a subject in regard to which they have not the full details. I wish to refer particularly to the present extraordinary political position, apart altogether from the merits or demerits of the scheme, and I desire to see the House as unanimous as possible on the question. We see this colony pledging itself to the extent of £2,500,000, at least, to give the one blessing which the fields are and have been hankering after—a munificent water supply; whilst at the same time there is a solemn convention or conclave on the goldfields, composed of representatives of all the public bodies, and in the published reports of the proceedings we find not one word about the Coolgardie water scheme. Those leaders of public opinion first demand something from this House, not through their representatives in Parliament, but by direct communication with the Premier; and the invitation to do certain things having been declined by the right hon. gentleman, this small conclave comes to the decision that it will hand in its papers and withdraw its ambassadors, unless its demands are acceded to within a few hours. The goldfields have 11 members in this House, yet that conclave de-

cided to send down three irresponsible men to speak from the floor of this Assembly; and if the Assembly does not see fit, in its wisdom, to agree to their request, and decides to back up the Premier in the matter, they will then in accordance with solemn resolution of that body representing all the societies on the fields, save and except good old Coolgardie for the present, apply to Her Majesty the Queen to be removed from this beneficent colony of Western Australia—which simply wants to give them a water supply costing £3,000,000, for their own good—and apply to be annexed to South Australia, which never bothers her head about goldfields at all. I am pointing this out for the reason that we shall have the strange anomaly of seeing a loan on the London market for the Coolgardie water scheme, and at the same time a petition from these people before the House of Commons, asking to be removed from connection with this colony. It may be said this extraordinary proceeding should have no weight with us; but I want to see the matter at once seriously considered. I do not hesitate to say that the actions of that convention are distinctly intemperate, and totally opposed to the best interests of the fields themselves. They are undemocratic, and those people are seeking to do in an indirect manner what their representatives in this House would do. The matter should, as I say, be seriously considered by this House in its entirety; and any weight which the action of that convention may have must be counteracted by strong, unanimous, and determined action in this House. I hope the Premier will make reference to this matter. On three different occasions, we have decided that we are prepared and willing, nay that we are anxious, to carry out the Coolgardie water scheme. Those delegates who are supposed to represent the majority of the people on the goldfields, want to throw out that water scheme; for if they destroy this Parliament, and destroy the Government proposing to give them the scheme, it means that they will destroy the scheme itself. I challenge the assertion that the convention represents the opinion of the majority of the people on the goldfields; and I hope we shall get an expression of the views of the member

for Coolgardie, and every other goldfields member.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They are not serious.

MR. MORAN: If these people are not serious, they are distinctly childish; for it is a most absurd thing to raise objections and threats of this kind, if they do not mean what they say. It is my solemn conviction that if a *plebiscite* were taken to-morrow of the people in Kalgoorlie, there would be an overwhelming expression of opinion that the doings of that convention savour rather more of the ridiculous than anything else. I believe the underlying sense of the goldfields is with the Government on this matter, or at least with Parliament. I have spoken plainly, although a goldfields member; and I hope every member will strongly express his opinion on the subject. We know what our privileges are, and we also know that, as an Assembly, we always have been, and always will be, ready to do justice to every part of the colony. It is very strange that these two things should crop up together; for to-night we are deciding for the last time whether or not we shall give the goldfields a water supply scheme; and yesterday, just before we met here, that convention decided to apply for annexation to another colony. We should weigh the importance of the doings of that convention, and of the statements made.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They do not deserve it.

MR. MORAN: I scarcely think with you on that point, for when you have a convention backed up by every public body on the fields, it is rather too much to say they do not deserve consideration.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They do not deserve the scheme.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I think the worst punishment you could inflict would be to refrain from giving them the scheme.

MR. MORAN: If the House decided to-night to postpone the scheme for 12 months, it would be the worst punishment they could have. There would be nothing extraordinary in it at all, for it would simply rest on the heads of those persons who are acting in an irresponsible way, not knowing of the injury they are inflicting on people who have not

spoken at all. This House has to consider whether it will go right on and confer this great boon on the goldfields, notwithstanding this solemn conclave of so-called leading men, who are sitting and dictating to this House and to the colony. I recognise in the leaders of that movement disappointed personal spleen and heat, and I recognise the influence of a newspaper whose policy is opposed to the interests of the goldfields; and we know that a newspaper can work up an agitation and that persons may be misled by it, when the other side of the picture is not presented to them so as to correct misrepresentations. I say that the object they have in view is a just one in regard to the desire for more representation to be given to the goldfields; but the action which that conclave has taken is to be deplored in view of the importance of this great water scheme; for at the very time this Parliament is proposing to proceed with the scheme, that conclave is threatening separation from the colony, and I say this is a political situation which demands the grave consideration of this House. That convention is thoroughly representative of public bodies on the goldfields, but I say at the same time that it is not representative of the people generally on the goldfields; and I guarantee that, if the people were consulted in any direct way, they would sweep away that convention of so-called representative men. As a representative of the goldfields elected to this House, I am loyal, firstly to the colony of Western Australia, and secondly to the goldfields which sent me here as a representative. This is my own colony, at the present time; and, having been returned here to legislate for the good of the colony as a whole, I am not going to be used as a catspaw for putting before this House ridiculous resolutions passed by that convention, when I know that this colony as a whole and this Parliament have acted generously in the interests of those goldfields; for although those goldfields are only five years old, they have been supplied with a magnificent railway service, with telegraphs and postal conveniences in all directions, with wardens' courts and courthouses, and with all the adjuncts of civilisation; and now we are pledged, further, to give them a water

supply at a cost of perhaps three millions of money, in order to meet an urgent cry, sometimes a howl, for a water supply for the fields. If, in these circumstances, anyone says Western Australia has not acted generously towards those goldfields, I say he cannot point to a place in the whole world where so much has been done for goldfields or for any new district in so short a time. We may consider the question of redistribution of seats, when the proper time comes; but anyone who asks me to concur in dissolving this House before we have settled this great water scheme, is a fool, pure and simple. I say it is more important for the goldfields that they should have a good supply of water than they should have a supply of political gas. If this House decides to-night to go on with this water scheme, I believe you will find those people who are figuring at the convention as leaders of public opinion will be swept away by the people whom they profess to represent, and when that unhealthy agitation has died, you will find that the people on the goldfields will show their ordinary good sense, and show that they are loyal in their feelings towards this Parliament and this colony. With reference to the proposed contract for pipes, there is only one point on which I want information, and that is about the price to be paid for plates at home as compared with what the pipes can be made for. The rule in contract is that only 75 per cent. is paid on the material, the balance being kept in hand; but the Government may be paying 100 per cent. on the material under this contract, and I want to know how that point stands. We are told by the *Morning Herald*, which is not supposed to be an irresponsible newspaper, that plates can be brought here for £5 15s. per ton.

MR. HOLMES: Not so low as that.

MR. MORAN: Say £6 or £6 10s. We are told that we are to pay for them, when delivered on shipboard in a port at home, £8 5s. per ton.

MR. MORGANS: That includes freight.

MR. MORAN: No; it does not.

MR. GEORGE: It may include railway freight to put them free on board at home.

Mr. MORAN: We are not supposed to take for granted that the two firms which have tendered for this contract work are necessarily superior to all possibilities of accident. Although Mr. Mephan Ferguson and Messrs Hoskins and Company are respectable firms, we must not play into their hands so as to enable them to get at the Government. I do not see why they should be able at any moment, on payment for a certain delivery of pipes, to drop the contract there and then, losing their £5,000 guarantee. A firm might go insolvent, or might die, or might go into liquidation, so that we should provide against contingencies. I believe it is a good rule, in connection with this scheme, to hold something up your sleeve, and not let the other party hold the "joker" in the game; that the Government should have more material in hand at a given time than they have paid for in money. I have a few figures here bearing on the point as to the $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to be kept back as a guarantee. Suppose the price paid for plates in London on board is £8 5s. per ton, and we keep back $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as a guarantee until the amount kept back amounts to 5 per cent. of the whole contract sum, that will amount, as I reckon it, to 13s. 9d. per ton kept back.

Mr. HOLMES: No; 12s. $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Mr. MORAN: Well, take it at about 13s. We have to pay over £7 10s., after keeping back the $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and what does that amount to? It means that the contractors buy the plates for £6 10s., and we pay them £7 10s. delivered on shipboard. We get the full insurance value of the plates; but that insurance has to be handed back by the Minister to the contractor, in case the pipes are lost, if it amounts to the full total due on the contract; but, if not, the Minister has to make it good. The obligation is on the Minister first, and he must trust to the contractor to refund him any amount that may have been overpaid. Clause 9 of the agreement, as printed and laid before members, deals with insurance; and in line 6 there is a statement which rather startled me when I saw it, for it says: "The contractor shall be given a bill of lading for all pipes and materials shipped on board in London." Is it in-

tended that the pipes should be made in London?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: That was in the agreement as originally drawn; but it is subject to revision, and is not yet signed by us.

Mr. MORAN: That looked to me as if the pipes were going to be manufactured in England. Clause 11 of the agreement, dealing with the obligation of insurance companies in case of loss, says:—

If the said materials or any of them shall be totally lost on their voyage to Fremantle, owing to the perils of the sea or other risks covered by the said insurances, the Minister (without prejudice to his right to have this contract performed within the contract time, or such extended time, if any, as may be fixed by the Engineer), shall receive the moneys which shall become payable under any such policy of insurance as aforesaid, and retain the same on behalf of the Minister, paying the contractor the difference between such sums as may have been previously paid to him under this contract in respect of the materials so lost as aforesaid, and the amount received under such policy of insurance. But if for any reason the said policy monies shall be less than the sums so paid to the contractor, he shall forthwith make good and pay the amount of such deficiency to the Agent-General.

That is one of the cases in which I contend the contractor holds the "joker."

THE PREMIER: We do not propose to ship any pipes.

Mr. MORAN: No; but this deals with material. There is a possibility that you may have to pay the contractor more than the insurance amounts to; and, if he afterwards files his schedule you can not possibly get the money back. You have only his personal guarantee, and why should you allow him to have more money in hand than the material he has given you represents?

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

Mr. MORAN: I thought when I first looked through the contract, that the freight was payable beforehand in London; but I see that it is payable at Midland Junction.

Mr. GEORGE: There is not much in the freight business.

Mr. MORAN: Nothing at all. I want to ask the Attorney General, how will this contract work with the Bill which provides that you shall not import any labourers under contract to work on that contract? Will they be excluded? Will

it be possible to import bodies of men to work on this contract?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It will be possible.

MR. MORAN: Well, that is a rather dangerous power to give the contractors. Such practices have been objected to in the United States, where they have caused a great deal of trouble. The Imported Labour Act provides that you can not contract with men outside the country to bring them here to work. They might bring men under contract to work for 4s. or 5s. a day. I have no more to say about this matter. My opinion is that the House will affirm the Coolgardie water scheme, notwithstanding all the serious objections that appear to be in the air at the present time. I would say, as member for Kalgoorlie—the biggest of these centres—if the Government said, we will not build this work for another year owing to the serious trouble up there, I would say: "I do not blame you, and I am not going into opposition because you have so decided." I would say: "You are giving a gift horse to the fields, which they ought not to look in the mouth." But, I say, how would it look to the outside world? How will it look in London? However, I believe the Premier, with his usual courage, will go ahead in the face of all these obstacles; and I hope that the Coolgardie water scheme will be decided finally and definitely, once and for all, before this House rises for tea to-night:

MR. HOLMES: It will not be until the water is turned on.

MR. MORAN: Once we put our hands to the plough—once we commence the contract—there is no one in this House who will attempt to harass the Government in carrying it out. Every man will put his shoulder to the wheel to help it along. I believe that once hon. members find the thing going ahead, they will do all they possibly can to watch its progress, and to see that the Government get the worth of their money. There is a great deal yet that is obscure at the end of the contract. I do not know what sort of service Kalgoorlie is going to get.

THE PREMIER: A full service.

MR. MORAN: I should like to know something definite about it, so that we

up there may make some arrangements which we cannot do till we know what amount of water to expect. It is all *in nubibus* as far as the end of the pipe line is concerned. We have decided to bring it up as far as Coolgardie; but Coolgardie is not the terminus. As time goes on, I shall want hon. members to assist me in elaborating a scheme of reticulation and service.

MR. WILSON: How are you going to do it?

MR. MORAN: Do not ask me. I cannot give away Cabinet secrets like that. This motion of the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) is putting a damper on the business of the colony once more; simply because it has hung the thing up in insecurity. Let us have the scheme, or not have it. Let us do it, or not do it.

MR. HOLMES: You must remember it has been hung up for two years.

MR. MORAN: Well, if you hang it up much longer, you will kill the scheme, and the people too. Perhaps the motion of the hon. member has not done much harm. It is no sign of want of confidence in the Government that we should review in a friendly way the contract for so gigantic a scheme as this; and, if the hon. member's object was to kill the scheme, I fail to see how he can possibly continue to sit on the Government side of the House.

MR. HOLMES: I said, "delay."

MR. MORAN: Well, I am glad to hear the hon. member say that. I am glad to hear that he did not seriously mean any harm to the Coolgardie water scheme. He merely wants another delay; therefore, he is perfectly right in sitting in the seat he occupies at the present time on the Government side of the House. He only wants a little further delay. He is not yet prepared to face the pleasures of opposition, and he will sit where he is at present.

MR. GEORGE: What difference does it make where a man sits?

MR. MORAN: I think it does make a difference. While we have party Government, it does make some difference where a man sits.

MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear.

MR. GEORGE: That is why we should abolish party Government.

MR. MORAN: Still, we have it now; and, while we have it, the side of the House occupied by an hon. member will always make a difference to him. So far as I am concerned, I hope this House will finally decide to-night to construct the Coolgardie water scheme, and that the work shall go on vigorously; for when we have made the inevitable plunge, every care and attention will, no doubt, be taken by the Public Works Department to see that no flaw shall creep into it. I am willing that the Government should pay a good salary to an expert in pipe-laying, from any part of the world, in addition to our own Chief Engineer, who cannot be supposed to have had special experience in that particular line. I hope the House will not carry the motion of the hon. member, and that we shall hear a satisfactory explanation of all the points raised by hon. members, from the Director of Public Works.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piessé): Before I commence my remarks with regard to this matter, I should like, with the permission of the House, and of the Speaker, to say that, although just now a motion was moved in which the member for the Murray (Mr. George) referred to me, and although I did not reply when the hon. member called upon me to do so, I would like to point out that there was no intention on my part of insulting the hon. member. In fact, the remarks to which he referred were made by me in a general way, and not with any intention of implying that the hon. member's statements were untruthful.

MR. GEORGE: You said "absolutely untrue."

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The remark was that the particular school was in the vicinity of Perth. It now appears his references were to a distance from Perth; and I think there is a misunderstanding about it. I hope the hon. member will take from me the assurance that it was far from my mind to insult him or any hon. member in this House. My desire is always to be courteous. It is one of those interjections which perhaps we use rather too frequently, when, on the spur of the moment, we are inclined to resent the remarks of hon. members who attack us.

MR. GEORGE: You said "absolutely untrue."

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: I did not use the word "absolutely." A newspaper reported that I had said so; but all I said was: "I think that is untrue." I think the hon. member will take this assurance from me that I did not wish to be discourteous to him or any other hon. member; in fact, I think it would be entirely unbecoming of me to be so. I mention this now because I wish to let the House know that I do not wish to be dogged, and I think there must have been a mistake about it.

MR. GEORGE: That is all right. I accept it.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: It is necessary, at this stage, that the House should hear from me some particulars regarding the contracts which the Government intend entering into for the supply of pipes for the Coolgardie water scheme. As only two members of the House besides the Premier have spoken on the subject at this early stage, perhaps I can set at rest the minds of hon. members with regard to some of the fears which have been recently expressed, and the misapprehension which seems to be prevalent regarding these tenders. The hon. member for East Fremantle, in moving his motion, was probably prompted by the interest he has in the country to do his best for the country; but I think the hon. member should certainly have looked into the matter more closely than he has evidently looked into it, before bringing forward a motion which has acted so disastrously, I may say in many respects, for this reason. That the depression which has existed for some time past, and which, I am glad to say, in consequence of the determination which has been arrived at to go on with this scheme and the other works which are in hand, had begun to give place to a revival in trade, has now been renewed. I find that during the last week, the revival which had been created in business, and the better feeling which seemed to exist, have been in a measure dissipated again by the motion brought before the House by the hon. member; because, after all, the people in commercial circles, and those engaged in trade, are somewhat mercurial. They are up and down

like a thermometer; and it takes very little to cause them to become afraid that the depression is coming upon them again, or that something may cause this work to be stopped, and that the possible advantages which may accrue to the country will not accrue. Therefore, I think we can all understand that, while this matter is hanging over our heads as it is, it is not doing much good to the country, and the sooner it is cleared up, either one way or the other, the better. I hope there will be no difficulty about it. I hope that, after this matter is discussed to-night, it will be the last we shall hear of it, and that the work will proceed with all vigour. The hon. member has alluded to this matter, which is purely a departmental matter; but he said he thought that, whilst the House was in session, it should certainly be consulted on the various points in connection with the tenders, before such tenders were accepted. Now, I should like to refer to the course usually followed. We have had to deal with very large works in the past—railway works involving the expenditure, on some of them, of a quarter of a million of money; but, in this instance, we are all agreed that the expenditure is very much greater; though, after all, it is only a question of degree; and I certainly think that the House, having agreed to the principle that this work should be put in hand, ought to have sufficient confidence in the Government to believe that, in accepting tenders for a work of this kind, the Government would follow the course usually followed, which is, that the lowest tender, if it is in order, and if the Government are assured that the conditions implied under the contract are to be carried out, should be accepted. We usually accept the lowest tender in the ordinary course, without reference to Parliament. Tenders have been received, and the matter has been looked into in the same way as it always is. The lowest tender was disclosed, but the tenders above the lowest, following out the usual course, were not disclosed; consequently, we have decided to take that course in this instance. Hon. members who have anything to do with contracts will know that, to disclose all tenders until matters are finally disposed of, is not always a judi-

cious course; on the contrary, it is a course fraught with danger, and probably with difficulty; therefore the Government have adopted the usual course, and have decided to agree, provided that all the conditions are arranged, to accept two tenders. Those tenders are the lowest; and although it has been stated that tenders have not been received from English tenderers, yet I can assure the House that, in response to the advertisements which were to appear for three months in every English speaking country and on the Continent as well, we have received eight tenders, which had been sent to the Agent General in England. We have also received in Western Australia five tenders; so that we have the respectable number of 13 tenders for this work. It was found that the Australian tenders were the lowest in each instance. The Government took into consideration the question of deciding the tenders, and with a view of more clearly putting before the House the reasons which prompted them to arrive at the conclusions they did, I will read from some notes prepared by the Engineer-in-Chief, which will give members a full statement of what has taken place. Of course we all know it was intended to call for the tenders in two sections, the first section being 81.74 miles of welded pipe, and the second 246.28 miles of rivetted pipe:—

The estimate was for 330 miles of spiral rivetted main pipe, and amounted, exclusive of joints, to £1,037,250. Thirteen tenders in all were received, eight in London and five in Western Australia. Of the eight London tenders three were informal, and the lowest of any of the tenders was higher than the lowest of the Australian tenders. The lowest of the London tenderers for rivetted pipes stipulated that the steel should be either basic or acid steel, at the option of the contractor, instead of being acid steel as specified (basic steel would probably be £1 per ton cheaper than acid steel), and it is also stipulated that the holes are to be punched instead of being drilled (punching is cheaper than drilling). All the tenders received in London for rivetted pipes were for manufacture at Midland Junction, but the tenders for welded pipes were for manufacture in England. The lowest tenders received in Perth were as follows:—For rivetted pipes, £682,827 3s. 3d.; for locking bar pipes, in lieu of welded pipes, £253,355 15s. 0d.; total, £936,182 18s. 3d. In the last-mentioned tender, however, there were included 15,415 joint rings, valued at about 17s. 6d. each, which would amount

to £13,488 2s. 6d., and deducting this (as it is not included in specification and estimate above mentioned), the case stands as follows:—For rivetted pipes (Messrs. G. and C. Hoskins), £682,827 3s. 3d.; for pipes of locking bar type, alleged to be as good as welded pipes, exclusive of joint rings, which are included in tender (Ferguson), £200,867 12s. 6d.; total, £922,694 15s. 9d. Hoskins' tender for rivetted pipes was for manufacture at Midland Junction, and Ferguson's tender for locking bar pipes was for manufacture at Falkirk, near Bayswater. The prices in Hoskins' tender for rivetted pipes of 28 feet in length were as follows:—3-16in. pipes, £12 12s. 9d. each; ½in. pipes, £16 5s.; 5-16in. pipes, £20 3s. 6d. As compared with this, the prices in Ferguson's tender for the same quantity of piping, but for the locking bar type of pipe in place of rivetted pipes, were as follows, exclusive of joint rings:—3-16in. pipes, £15 each; ½in. pipes, £17 5s. each; 5-16in. pipes, £20 each. The prices in Ferguson's tender for the locking bar type of pipe, alleged to be equivalent to welded pipes ½in. thick, in lengths of 28 feet, were as follows, exclusive of joint rings:—26in. diameter, £14 7s. 6d. each; 27½in. diameter, £15 7s. 6d. each; 29in. diameter, £16 7s. 6d. each. In view of these prices being so low, and so much under the estimate, it was decided it would be better to have all the pipes of 30in. diameter, in place of some of them being 26in. 27½in., and 29in. diameter as specified. This, in conjunction with the other suggestion, would, by reduction of friction, probably result in a saving in cost of pumping to the extent of about £10,000 per annum. It was also thought desirable if possible to get Messrs. Hoskins and Ferguson to combine and supply the whole of the pipes of the patent lock-bar type (for which Mr. Ferguson holds the patent) at somewhere about Hoskins' prices, or at any rate somewhere between the prices of the two firms; as the locking-bar type of pipe is distinctly much better than rivetted pipes, for the reasons that, amongst others, there is much less liability to leaks, that it is much stronger for equal weights, and that the locking-bar creates much less friction and swirl in the water than rivet heads do; and so the two firms were requested to confer together, and to send a joint tender accordingly, which they subsequently did as follows:—For pipes of the patent locking-bar rivetless type, 30in. internal diameter throughout in lengths of 28 feet. 3-16in. thick, 23,425 pipes at £13 10s., £316,237 10s.; ½in. thick, 37,431 pipes at £16 15s., £626,969 5s.; 5-16in. thick, 1,000 pipes at £21, £21,000; total, 61,856 pipes; and total amount, £946,206 15s. Comparing this with the amount of original tenders (after deducting value of joint rings) it would be seen that there was an increase of £41,512 made up as follows: Value of increasing 26in. and 27½in. and 29in. pipes to 30in. pipes £26,041; less difference value of 2,257 5-16in. pipes reduced to ½in. pipes at schedule rates, £7,533; total, £18,508. Amount added by contractor for providing 246½ miles of locking-

ing-bar pipes in place of rivetted pipe, £25,004; total, £41,512. The original tenders, excluding joint rings, having been £174,555 under the estimate, and the revised combined tender being only £41,512 more than the amount of the original tenders (exclusive of joint rings) the revised tender was therefore still £133,043 below the original estimate. In view of the fact that there was so large a margin, and that there was some little risk in using steel as thin as 3-16in. for pipes as large as 30in. in diameter, and also, moreover, in view of the fact that the life of a ½in. pipe would be greater than the life of a 3-16in. pipe, and that the 23,425 pipes specified to be of 3-16in. steel could at schedule rates be all of ½in. steel, or £76,131 more, the contractors were asked to quote as low a price as they possibly could for the ½in. pipes, in the event of all the pipes being ½in. except the 1,000 which are to be 5-16in., with the result that they offered to supply the whole of the pipes required for the contract at rates as follows:—60,856 pipes ½in. thick at £16 10s., £1,001,124; 1,000 pipes, 5-16in. thick, at £21, £21,000; total, 1,025,124. Comparing this with the amount of previous tender, namely, £964,207, it will be seen that the difference was £60,917, whereas the difference in value of 23,425 ½in. pipes in place of 3-16in. pipes, at rates of previous tender was £76,131, so that it would be seen that the contractor had made a concession of £15,214. Comparing now the last tender which provides for larger pipes and better pipes, and less friction, and consequently less cost of pumping and greater durability, with the original estimate, it will be seen that notwithstanding the attainment of all these advantages there is still a saving as compared with the original estimate of £72,126. The tender of £1,025,124 was therefore recommended for acceptance by the Engineer-in-Chief.

Of course this agreement entered into is for equal quantities of pipes to be supplied by the two contractors.

A MEMBER: Why was not Fulton's tender accepted.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Fulton was a long way above the others.

MR. GEORGE: Why did you not call for tenders?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: We decided not to. The statement goes on to say:—

The total estimate for pipe main, with joints and stop valves and air valves, etc. (exclusive of the labour of laying and jointing, and also exclusive of allocation for departmental charges) being £1,397,000, and the amount of the tender for pipes above recommended being £1,025,124, the balance left for joints and stop valves and air valves, etc., was £371,876, and the Engineer-in-Chief believed there would be a very considerable saving on the amount, as the joints and stop

valves and air valves, etc., required could be obtained for much less than that sum.

Those are the whole of the particulars in regard to the prices.

MR. WILSON: Have you not let a contract for joints?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Yes, at £1 2s. 6d. each. Tenders were obtained from the two contractors for the supply of these joint rings. Mephan Ferguson tendered at 17s. 6d. for joint rings for pipes of smaller diameter than 30 inches, but it was decided to accept tenders at £1 2s. 6d. for pipes of 30-inch diameter. It is accordingly specified, in Mephan Ferguson's contract, that the width shall be increased an inch, the cost of production being thereby increased.

MR. GEORGE: The simple joints are the best part of the contract.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: With regard to that, I have given hon. members the whole of the facts and reasons which prompted the Government to decide upon these tenders; and we must remember that, although much has been said with regard to the Government deciding to accept the tenders, yet these are the lowest tenders out of 13 received, 8 of them being received from different parts of the world, and all very much higher than these tenders.

MR. GEORGE: You never asked anyone else to tender for that pipe.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The Government considered they were acting in the interests of the country in adopting this pipe; and, after all, I think every member will agree that the price at which this pipe is to be made under this agreement means that it will cost more to produce this length of pipe than a rivetted pipe would cost, for the reason that the plates which are to be used are the length of 28 feet and 4 feet wide, whereas if we were putting in a rivetted pipe, the ordinary plates would, according to the prices current in the circulars of English manufacturers, be the plates used. Reference has been made to the circulars issued by different manufacturers in England, as to the prices of plates; and assuming that the price, according to those circulars, to be £5 18s. 6d. a ton for mild steel plates, which could

be procured with great ease no doubt for making into pipes, the probability is there would be some additional cost caused by the length of plate being 28 feet; so that the price quoted in these circulars is not a fair criterion of what the proper price would be if quoted for pipes of this size. We all know that an increased length involves an increase in price; and without going into the question of the cost of plates, which we may take to be £5 18s. 6d. a ton according to the current quotations, we say that is a matter for the contractor to see to. It is provided in the tender that we have to pay £8 5s. a ton for plates put on board, and that is the price we are assured by the contractor these plates will cost; but if the plates do not cost £8 5s. a ton, we will take care that the price is not going to be advanced, and as we have to take off $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., that reduces the cost of the plates to £7 8s. per ton on board, so that we would advance only on the value of the plates put on shipboard. We have to consider also that a change in market rates might go against us, for if iron or steel went up in price, we should be put in a little difficulty; but, as nearly as we can, the Government will see that they are to get full value before any advance is made to the contractors. We have agreed to pay $92\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. upon the value of the plates supplied. I may point out, in reference to these details, that the contract has not yet been signed on behalf of the Government, that only two parties have signed it as yet, the Government having one month in which to sign it; and if at the end of the month we do not sign it, the contract will be off. If, during that time, we can see that any detail can be arranged or modified, there will be no difficulty in doing it. I had expected a wire from London to-night on this matter; but it has not come to hand, and I cannot speak so definitely on it as I hoped to be able to do. As to the extent of the advance, we have $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. off from the price of shipment at home, also $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. deducted on the plates delivered at Midland Junction. The deductions altogether, under three different items, reduce the amount payable by £1 a ton taken off by way of retention money, and this amount is retained until it reaches 5 per cent. of the total amount

of the contract; so that by the time it reaches 5 per cent., the contractor begins to receive the balance in full; but by that time we shall have £25,000 of retention money in hand for each contract, so that we shall be well protected. The weakest point will be the first advance, and that is one in which we must protect the country, by doing all we can to see that the value we pay on the plates at home we must get full value for; and, if we find there is a difficulty in regard to the matter, we can yet determine it with the contractor. With regard to the value of the plates, I may say that every plate has to be passed and stamped by our own inspector at home before we take delivery, and has to undergo a most rigid inspection by our inspector to stand the tests described in the conditions, before the plate is handed over to us. We receive the plates from the mills after the plates have been passed by our inspector; consequently we shall be responsible for the plates from the time they are delivered, and we do not hold the contractor responsible after they are delivered on shipboard. There is also the hammer test, which has to be undergone here after delivery, and if any pipe, when received here, does not stand the hammer test, it will be rejected and another will have to be supplied. The different clauses of the contract are too lengthy to go into in this House.

MR. MORAN: You reserve your right to reject bad plates here, when received from your own contractor, who builds the pipes.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; but we expect that, if the plates are properly inspected before shipment, we need not be anxious about the delivery of defective plates here; but, if there is anything like duplicity in regard to substituting other plates on shipboard, we have the power at this end to reject any plates which do not satisfactorily answer the tests. Ordinarily, there may not be any reason for rejection.

MR. GEORGE: If you insist on a good brand of plate, there is not likely to be any cheating on the part of the manufacturers.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: We believe we shall get a good plate. With regard to the insurance

question, referred to by the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), he did draw my attention to the question of handing the insurance policy over to the contractor here. Hon. members know we have to adopt this course in ordinary business transactions of the kind, and that goods cannot be obtained for delivery unless some method of handing over to the party is adopted for the purpose of clearing at the Customs. That is the ordinary course taken, and it will be followed here so as to enable the contractor to get his plates through the Customs and release them.

MR. MORAN: That is no reason why you should have the worse end.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: We know that in ordinary business, things have to be done through an agent or a bank, where material is hypothecated, and that to release the material a certain procedure has to be gone through. I have already pointed out that, if there is any thing objectionable in the terms of the contract, it will be looked into before the contract is finally signed. In regard to the question generally, the House having committed itself to the carrying out of this work, we should in the ordinary course have gone on with the construction of the work, and nothing more would have been heard of it except as to the progress made from time to time, and I believe that both this House and the country would have been satisfied with that course. But the hon. member who brought forward this motion has thought it necessary to say that the confirmation of the House must first be given before the work can proceed. This course, while causing some delay, will have its advantages, because we are able once more to clear the air and bring again before hon. members the full particulars in regard to this matter, in which no doubt hon. members feel great interest; and I think this is an advantage. With regard to the technical matters, those are questions which are more for the professional branch of the department to deal with than for the Minister. But I think, generally, provided we see that everything has been properly done, and that we also see that the work is to be in hand and is to be carried out satisfactorily, that is all the House really expects the Government to

do. Much has been said with regard to the way in which this contract is proposed to be let. As I pointed out just now, I am sure—at least I hope the House will agree with me—that confidence must be placed in the Government to accept the contracts. This is the ordinary course of things when a railway is to be constructed. We do not come down to the House, and ask whether we are going to build a railway, after it has been authorised by Parliament. We simply accept the contract, and the work commences. The next thing that we hear of is that the affair is progressing, and the House is perfectly satisfied. But here, it seems to me, there is some doubt as to what is being done, or what should be done. As I said just now, I do not know that course is necessary in this instance; but, having brought the matter before the House, I say that the full explanation given, as it has been given, should convince the House that the Government have only one object in view—to carry out the work as economically as possible, and to the greatest advantage. We want to proceed with the work as quickly as we can; and, if we do not proceed with this work with some despatch, it will be hung up again for some time to come, and the result will be disastrous to this country. Now, I think we have up to the present so far committed ourselves by making a commencement with different parts of the work; and, although it has been pointed out that delays have ensued, I think that, in a measure, the obstruction which has been offered by some hon. members in this House—

MR. GEORGE: Not obstruction.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:

I take it that the obstruction has been responsible for the delay. If it had not been for those delays, the work would have been further advanced, and we would have had the whole matter in a more advanced stage than it is at present, at a more opportune time. The work would have been in a fair way to completion.

MR. LEAKE: You have had two years in which to get your finances into a mud-dle.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:

With regard to the question as to whether the whole scheme is or is not necessary, that is a matter that has been dealt with

so often that there is no need to say anything about it. But I would like to point out that allusion has recently been made to what may be termed the conservation of water on the fields, by people who stated that all that is necessary is to dig or provide tanks or reservoirs for the purpose of conserving water. Now, I say that the conditions on the goldfields are entirely unfavourable to this means of supplying water. Already the Government have expended a large sum of money at the request of the people on the fields for this purpose; and what has been the result? This year the tanks so frequently alluded to by members of this House as being overflowing are, some of them, absolutely dry, whilst others have very little water in them; and this, I am afraid, will be their condition very frequently; and, if we are to depend on this source of supply, I am afraid we shall be depending on a most unreliable source. Not only have tanks been constructed around Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, but they have been placed in other positions on the fields; and the result has been most unsatisfactory up to the present time. Of course, we shall have a time in the future when there will be the same heavy falls of rain which we at one time experienced, and those tanks will be filled; but such seasons only come periodically.

MR. MORGANS: Once every ten years.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:

To depend on such an uncertain supply as this points to the fact that, if we intend to do so, there is no possible chance of prosperity on those fields. What we want, especially in places like Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, is a large supply of water, such as we intend to supply by this scheme; and those who know anything of the districts around Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie will bear me out in this, that there are numbers of mines there which only require water now to develop them; and if we have that water supplied at the price at which it is intended it shall be supplied, it must be most advantageous to the whole country. With regard to the point of the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) respecting the distribution of water, I may say that of course it has always been stated that this is a scheme for the conveyance of water to Coolgardie. The district

was at one time termed the Coolgardie goldfields, and the name has been retained. Consequently, the different centres now existing around the field were not mentioned in detail in speaking of the scheme ; but it was always understood that the water would be conveyed to Kalgoorlie ; and arrangements will be made, and have been made in this contract, if necessary, for the supply of pipes at the same price per ton, but of a smaller size if required, for the purpose of having a main laid between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. Then again, we have the question of reticulation. That is one, too, which, no doubt, will receive due consideration when it is necessary to deal with it.

MR. MORAN : It is the biggest question of all.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : It is a question which will not be lost sight of because it should be considered even at the present juncture. It is one which requires every consideration, for we have to distribute the water, even if we only take it to the outskirts or boundaries of the different mining properties ; and that, I take it, is the proportion of the work which the Government will have to carry out, and then it will be for the companies to have their smaller reticulating pipes laid from the point to which we take it to the boundaries of their properties. These are matters which are receiving every attention now from the Engineer-in-Chief, so that we have not lost sight of the necessity of making provision, early in the day, for the distribution mentioned by the hon. member.

MR. LEAKE : What allowance has been made for the contractor's probable claim for extras on the contract?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : There cannot be very much in the way of extras on a plain pipe.

MR. LEAKE : Cannot there? You never had a contract yet that you did not have smothered with extras.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : That is all right.

THE PREMIER : There are no extras on a pipe.

MR. GEORGE : Are the joinings to be cast or wrought?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : They are to be wrought steel—welded. There is one point I overlooked in regard to the price of the pipes. The price of the pipes delivered at Midland Junction will be £13 7s. 8d. a ton. That is about the price.

MR. MORGANS : That is cheap.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : That is, I consider, a low price.

MR. GEORGE : How do you make that out?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : The quantity of pipes delivered there will amount to 76,550 tons, and the price will come out about £13 7s. 8d. per ton.

MR. GEORGE : That will be right, then.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : There is another point which has been lost sight of in this discussion ; that is, the locking-bar which forms a portion of the pipe, and will require to be separately manufactured. It will probably cost very much more in the same ratio than the pipe itself.

MR. MORGANS : 60 per cent. more.

MR. WILSON : Nothing of the sort.

MR. GEORGE : Nonsense.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : And if it comes into the colony manufactured, it will, of course, have to pay the duty which is payable on any portion of this material when it comes in a complete state ; therefore, if it is brought in in that way, it will have to pay duty as a manufactured article.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Is a rolled bar a manufactured article?

MR. WILSON : It is plain.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : It will be planned.

MR. OLDEHAM : It is rolled just the same as a plate.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : I hardly think there is any necessity for me to deal further with this question. I have given all the information, I think, that I can give with regard to it ; and, as so much has been said from time to time in reference to the general question, that is one which I will leave other hon. members to deal with. I think my friend, the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), is well able to place before the House, should the necessity arise, the absolute need for this water supply ; and I think that I may

conclude my reasons by reading—if it will not tire hon. members—an extract from the *Golden Age* of the 17th August, written after the matter was previously decided in this House. When the last motion was brought before this House, as to the question of dealing with this matter by private contract, the *Age* said:—

As the time draws near for the acceptance of the tenders for the pipes required for the Coolgardie water scheme, we naturally feel a little anxious that no hitch will occur to cause delay. There has already been too much procrastination, owing, in a large measure, to the obstructive tactics of certain individuals. If the work were half finished now, as it ought to be, we are confident that the cloud of depression hanging over the colony would be showing a break with the light coming through. We say depression, because there is no blinking the fact that business is slow and money is scarce. Yet, if the water scheme were well in hand, we repeat that we believe things would be on the mend. Under the present dreary wait, we cannot hope for a return of briskness and enterprise; and the chances are that we shall not see this desirable state of things for some time yet. There are any number of good "shows" in the district, but capitalists are disinclined to touch them, simply because they do not see any immediate prospect of cheap and large extraction of gold. Even the mines which are equipped with batteries are hampered by the lack of water; and although some of them have laid down two, three, or four miles of pipes, the supply is unsatisfactory and uncertain. It is an axiom of mining that you must have cheap and abundant water, and it is apparent to a novice that 10dwt. and 15dwt. ore will not pay when, in addition to various other impositions, water has to be purchased at so much per hundred gallons. On this subject it is amusing to read the curiosities of eastern critics, who do not understand the conditions under which we are living. The other day we noticed that one of these writers emphasised a condemnation of the water scheme by stating that the people would never consent to pay 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. When it is remembered that at this moment a thousand gallons of water costs £3 5s. in Coolgardie, £5 at Kalgoorlie, and £6 at Kanowna, the absurdity of saying that we would not pay 3s. 6d. for that quantity must stand out as an opinionate silhouette. The most economical family uses 100 gallons per week, which, at 6s. 6d., represents £16 18s. a year. At 3s. 6d., the same quantity would cost 24s. 6d.; so that, if the consumer doubled the consumption, the outlay for a twelve-month would only amount to £2 9s. These Eastern critics talk as if it were an irrigation scheme; but the only irrigation likely to be undertaken is that connected with the dilution of whisky, and that will not run into a heavy tax. We can assure the Government, the Parliament, and all whom

it may concern, that the people of the goldfields will be delighted to get water at 3s. 6d., or even 5s. per thousand gallons.

MR. WILSON: Who is the writer?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: It is from the *Golden Age*.

MR. MORAN: That paper has since died, from failure of the heart's action.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: I think those who know the fields will agree with this extract. Another thing we must remember is that we have spent a large sum of money in having public works carried out on the fields.

MR. LEAKE: Is that a Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie paper?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: A Coolgardie paper. It may be interesting to hon. members to know that, up to date, out of consolidated revenue, about £800,000 has been expended upon the eastern goldfields, in public works in different parts of the fields, and upon railways an amount of £915,000 has been expended.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is loan money.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: So the expenditure up to date has been something like £1,700,000 upon these fields in connection with railways and other public works. After the Government have expended so large an amount upon these fields, surely we are not going to back down when we have come to this important turning point; but rather we will decide to go on with the scheme, and to add still further to the wealth of these fields by following up those great enterprises we have undertaken with this work which is so important in the interests of the fields. I think there are not two opinions about it. We have every evidence that the work is most necessary and all I can say is that the sooner the House disposes of this motion and allows the Government to proceed with the work, the sooner we shall reap the advantage of the enterprise shown by the people, and indicate the confidence this House has in the country, and in its prosperity.

MR. CONNOR (East Kimberley): It will be in the memory of some members that I was one of the first to move in the matter of the necessity of a water supply to the eastern goldfields, when I proposed here that artesian boring

should be tried. Unfortunately that attempt has failed, and the next best thing under the necessities that exist is the scheme before the House. I was not in favour of this scheme some time ago, but within the last fortnight I have had a trip to the eastern goldfields—Kanoona, Kalgoorlie, and Coolgardie—and it came home to me that if we cannot supply the eastern goldfields, not only for three or six months but for the whole year, with the water necessary to carry out the crushing operations, there will be a collapse in this colony. It amounts to this: are we or are we not going to have wages paid to a large wage-earning population? If we have not a water supply there, we will be able probably in a good season to keep the population the same as at present for a few months; but after the rainfall, and the water conserved from the rainfall has been exhausted there, what are the people to do? If this scheme can be carried out—and we have the opinion of our Engineer-in-Chief, and of a very important board of engineers in London, that it can—and if we are able to supply Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie and the eastern goldfields generally with plenty of water for crushing purposes, I say no matter what the risks are, it is our bounden duty to save the country by undertaking those risks. Outside Coolgardie, within a radius of a few miles, I think I counted 23 mines that are shut down.

MR. GEORGE: For want of gold or water?

MR. CONNOR: Want of water. If those 23 mines could be supplied with water so that they could crush throughout the year, how much would it add to the population of the colony, not only in regard to the people working on the mines, but families that would come here? I will not take up the time of the House, because all the details have been discussed over and over again. But I repeat that if it is possible to obtain the necessary supply of water, we should do so. I do not think the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) is serious in asking the House to delay this scheme. I am sure before the clock strikes the hour of midnight, we will hear him get up and say he is sorry he introduced the

motion. I am satisfied that if he does not do so, he would wish to, but possibly his sense of modesty may prevent him from saying, "I am sorry I brought this forward, and I would withdraw it if I could." I am certain that he, being the representative of a large portion of the labourers of this country, would be the last to block the scheme, which, I say, will be, or ought to be, almost the salvation of the mining industry.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I must say I am pleased indeed that the Director of Public Works has made it possible for us to meet together with a feeling of regret that there has been any friction between us. With regard to the question before the House, I really do not think members will be found to subscribe to the principle laid down by the member who has just spoken, who avers that no matter what risks may stare us in the face, we must go on with the scheme because we are pledged to it.

MR. CONNOR: I did not say that. I said, because it was necessary.

MR. GEORGE: I do not think what I said was an unfair deduction from the remarks of the hon. member. At any rate, I have no desire to be unfair. One may speak rather generally on this matter irrespective of the Coolgardie water scheme. Surely if Parliament in its wisdom some time ago, or even now, decided upon a scheme, and subsequent events occurred which made it undesirable that the scheme should be gone on with, it would, at any rate, be well for us to pause, and not to say that, no matter what risks stared us in the face, we should proceed with the undertaking. I may bring the matter down to a level which is perhaps more within our ken than the Coolgardie water scheme. Supposing anyone thought his business progressing profitably, and he desired to obtain some conveniences regarding personal affairs, but suddenly discovered that, from some cause, the money at his disposal was not so great as he had imagined, it would be consistent and prudent of him to look the position in the face, and put off what he had intended to carry out.

MR. CONNOR: Suppose he killed himself by it?

MR. GEORGE: Suicide is not allowed by law, and I think the hon. member is, like myself, too full-blooded to commit suicide, either politically or personally. With regard to the remarks of the Director of Public Works, I must say he has gone very fully into the subject; and the only matter, or at least one of the matters, for regret is that it is impossible for members to form anything like a just opinion upon such a mass of figures, unless they have an opportunity of studying them. I do not wish members to infer for a single moment that these figures have been got ready for the occasion. I take it that they are honest figures, and that they are figures by which the department, at any rate, will have to be judged as the scheme goes on. I also take it that if this House in its wisdom decides that the scheme shall continue, it will be imperative upon every member of this House, or any future House, if at all patriotic, to help the Government of the day in forwarding it. When we have decided emphatically upon a matter, we should act shoulder-to-shoulder to push the thing forward, whatever our fears, and whatever the consequences may be. I am free to confess, with regard to the type of pipe, that if it has been proved to the satisfaction of the engineers, that the present type of pipe, known as the Ferguson type, is the best—that is, that it will fulfil the conditions, and is not likely to break or burst under the pressure put upon it—and other things of a practical nature have been fulfilled, the Government are wise in adopting a pipe by which friction has been reduced to a minimum.

MR. MORGANS: What is your opinion?

MR. GEORGE: My opinion about that pipe is that, if the locking part will resist the pressure, and if provisions for dealing with expansion and contraction are properly carried out, it is, with the exception of the welded pipe, the best pipe I have ever seen. It would be less than just if I did not say that. If the engineers are satisfied on that point, we cannot go against it. Where I do join issue on with regard to this matter is that the Government called for tenders for certain pipes, and accepted tenders for others. It may be a better pipe, and I believe it to be so, if it will stand the tests of which I have

spoken; but, at the same time, if the department decided that this was the pipe they would obtain, their only honourable course would have been to invite tenders throughout the world for that pipe.

THE PREMIER: That pipe was patented here.

MR. WILSON: The question is whether the pipe is good or not.

MR. GEORGE: I have not risen on this occasion to attempt to pick flaws in the scheme, but to give expression to an opinion which I think my experience gives me a right to. I believe I am the only person in the House engaged in contracting for iron-work, with which I have been connected since I left school; and if, during that time, I have gained anything, it has not only been the respect of my employers, but respect among other people who contract. I may not have the respect of the House, but I will endeavour to earn it.

At 6.30 p.m. the SPEAKER left the chair.

At 7.30 the SPEAKER resumed the chair.

MR. GEORGE (resuming): In my previous remarks, I was replying to a question put by the member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) as to what is my opinion of this pipe. My answer is that, if the pipe fulfils the conditions of perfect safety, freedom from bursting and from leakage, it is about the best pipe I know of, with the exception of the welded kind. It is only just to say that. In dealing with this matter from the point of view stated by the mover of this motion, it is really taking a new departure in connection with calling for tenders for any work authorised by Parliament, that the tenders received should be adjudicated upon practically by the Parliament of the country. That is a course which should not be countenanced, if there were not some great question of principle at stake. If it were a question of an ordinary contract in connection with the construction of a railway or other large work, and that it was incumbent on the House to criticise the details of the tenders submitted, then the position would be intolerable to members of this House, because to do so with advantage to the country would require

that the qualifications of members of Parliament must be considerably enlarged, and they ought properly in such a case to pass an examination in the manner of conducting commercial business and with regard to the carrying out of large works under contract; otherwise the criticisms would deal only with generalities, and there could be no practical result. But I understand the reason why the mover of this motion has raised the question in this form was that this great scheme might go forth once more with the distinct approval of this House; and if thought desirable that the scheme should be delayed or be further considered, the House should have the opportunity to take that course. When the hon. member brought forward his motion in that way he was justified, in my opinion, and was acting within his rights; therefore I think it was not right on the part of any hon. member, however exalted his position, to ask what qualifications the mover had for arresting this work and insisting on criticising it afresh, or what mandate he had for taking upon himself the raising of this important question again. I say that in matters of this kind we stand on an equal platform in this House, that the Premier is simply one member amongst other members, and that it is not right for any member to throw stones at another member when acting within the rights which belong to every member of this House. If there is no other result from this motion than that the House will decide to go forward with the scheme, then the debate cannot be considered to have been anything but useful; because we have had laid before us by the Director of Public Works some statistics and figures which are interesting, and will be useful for future reference as the work proceeds, and they will show the position that Parliament to-day takes with regard to the scheme. If the motion were carried, I take it that the Premier would abandon the scheme. It follows naturally, on the other hand that, if the motion be defeated, the Premier will have got the sign manual of Parliament once more to go ahead with the scheme. Therefore there should be no grumbling about the course which has been taken in raising the question again on this

motion. It has been said that we have not the money to carry out the scheme and fulfil our other obligations. The Premier does not say he has the money, for though he says he has a million and a quarter available, he forgets to tell us it has been necessary during the last few weeks to reappropriate no less than £170,000 from other works for the purpose of carrying on certain undertakings. Therefore, so far as the independent members of this House are concerned, we have nothing to warrant us in concluding that the £170,000 reappropriated a few weeks ago is the end of the reappropriation, so far as loan moneys under the control of the Government are concerned. We have no such guarantee; and, seeing that is so, and I do not think it can be disputed, I say we have a right to view the situation carefully before we finally take a plunge; because the effect must be, if the scheme is not successful, that it will place a millstone of debt upon this small population; but if, on the other hand, the scheme does succeed, it may probably realise the sanguine expectations which the Premier has again placed before us. Dealing with the conditions of tenders, I cannot see why, in the drawing up of the conditions, there should be a departure from the usual conditions under which contracts are let and tenders called for in the other colonies, and that a cash deposit of substantial amount should not be insisted upon. We are told that the two lowest tenderers have to enter into a personal bond to carry out their contracts. I have nothing to say against the probity or the financial status of either of the two contracting firms; and I think it only fair to say that, if they undertake the work, they will be likely to carry out their contracts whether a cash deposit is insisted on or not, because, apart from their known standing as manufacturers, they have a very fair thing in these contracts, and no one will begrudge them of it. But I fail to see why the usual conditions should not have been carried out.

THE PREMIER: It is not usual in this country.

MR. GEORGE: The right hon. gentleman always has a way of putting things off, by saying it is not done in this place or not in the other, just to suit his case.

Western Australia is more important to me than England. This scheme involves contracts for large amounts; and naturally those who have to carry out the making of these pipes will have to put down expensive plant and erect expensive buildings in the colony. That is undeniable. At the same time, the Government have no lien upon the plant—none whatever; and if it should happen to suit the book of either of those contractors to abandon their undertaking—

THE PREMIER: It would be ours. We have a bill of sale over it.

MR. GEORGE: That is not stated in the tenders, or in the conditions of contract.

THE PREMIER: It is always done.

MR. GEORGE: Let us know what is done now. It is not in these conditions of contract.

THE PREMIER: You are not sure of that.

MR. GEORGE: It is not there.

THE PREMIER: One place specified is our own land: and, in respect of the other, we already have a conveyance of the land.

MR. GEORGE: If the Premier has particulars in his possession which he has not thought fit to put before the House until they are dragged from him, I can understand the situation. Speaking from my point of view, and I think I have had far more experience in contracting than the Premier—

THE PREMIER: Oh, we will look out.

MR. GEORGE: Oh, the right hon. gentleman will look out. If the House wants my opinion, I will say straight that I would like to have a share in those contracts; and, if so, I could break through those conditions of contract easily and successfully.

HON. S. BURT: Why did you not tender?

MR. GEORGE: The Director of Public Works will perhaps be able to answer that question. When the debate has proceeded a little further, I will be able to answer it also.

THE PREMIER: Let us have it.

MR. GEORGE: Oh, you shall know. I always notice that if any member of this House is getting what we vulgarly term "home" on the Premier, the right hon. gentleman squirms.

THE PREMIER: Not at all. You cannot do it.

MR. GEORGE: If any hon. member does not know what "squirm" is, he now has an opportunity of seeing the right hon. gentleman "squirm" as he walks out of his seat. I was saying that I see no reason why the ordinary conditions of contract should not have been carried out. If it is necessary, in the case of a railway contract extending to £50,000 or £100,000, to impose stringent conditions on the contractor, surely in a matter of this sort, on which the existence of the country as a whole is staked, and on which the existence of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie and the neighbouring places are doubly staked, surely there should be no possibility of any loophole for any mistake with regard to the carrying out of this contract. I believe even the Premier, when he is not squirming, will agree with me on that. Now, there is a condition in this contract with regard to the retention money; and I have no hesitation in saying that there is no more unjust thing that I know of in connection with a contract than going in for this retention money. It is unjust for the contractor; it is unfair to the person who lets the contract; and it will be far more fair, and far better, if a cash deposit is required; and, if the cash deposited at the start of the contract is sufficient, there is no necessity for this retention money. And I will tell the Premier, who, of course, knows nothing about it, that, as far as this retention money is concerned, it is always duly provided for in the making up of a contract. It has been stated by some hon. members, and also by some of the newspapers, that the contractors are likely to make a big profit out of the pipes at £8 5s. per ton. Now, I do not think it is possible for any of the newspapers in question, or any members of this House, to be able to tell what profit, if any, the contractors will make on the plates. Anyone who has been connected with the iron trade, and has had to buy quantities of plates, will know that iron works which are capable of rolling steel plates 28ft. by 4ft., which necessarily means that a plate must be rolled 30ft. by 4ft. 6in. so that it may be ulti-

mately sheared to its proper size, are few and far between; and, moreover, the quality of material which is to be used in the manufacture of these plates, so as to retain the heat while they are being rolled out to that large size, must be so good that ordinary material would be of very little service. Anyone who has had practical experience with regard to iron manufacture will agree with me on that. It is possible and probable that, in connection with these plates, these gentlemen may have a profit of say from 10s. to 15s. per ton; and, if they do have that, it is not an unfair amount of profit in connection with the quantity of material they have to deal with. Therefore on that point, at any rate, I am not inclined to severely criticise the Government. But I think, if, after having gone into the matter, they find that £8 5s. is too much—if they can readily ascertain it, they would be acting wisely if they got that £8 5s. reduced to what they think is a fair thing. I do not say they ought to cut it down to bed rock, because I do not think that would be just to the contractors, who, if they go to the trouble of making the contracts for the supply of these plates, are entitled to a fair share of the profits. Coming to the question of freight, I do not think it is such a big item as has been made out. If you take the ordinary sailing ship freight, or steamer freight, for the matter of that, you are not likely to get it under 22s 6d. or 25s. per ton; and it must be remembered that the throwing of from 70,000 to 80,000 tons of freight upon the shipping market at home is not likely to be conducive to low freights: it is more likely to have a tendency to harden the market. But, even supposing that only 22s 6d. or 25s. has to be paid, there are primage and various other expenses, which will make the total freight about 30s. per ton; then add to that 10s. 8d., representing railage and wharfage at Fremantle, and the stacking at Midland Junction, which is worth about 2s. 6d. per ton, and all this comes to £2 5s. 2d.; therefore the difference between that and £2 10s. is not great. It is simply a fair working margin of profit. I am trying to approach this, if I possibly can, from an unprejudiced point of view, and it seems to

me that is not an unfair amount to allow; and if the conditions of contract with regard to the deposit are such that there can be no question at all that the contractors will carry out their contracts, and make those pipes and deliver them on the sites as they are required I do not see that we need have much more to say on the matter. But I would like to point out that the price per ton of these finished pipes, we are told by the Director of Public Works, is £13 7s. 8d.; and that the quantity is 76,550 tons. Well, if you take from £13 7s. 8d. the sum of £10 15s., which is the amount to be paid under this contract, that leaves you the sum of £2 12s. 8d. per ton to manufacture the pipes, provide buildings and plant, pay wages, and make a profit. That is the margin left. And if you take that rate on the 76,550 tons, it gives you the sum of £201,581 out of which is to come the erection of buildings, the providing of plant, depreciation, wages, interest, and profit. Now what does that leave for us? What is a fair item to take for that, to say what is going to be spent for wages? I think it is not unfair to say that if you take 25 per cent. of that £201,000 off to provide for those wages, profit, and all, that is only £50,000; so I am not allowing them very much profit, because, when you take plant and buildings and depreciation out of it, that leaves us £150,000 to be paid in wages for the manufacture of these pipes. Now, the point I am endeavouring to make, and will make, is this: the Premier has told us—and he is no doubt sincere, but I do not think he has had these figures put before him in this way—he has told us that this scheme will give an immense amount of employment in Western Australia—such an amount that it will practically dissipate the dulness that we now have in business. I hope it will do so; but I want to point out that the amount spent in wages upon this scheme is not nearly so much as he thinks.

THE PREMIER: What about the laying of the pipes?

MR. GEORGE: I will come to that if you will wait. There is £150,000 wages for making the pipes. For the laying, jointing, including excavation and filling up, there is £200,000; for making reservoirs there

is £70,000, which will not be all wages, probably about £50,000 will be wages; and then there is laying the distributing mains—cost of laying estimated at £170,000; and, if you take £50,000 of that for wages, that is a very fair margin. That is a grand total of £470,000 for wages; and that is all the wages of the Coolgardie water scheme; and recollect, this sum is to spread over something like three years. That means £150,000 per annum. Hon. members must know that in our large timber concessions—or say two of them—the amount of wages paid almost equals this. Take anything like a large railway contract—the Cue or Mullewa contract—the amount of wages paid in connection with those contracts is nearly as much as this £150,000 a year which has to be spent on the Coolgardie water scheme; therefore it is scarcely accurate—that is a mild way of putting it—it is scarcely accurate to argue that we must carry out the scheme because the amount of wages that has to be spent will regenerate our present dulness of trade, and make Western Australia flourish. There is another little matter to which I want to refer: that is with regard to the one and a quarter millions of cash we are supposed to have in hand. We are supposed to have available something like a million of money for this water scheme; and we also have on hand, as against that, a million of Treasury bills that have to be met next year; and, if I understand the right hon. gentleman correctly, that million of Treasury bills will have to be met by another loan; and by that time, or shortly afterwards, it will be necessary to raise a further loan in connection with this Coolgardie water scheme. Now, though I do not wish to pose as a financier, it seems to me that, within the next two or three years, we will have to go to the London market, or somewhere else, for something like two or three millions of money to carry us on.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: More than that.

MR. GEORGE: Well; you know the figures better than I do; but say between two and three millions. And what price are we likely to have to pay? If I understand rightly, we will have to pay a very substantial discount on that large amount of money in order to get cash to keep our credit square.

MR. MORGANS: About 6 per cent. discount.

MR. GEORGE: Well, £6 upon £100, when it runs into millions, is a big thing.

A MEMBER: That is a low rate of interest.

MR. GEORGE: Even if it were only 1 per cent., the sum would be considerable. If you get only 94 sovereigns out of 100, you have only 94 to spend instead of 100. We have a right to look at the matter in all its aspects; but I will leave the financial points to members who understand them better. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) spoke about a meeting at Kalgoorlie at which, as far as one could understand, there were representatives from all parts of the goldfields.

MR. MORGANS: All except Coolgardie.

MR. GEORGE: Apparently they were the chiefs of representative bodies. These men should receive a very great check from the inhabitants of the goldfields towns, which should be quite as outspoken as was the member for the particular district (Mr. Moran), and as I have no doubt will be the opinion expressed by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans). We are pledging our credit and raising our money for the purpose of giving what the goldfields people say they need; and this is not the time to talk about separation and flouting the Government and the Parliament of the country. The member for East Coolgardie has been man enough to say that Parliament has dealt generously with the goldfields, and I am of opinion that he said nothing but the truth in connection with the matter. I assert, not only on my own behalf but for a number of members, that Parliament will always act generously towards the goldfields, so long as they act justly towards the other parts of the colony. Whatever our differences may be, we try to act fairly to the colony, and certainly to the goldfields, which have been the main factor of our prosperity. But when there comes this talk about separation, I think members should put their considering cap on, and say, "If these men are fair representatives of the goldfields, are we justified in carrying out the scheme?" I am sure the member for Coolgardie is not in accord with the persons who were at that meeting. I have thought it necessary to give expression to my view on that subject.

Little remains for me to say except that from the time I joined this House I have always set my face against party Government, and if there is one thing which this session has shown more than another it is the evil of party Government. We know perfectly well that the last vote on this subject was taken, not on the question of the Coolgardie water scheme, but on that of keeping the present occupants of the Treasury bench in their seats. Whilst I have not the slightest ill-feeling towards the Premier, or any of his colleagues—for I recognise they are honourable and honest men, trying to do their best according to their lights—I say, when it comes to an important question like this, we should be able to exercise our independence and judgment, and not be told that if we do so, and the vote goes against the Government, the Government will resign. Although in the last debate I was prepared to keep the right hon. gentleman in his place, I think the time has come for us to consider whether, in keeping him there, we are not paying too heavy a price for the country to bear. The cost of this scheme, and other schemes placed before the country, in regard to which we have been treated with threats of resignation, amounts to something like £3,000,000 or £4,000,000, and there is no man in Western Australia whom it will pay this colony to keep in office at such a price. This, to my mind, shows the utter farce of attempting to have party Government. For my part, if it is necessary to keep the right hon. gentleman in his place, or necessary that he should draw the emoluments of office, I would be prepared to vote for a permanent sum of £25,000 to be invested in English consols for the purpose, if that were needed. —I do not think it is needed, but I put before members the question of the prostitution of their understandings, and the threat that unless they vote in the way the Government wish, the Government will resign. It is asking the country to place a value on the right hon. gentleman of between £3,000,000 and £4,000,000, which I do not think he would fetch if he were put up to auction. In conclusion, I have simply to say I shall not vote for the scheme to-night, for the simple reason that I do not believe it prudent to do so. I believe the scheme can be carried out

as far as engineering is concerned, and that the water can be got to Coolgardie; but at the present stage of our financial affairs, and viewing the situation as broadly as I can, I do not think I would be right in voting for the acceptance of these tenders. If the circumstances of the colony were the same as two years ago, when things were booming and we had plenty of money, I should have less hesitation about this scheme; but when I record my vote, it will be simply on account of the position of the finances of the colony, and not because I am against the scheme.

AMENDMENT PROPOSED.

MR. MORGANS (Coolgardie): I have an amendment to propose, although I intend first to speak to the motion before the House. I would like to say, before dealing with the question at issue, I regret it has been found necessary for a member sitting so near to me on this side of the House to propose a vote of want of confidence in the Government. The motion which the hon. member has introduced cannot be classified in any other way, and I would like to congratulate the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) on having such a worthy supporter on this side of the Chamber. I hope if the motion is lost, the member for Albany will not feel that the member for Fremantle has not done his level best. The member for East Fremantle stated in his speech, I believe—although I had not the pleasure of listening to it—that he considered this House had a right to interfere with the letting of this contract. I think it is quite clear to the minds of all members present that such is not the usual course, to say the least of it; and, so far as this particular instance is concerned, it must be admitted that the Government have been authorised on two occasions, by a special vote, to carry out this work. They are armed with a full authority in every sense of the word to carry it out, yet now the hon. member suggests that the calling for tenders or acceptance of contracts is a concern which this House should have a further power of interference in.

MR. LEAKE: Altered circumstances.

MR. MORGANS: My friend says "altered circumstances," but I do not know

where they are. I am not aware of any myself; but, supposing the circumstances are altered, I contend that when once the House authorises the Government to do a certain work, the Government are perfectly justified in carrying it out; and it is not reasonable to suggest that the House should take any part in the question of letting these contracts. The hon. member said, in the latter part of his speech, that he wished to delay the carrying out of this scheme. It is something to know that he only wishes to delay it, and does not want to kill it altogether. On behalf of the goldfields I beg to tender the warmest thanks of the inhabitants to one of the members for Fremantle for being good enough to assert that he does not wish to kill the scheme, but only wishes to delay it. I am sure they will be very thankful to know he has no such sinister designs upon this important work, upon which their life and energy so much depend. But, when the hon. member tells us he only proposes to delay the work, he reminds me of a person who invited people to a repast and put before them empty plates, afterwards congratulating them upon what they had been able to get, and upon the way in which they had enjoyed themselves. Nobody knows better than the hon. member that if this scheme is once delayed, and if once the Government are prevented from carrying out this contract, or from accepting tenders for these pipes, and putting this great work in hand, it will never be carried out, at least for many years to come; and notwithstanding his assurance that the object he has in view is only to delay the work, I am sure that as a practical man of the world, he must see and understand that the position he takes up in this matter will, if he is successful, mean the death of this scheme at least for a considerable time. I do not consider it needful for us to debate any further whether or not this scheme is required, for so many clear proofs have been brought before us as to its absolute necessity. Its necessity has been abundantly proved. If the hon. member will for one moment reflect upon his position as member for Fremantle, he will, I think, realise that the attitude he takes up with regard to this water scheme is inconsistent. The hon. member desires to lead

this House to believe that his sole reason for trying to kill the scheme is that he considers the finances of the country are in such a state that they will not justify going on with it. I am not prepared to accept that position, nor that argument, because I noticed the other night that when a question arose as to apportioning £150,000 out of loan moneys to the purpose of carrying out the Fremantle harbour works, the hon. member did not raise the slightest objection. That overpowering spirit of economy now exhibited against this water scheme was entirely absent that night. When it becomes a question of pouring out hundreds of thousands upon Fremantle everything is all right, and the hon. member has no objection whatever to any amount of expenditure on behalf of that port. If his intentions are really what he would lead us to believe, he should have raised some objection to the expenditure of £150,000 on further works at Fremantle harbour because it is possible to do without that expenditure at the present time.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The work has been begun.

MR. MORAN: So has the Coolgardie water scheme.

MR. MORGANS: We are told the harbor works are so far advanced that actually German steamers are arriving in the port.

MR. DOHERTY: A pity they were not British.

MR. MORGANS: I am quite prepared to admit that further expenditure on the Fremantle harbour works is equally desirable; but if members are going in for a policy of economy, then I say that further expenditure on even that important work might have been delayed for one or two years, because the port has been sufficiently improved to make it of use to the colony. Therefore, if we are not going on this principle of economy, I would like the member for East Fremantle to be a little more consistent in his position, and when questions arise regarding the expenditure of money I would like him to see that other places as well as Fremantle deserve some consideration at the hands of the Government. If economising is to be done, let it be carried out all round in a fair way. The

hon. member tells us this scheme is going to end in disaster. I would like to ask him whether he means from an engineering point of view, or a financial one.

MR. HOLMES: Financial.

MR. MORGANS: With regard to the engineering part of the argument, the House has been satisfied for months, and even for years, that the scheme is quite practicable. Turning to the financial part, the hon. member has said that from this point of view the scheme will be a disaster. It could be a disaster only if it did not realise the anticipations of the Government.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Supposing we could not get it finished?

MR. MORGANS: That is not a financial question. I do not recognise it as such.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do.

MR. MORGANS: The hon. member asks a question which seems to have no point in it whatever. We assume and we know the credit of the colony is so good, that it is firmly and well established in London, and in every part of the world, notwithstanding all that may be said to the contrary in this House; and we know that, with a history of not many years of commerce and trade, with a gold-mining industry that is only some six years old, this colony is now placed in the proud position of being the greatest gold-producing colony on this continent. A colony with a population of 170,000 people can borrow in London on nearly the same terms as the great colony of New South Wales, which has a much larger population, which has a revenue of something like 10 millions per annum, and which has been established something like a century.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But what is the debt?

MR. MORGANS: It has a public debt averaging about the same rate per head as the debt of this colony.

THE PREMIER: That is it.

MR. MORGANS: I say that no hon. member can assert that the credit of this country is not well established, in the face of the fact that we can actually borrow money in the London market on practically the same terms as the oldest colony on this continent. What better proof can this House or can anyone de-

sire, than the fact I have stated? I remember that, in the first speech I had the honour of making in this Assembly, I said it was unreasonable for this colony to expect to borrow money at 3 per cent., and I say that now. If this colony can borrow money even at 4 per cent., or 3½, considering the circumstances of the colony at the present time, we shall be doing very well. The fact that we can borrow at 3 per cent. with a minimum of 92 is a proof that the credit of the colony is good indeed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Are there no limitations to borrowing?

MR. MORGANS: I think there are certain limitations; but if a Government can borrow money at 3 per cent. and invest it at 8 or 9 per cent. it is doing very well; and I would remind you that our railways have shown, last year, a profit of 9 per cent. on the capital outlay.

MR. VOSPER: What are they showing this year?

MR. MORGANS: They are showing less this year owing to certain circumstances over which the Government have no control. The Government have proposed to spend two and a half millions on this work, and, so far as we can judge, the work will cost less than the amount of the original estimate, for we see that, in regard to the lowest tenders for these pipes, involving about one half of the total outlay, the price is £170,000 less than the original estimate. It is true that since the estimate was framed, a slight change has been made in the diameter of the pipes, and a desirable change it is, as also in the thickness of the pipes, that being a desirable change too; but the fact remains that the contract price for these pipes shows a saving on the whole scheme of £170,000, as compared with the original estimate. If we take it for granted, as I do, that water can be taken to Coolgardie successfully, we shall then have five million gallons of water a day for disposal; and, although I know there are certain members here who will join issue with me about the sale of the water, and will say, as they have said, that when once the inhabitants get the water they will not pay for it, yet I say that is an unjustifiable and ungenerous assumption. What right have those members to say that the

inhabitants of the goldfields will not pay for water when it is supplied to them? That statement I look upon, to say the least, as absolutely unjustifiable and unfair.

MR. LEAKE: They want to separate now.

MR. MORGANS: The inhabitants of the goldfields know how to carry out their obligations as well as anyone in this colony, and if they will not pay for the water, it will not be supplied to them; but I say it is unreasonable to assume they will not, and I have never heard so unreasonable a suggestion made in connection with any matter. We shall, as I say, have five million gallons of water a day to dispose of at 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons, which will cover the cost of the work; that is to say, it will cover interest on cost and cover a redemption fund for repaying the whole capital, and, in addition, it will cover working expenses. But, supposing, when the water is supplied to people on the goldfields, the Government find it necessary to charge a little more for it, I say the inhabitants of the goldfields are quite prepared to pay more if necessary, and will pay 5s. a thousand gallons, and are quite prepared to do it, if that sum is found to be necessary for making the scheme payable. If this scheme is an engineering success, as I have no doubt it will be, and if you can dispose of five million gallons of water a day, then it is absurd for any member of this House to attempt to claim that the scheme will be a dismal failure, as the mover of the motion expressed it, for he said the scheme will end in disaster. That is entirely a supposition on his part; and with all this information and all this data before him for forming a practical opinion on the scheme, I say he should look carefully into it, and make liberal allowances for the possibilities of the scheme instead of condemning it wholesale, as he has done. What we want to show is that the scheme is necessary, and I think that has been shown. Further, we desire to prove that, if carried out, it will be a financial success; and in view of the statement I have made, I see no reason why any hon. member should doubt that this scheme will be a financial success. There is an enormous population on the goldfields languishing for water,

and every head of the population there has to pay to-day nearly £10 per annum for water for domestic purposes. Therefore, can it be expected that any working man will bring his wife and family to settle on the goldfields, when he has to pay £9 or £10 a head per annum for his domestic water supply? I say it is impossible to expect that; and the reason that this great colony to-day is being denuded of its resources and denuded of the gold it is raising is not the dividends sent home to British capitalists who have invested here, but it is denuded by the remittances of money made by the workmen employed here, who support their families in other countries. I say workmen can live in this colony and on the goldfields as well as they can live in any other colony; but the Government must make the conditions such that the men can reside there with comfort and without excessive cost; and I contend that the most important condition for enabling these men to settle down with their families on the goldfields is to provide a safe, a certain, and a cheap supply of domestic water. I am sure any hon. member who studies this question from a fair and impartial point of view will admit, notwithstanding all that has been said about the cost of food, that this question of a good and cheap supply of water is far more important and pressing than a reduction of food duties. I have shown in this House that the food duties on everything except meat in this colony amount to 6d. per head per week, and I have pointed out that this is no reason why working men should not bring their families to reside in this colony and on the goldfields. That is not the reason, but the reason why working men cannot bring their families to Western Australia is this great question of domestic water on the goldfields. That is the essence and the centre of the whole subject. I desire that the House should remember these facts; and that it is impossible to expect the working population of the goldfields to settle down there, unless you give them this supply of domestic water, which they need and can not do without. That is the crux of the whole question, and it is not for any hon. member to look upon this question from

that very narrow point of view that the colony is running the risk of spending two millions, or say two and a half millions of money—what for? For the purpose of giving protection and life to the population that is producing 95 per cent. of the total wealth of this colony to-day. The gold export is 90 to 95 per cent. of the exports of this colony, and that is the wealth of the country to-day.

MR. HOLMES: It does not all come from Coolgardie.

MR. MORGANS: Will the hon. member explain why he says that? What is the idea of the hon. member, in telling me a fact that I know so well? I should think that nobody in this House knows where the gold comes from better than I do, for I know exactly how much comes from Coolgardie, how much from Kalgoorlie, and how much from other parts of the goldfields. I am speaking now of a scheme which is for the benefit of the population that is producing this gold, and I say the case has been well made out and been proved beyond all doubt, that the reason why we cannot get a settled population on the goldfields is the want of this domestic water. The mover of this motion made one other remark that seemed strange to me, for he said the miners on the fields had not taken the trouble to look for water, because the Government proposed to take water up there. That is one of the most astonishing statements I have heard.

MR. A. FORREST: Who made that?

MR. MORGANS: The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes).

MR. GEORGE: He is a young member. Let him down lightly.

MR. MORGANS: He made that statement, and he confirms it now by saying they did not make the provision they would have made. I said the same thing just now, in other words. If they have made no provision, then how is it that the yield of gold in the colony has doubled during the last year? The inhabitants of the goldfields have simply been exercising the whole of their energy to get water enough to run their mills for crushing the ore, and they have spent thousands of pounds in sinking shafts and trying to get water, and, although in some cases they have got it, yet in the majority of cases they have not got

it. It is absurd for the hon. member to make such a statement. The proof of the increase in the output of gold shows he is entirely wrong, and that, in making the statement he did, he was certainly misleading the House. The mover of the motion made one other remark, that at the time this scheme was started our pockets were full and our heads were swollen. As to that statement, I know that in regard to some of the mine-owners of that epoch, their pockets were pretty empty and now they are fairly full. I know also that some of the mines, when the scheme was first talked about, had all they could do to find wages for payment on Saturdays, some of them being amongst the most important mines on the fields, and now they are in an exceedingly prosperous position. I am prepared to admit there was a halo of prosperity surrounding the country two years ago, and there was a mining boom, too. I also know that no level-headed business man like the hon. member (Mr. Holmes) would take serious notice of those things, or allow his head to be "swollen" at such a time. My head was not a bit swollen at that time, nor do I believe that a boom time would swell the heads of ordinary men of business.

MR. GEORGE: You have a good qualification to be made a Minister. Most of them get swollen heads.

MR. MORGANS: I will allow the Ministers to answer for themselves. I would like to refer to the meeting of representatives of the goldfields, held the other day in Kalgoorlie.

MR. VOSPER: If they had voted the other way, the representatives would be all right.

MR. MORGANS: No. What I notice is that there is one peculiar circumstance connected with the incident in Kalgoorlie, for it was only about three years ago that the whole of this separation business was gone through in Coolgardie, and, looking down the list of the men attending this meeting the other day, I notice that while many of them are men of the highest respectability, and I am prepared to say all of them are, still it is a peculiar fact that in the list of men attending that conference there were a large number who were mixed up with

the great separation movement in Coolgardie three years ago.

MR. MORAN: It comes along periodically.

MR. MORGANS: No. I think these men move from one prosperous centre to another. There we meet the names of gentlemen who were always stumping the streets of Coolgardie, some three years ago, demanding separation from Western Australia; and I believe the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) was there among them.

MR. MORAN: He was there, all right.

MR. MORGANS: I do not think he would do that now. I notice that nearly the whole of these men are the same men who were formerly carrying on the separation agitation in Coolgardie. The occasion then was that they were asking for a railway to Esperance.

THE PREMIER: Just when we built the railway to Coolgardie.

MR. MORGANS: Yes; they were agitating for a railway to Esperance.

THE PREMIER: That was the thanks they gave us.

MR. MORGANS: And I know the Premier was hissed on getting out at the station; that he was hooted at, and various other honours were extended to him.

THE PREMIER: I was hooted all over the place.

MR. MORGANS: It is a strange circumstance that we now have these same men in Kalgoorlie, and they are asking at Kalgoorlie exactly what they formerly asked for in Coolgardie, with this difference, that in Coolgardie their proposal was that the Imperial Government or the Colonial Secretary should be approached with a request that this colony be divided into two parts leaving the greater and better part to them, and the balance to the Premier and his friends down in Perth. They were to form a new Government. I do not know who was to be premier, but the whole thing was fixed up—premier, Government, and everything else.

MR. MORAN: I think the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) was to be "president."

MR. VOSPER: The star of the hon. member (Mr. Morgans) had not risen, in those days.

MR. MORGANS: No; it had not appeared on the horizon, because I was not then in the colony. But I point out this curious circumstance, that these are the very same men now; and the only difference in their programme is that, instead of setting up a new Government entirely, and dividing Western Australia into two countries under separate governments, they are going to annex their part of the country to South Australia.

MR. MORAN: I do not think Charlie Kingston wants them.

MR. MORGANS: There is one thing upon which I desire to congratulate Coolgardie; that notwithstanding all the agitation and all that was said in Coolgardie on this separation question, I congratulate Coolgardie on the fact that its people never suggested that they should be tied on to South Australia. They did want to have a Government of their own; and I think that reflects some credit on Coolgardie as compared to the other place. Now these gentleman have made a demand upon the Premier, and have told him that he was to promise within seven days, I do not know under what penalty, that there should be a re-distribution of seats. I do not take these gentlemen seriously, for even amongst such hair-brained men, some of them, I do not think you would find one who believes that any Government or any Premier in the world would allow himself to be brow-beaten into an arrangement of that sort. The thing is too absurd, on the face of it; therefore, I look upon it as one of the peculiar acts of these men, of which it is unnecessary to say much. They want to get up some kind of agitation for the purpose of calling attention to themselves.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is the "umbrella" crowd.

MR. MORGANS: One thing certain is that they do not represent the common sense, the prudence, the judgment, and the working power of the goldfields—they do not represent these on that particular proposition, anyway; and I will venture to say, so far as this water scheme is concerned, that if you took a plebiscite of the people on the goldfields next week, you would find 99 per cent. of the population in favour of carrying out this great enterprise at once.

MR. LEAKE: No.

MR. MORGANS: I am prepared to assert that, in this House.

MR. A. FORREST: I will say 100 per cent.

MR. GEORGE: Why not take a referendum throughout the whole country?

MR. MORGANS: I am speaking of the goldfields; and this scheme is intended to benefit the goldfields. The Commissioner of Railways made one or two statements I should like to traverse. He said the Government had expended, on behalf of the goldfields, £1,700,000. I am not prepared to deny that; but I do not think that is quite a fair way to put it to the House. I am sure my hon. friend had no desire to mislead the House in any way; but to put it in that way is not quite fair, because I contend that the expenditure on the goldfields should have placed against it, on the other side, what the goldfields have produced in the way of the sale of lands and other ways: and I contend that if a debtor and creditor account were opened as between the goldfields and the public exchequer of this colony, there would be a large balance in favour of the goldfields.

MR. A. FORREST: The advantages are mutual.

MR. MORGANS: I do not object to that. The Government have been very good to us, indeed, for they have made us railways, and we are content and pleased. We do not object that our resources should go into the common exchequer, for we should all do the best we can for the colony. At the same time, I would point out that a community of 20,000 working men, or, say 25,000, with a total population of 40,000 on the fields, a community which has really been self-supporting during the whole of the time it has been here deserves some sympathy at the hands of gentlemen like the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes); and I do not think that sympathy should be withdrawn from them, even when an expenditure of two and a half millions is proposed on their behalf. I think that is only right; and I even say the Government should run some risk, although in this case they run none, but I say the Government would be justified in running some risk in carrying out a scheme of this kind, for the benefit of some 40,000

people, that being about the number which would be benefited by it. There is one question with regard to the plates which I should like to ask. The Director of Public Works spoke about basic steel and acid steel. I should like to know if he can state the difference between the two, for I do not understand it.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: They are technical expressions. I do not know exactly what the difference is; but the professional men are in favour of the acid steel.

MR. MORGANS: I know what basic steel is; but the point I desire to arrive at is, as the member for the Murray (Mr. George) properly said, that any manufacturer who had to make a plate 28ft. long by 4ft. wide would naturally have to charge a much higher price per ton than one who made plates 9ft. by 3ft. or 8ft. by 4ft. as the usual size. This is true. I know from experience there are very few firms in England who can make plates of that size.

MR. GEORGE: It would be about 30ft. by 4ft. 6in.

MR. MORGANS: Yes; but the finished plate is about 28ft. by 4ft., and that is a very large plate. Some questions have arisen in connection with the cost of plates. Ordinary steel plate, I see by the last quotation for $\frac{1}{4}$ in. or 3-16th in., is £5 18s. 6d. per ton. That is the lowest quotation I have seen, and a recent one. At the present time the iron and steel market is in a lively condition; and at any moment there may be £1, or even £2, per ton added to the price of these plates. But, taking as a basis £6 per ton, if you put on to that the extra cost involved in manufacturing plates 28ft. by 4ft., and probably another £1 per ton for special steel, then it seems to me the price fixed by the Director of Public Works for the plates is not excessive. I would suggest this, and I agree with what the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) said in an interjection in connection with this point, that the plates should be paid for on the basis of the invoice; and, if that is done, let the manufacturer give a guaranteed invoice to the Agent General, showing that so many plates have been shipped at a certain net price, and then the Agent-General will advance on that invoice the full amount, less $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

In that case, the Government will have a perfect guarantee, and they need have no further anxiety about the matter.

MR. GEORGE: They might fairly pay the invoice value.

MR. MORGANS: No; I think it is a proper thing to deduct $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., because the Government must have some guarantee. Something has been said about Mr. Mephan Ferguson's patent. I know Mr. Ferguson has patented his pipe in this colony; but the patent is quite worthless, because the same type of pipe was made in England, to my knowledge, eight or nine years ago; and I saw samples of it at that time, made in exactly the same way, with grooved ribs and the plates closed by hydraulic power, just as in his patent. I do not mean that Mr. Ferguson has pirated that idea, for he may have invented the thing afresh, as many other men have done with their patents.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He may have seen an illustration of the thing somewhere.

MR. MORGANS: We must remember that the patent does exist in this colony, and that is the point. Whether it is good or bad is another thing, and I state with every confidence that nobody could come now into this colony and make those pipes without fighting that patentee first. Therefore, that is one reason, and a strong reason, why the Director of Public Works should give this contract to men who control the patent.

MR. GEORGE: The Government could make the pipes without paying any royalty.

MR. MORGANS: Yes; but they are not proposing to make pipes, but to have them made by contract, which is a different thing. I am perfectly certain the patent, in a general sense, is worth nothing; but yet its value would have to be tested in a court, before anyone else could use it; and I think it is only right that this should be pointed out, so that a good reason may be shown why the contract was given. With regard to the joint rings, and so on, that matter will no doubt be well looked after. I should like to add that in the United States at the present moment petroleum oil is being pumped a distance of 300 miles, under a head of 2,400ft. pressure.

MR. GEORGE: In one lift?

MR. MORGANS: I could not give you the amount of the lift; but I am simply trying to show the House that here we have a proposition to pump water about the same distance, and under a very much smaller head than is the case with that oil. We all know that petroleum oil is a substance which, in its crude state, is worth about $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per gallon; and therefore any leakage of such a valuable material as that in being pumped through a series of pipes would mean a serious loss as compared with the leakage of water through pipes. But it has been found that notwithstanding the permeable qualities of petroleum, and we know how petroleum can penetrate through some very dense substances, it has been found quite practicable to pump that oil a distance of 300 miles, under that head of pressure. This is a statement of fact, which should be taken note of by the House, so that members may know it is possible to pump these fluids successfully for these long distances.

MR. GEORGE: I do not think anyone has contested that.

MR. MORGANS: Oh, yes; many people have done so. I have had many discussions with hon. members on this very question. Some have doubted the practicability of this water scheme.

MR. VOSPER: They even pump acids in Queensland for a distance of 24 miles.

MR. MORGANS: I should like to refer to one circumstance in reference to a correspondent of a London newspaper, the *Economist*, who arrived on our eastern goldfields a short time ago for the purpose of making a report on the mines. I may say that I had the privilege of meeting that gentleman while he was there, and I have since had the privilege of reading his communications and his impressions of the goldfields of Western Australia. I would like to inform this House that I am astonished to find that many of the statements made by that gentleman are absolutely at variance with the facts. It does seem strange that a paper like the *Economist*, which by the way is not a particularly important paper, though it has some weight—

MR. VOSPER: It is a very trustworthy paper, is it not?

MR. MORGANS: I think it is, to some extent; but I am going to show now that it is not trustworthy in many ways.

MR. CONNOR: Like the *Sunday Times*.

MR. MORGANS: I was about to say that this gentleman—who is quite a young man, though I am prepared to admit that he has some general superficial knowledge, but cannot have been separated from his mother's apron strings very long, as he is certainly quite a youth—sent out here by this great paper for the purpose of criticising and reporting on the greatest goldfields on the continent of Australia. He came out and visited them, and he had *carte blanche* to visit all the mines around Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. The managers opened the doors of the mines to him, and even went as far as to allow him to sample their ores and record his opinions. He has gone back to London, and has made one of the most ridiculous, one of the most erroneous reports upon the Coolgardie goldfields that was ever made by anyone, or that could be made. He has made statements in regard to the mines that are not only absolutely false, but absolutely ridiculous; and it is difficult for any man to conceive that a person possessing claims to any knowledge as a mining engineer could possibly put his pen to paper and make statements with regard to the mines there that this young and inexperienced man has made.

MR. GEORGE: He would lose his billet if he did not make them.

MR. MORGANS: It is a misfortune for a paper like the *Economist* to send representatives of this kind out to these fields. I should like to ask hon. gentlemen what kind of confidence can the readers of the *Economist* now place in the statements made by this inexperienced young man, when they know, as they will find out, that these statements are absolutely inaccurate? What will they say? Will they feel much confidence in the mining columns of the *Economist*, when they find that the statements of this young man are misleading and erroneous?

MR. KENNY: They will say you did not give him a cheque.

MR. MORGANS: Probably they will; and they will be quite right, for I did not give him one. He said nothing about any mine I am interested in, I am very glad

to say; so I am not speaking from any feeling with regard to this matter. He did not see any mine in which I have a single share or interest of any kind. The *Economist* is a paper which circulates amongst investors and various people, and it has its weight and influence, although I do not consider it particularly weighty or influential. This young man has absolutely misled the editor of that paper with regard to the Coolgardie goldfields and to a large extent with regard to the Kalgoorlie goldfields also. He has given information which is absolutely untrue and misleading from beginning to end. Yet here is a journal represented as being one which it is safe to follow, with regard to mining in Western Australia. The writer was not satisfied with criticising the goldfields, but went further and undertook criticism of this water scheme as well. He said the scheme had been adopted for the purpose of providing Coolgardie with water, and that the people did not want it. That is about the essence of it.

A MEMBER: He must have had a yarn with the member for East Fremantle.

THE PREMIER: Was it summer time when he was up there?

MR. MORGANS: Yes, it was. He said they did not want it; that it was a wild scheme, and that the Government of Western Australia were wild in proposing it.

A MEMBER: He is about right.

MR. MORGANS: That is a matter of opinion; but, taking it for granted that the Government have done wrong in proposing to carry out this scheme, I say that a young man, inexperienced and incapable, coming out to a great country like Western Australia, staying six weeks on the goldfields, and then writing an opinion of them and of the water scheme has certainly more conceit than common sense. A man who, after staying six weeks, can profess to write a report on the Western Australian goldfields is either very clever, or very, very senseless. This scheme has been looked into by the best men in the country, and been advocated by most of the business men of the country; it is sought after by all the mining engineers on the fields, and has been approved by the best ability of Western Australia; yet this young man comes here and criticises and condemns

it, writing in the columns of a London newspaper against it. I mention this fact in order to show how little reliance can be placed upon the columns of some of those big journals in London, and how careful the public should be in reading statements in them. I beg to move the amendment that stands in my name, that all the words after the word "House" in line 1 be struck out, and the following words inserted in lieu thereof:—

It is advisable, in the interests of this colony, that the Coolgardie goldfields water supply scheme should be proceeded with at once, and this House urges the Government to do all things necessary to expedite the work.

MR. MORAN: I beg to second the amendment.

MR. QUINLAN: Perhaps I can claim that I have never yet spoken on this subject, either in public or in private, so far as to bind myself regarding the advisability, or otherwise, of the construction of this great work. I recognise the grave responsibility which all members representing the taxpayers of the country must feel as to whether this scheme should be carried out or otherwise. I have no hesitation in offering an opinion that the country would be wise in carrying it out in its entirety. I am aware that with a population such as we have in Western Australia at the present time it is a great weight upon our shoulders; and I am also aware of the responsibilities and risks we are undertaking relative to the success of the scheme in the future. But I feel justified, bearing in mind not only my own interests, but the interests of those I represent, in saying it will be for our welfare to have the work at once carried into effect. The proposal of the member for East Fremantle is somewhat late, seeing that the subject has been debated at least half-a-dozen times in this Assembly, and has been the principal tonic of conversation in the colony since it was first mentioned by the Government. Notwithstanding what has been said by those who would propose that the work should be carried out by private enterprise, the Government are justified in this undertaking. Outside the three important industries—the timber, wool, and pearl industries—there is not one to be compared with the mining industry; and it is admitted, not only in Australia, but in every part of the world, that Western

Australia has taken a foremost place in this important industry, which we recognise as having a great future before it, and one on which we rely for the future welfare of the country. We are, I assert, fully justified in this great and arduous undertaking. It may be argued in reference to the contract entered upon that the Government are not sufficiently careful in the proposed terms. I have had experience in a small way in contracts, and I take it that it is a usual condition to have a certain sum in hand, or a certain reservation. The member for North Perth (Mr. Oldham) and others, who have business in this direction as contractors, can vouch for the fact that it is always done in every contract, whether large or small, and the Government have, in this instance, as far as I am able to understand, made such reservation. Therefore, I think we need have no apprehension on that score. The next thing is that the manufacture of these pipes will take place in the colony, which will mean a large amount of employment. It will also mean that those large firms who have been fortunate enough to obtain the contract will establish themselves here; and I have no doubt whatever, from the results of offers from various contractors, not only in Australia, but England and other places, the Government have obtained at least, if not a bargain, a fair rate. In regard to the various contracts about to be entered upon, the Government have made certain variations with, I presume, the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief, who ought to be a competent authority on such a subject; and I believe they have made a good bargain. So far as I can learn, provision has been made in relation to one of the bogeys raised by those opposed to this scheme. I refer to the expansion or contraction which might take place in the laying of these pipes. The general feeling of the community is that, should the Government not carry out this scheme at once, it would be a fell blow to the country, and the interests of mining, because it would have the effect of making people think there is no faith in our mining industry, or the future of the colony.

MR. GEORGE: It simply means there is no money in the colony.

MR. QUINLAN: The money will be raised unquestionably. If we cry "stink-

ing fish," we shall not be able to raise the money.

MR. GEORGE: It is not crying "stinking fish." Everybody knows the state of the colony.

MR. QUINLAN: I believe in the future of the country, and feel more confidence than ever in regard to this scheme. Nothing can give greater confidence to capitalists in England, from whom we desire to borrow for this and other works necessary for the future prosperity of the country, than the fact that we ourselves, who are here at the very door of the goldfields, have faith and confidence, and are willing to risk our all in this great national undertaking. We have embarked, or agreed to embark, upon this scheme, and if we were now to retrace our steps it would be said we had no confidence in the country, and were willing to surrender it to croakers and those who feel that the bottom will fall out of it. An important matter, to my mind, has always been, and must always be, the question of the quantity of water we can supply; and those who are competent to express an opinion upon the subject have no hesitation in saying the rainfall is sufficient. The engineers have taken the necessary precaution, and can now say we shall have the quantity of water required per day, per month, or per annum, to supply the Coolgardie goldfields. We have then the question of consumption, and I understand that at present the people on the goldfields are willing to pay £5 per 1,000 gallons. Supposing the Government fix the charge at 3s. 6d., I think we need have no fear as to being able to provide for both interest and sinking fund, and assuming we had to charge 10s., the Government would have the matter well in hand. Then there is the question of supply along the route through which these pipes pass, and that is a material item regarding that portion of the colony which has not been blessed by nature. Unfortunately in Western Australia we are not able to boast of the means provided by nature such as they have in other portions of Australia, and therefore we have to fall back upon some artificial means. After the consideration given to the subject, and the investigation made not only here but in Eng-

land, by competent engineers, and those who are able to express an opinion, I think we are fully justified in this undertaking. If we are now able to provide the city of Perth, which is 22 miles distant from the reservoir that supplies us with water, surely we need not hesitate about supplying the goldfields. We were told a year or so ago by the Commissioner of Railways that two months' water cost £49,000. Assuming that we had to pay £100,000 for a six months' supply for railway purposes alone—and I am basing this upon the assumption that we might have a bad season, or one not to be compared with the present—that amount would be sufficient to provide interest and sinking fund upon the £2,000,000 for a year. This is something towards the outlay we would be put to, and the difference we could almost feel assured would be made up on the goldfields alone; and although this amount would place a considerable increase of taxation on the population, and while I may claim to be one who is very cautious in business matters and nearly a croaker in many things, yet I am bold enough to say I have no fear in regard to this immense scheme, and I think the country need not fear its being undertaken by the Government. I am indebted to the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) for a deal of information in regard to the matter; and although I have felt that we had passed the stage when it was necessary to consider whether the country required this scheme or not, yet the fact that some doubt has been thrown on the necessity for this scheme, or the intention of Parliament to go on with it, has caused alarm throughout this city and the country generally. I hope to-night will settle the question, and that the scheme will not occupy the attention of this House any longer. I am prepared to support the amendment, and hope it will put this question to rest once for all.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I notice that the debate has wandered away from the subject of the original motion. As far as I understand it, there is a proposal to bring under the consideration of the House the approval or reversal of the action of the Government in having arranged to

accept tenders for the construction of the pipes and for works in connection with the Coolgardie goldfields water scheme; and hon. members have wandered from the subject, for we have gone through separation, federation, annexation, and vituperation; and it seems the whole question has become extremely complicated, without necessity. When I saw the motion tabled, I did not think I was to be called on to vote as to whether the scheme as a whole should be extinguished or be gone on with; and I never imagined that the motion was an attempt to wipe out the scheme altogether, for I thought it was intended that this House should have some control over the acceptance of tenders in connection with the most important work which the Australian colonies have ever undertaken. I contend that we cannot possibly be too careful in dealing with a scheme of this magnitude, and consequently I am prepared to vote for the motion; but, on the other hand, we have an amendment by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), urging the Government to proceed with the scheme immediately. I stated in this House, only recently, that I was anxious the Government should go on with this scheme; and I find myself now placed in the anomalous position of being able to vote for the amendment, and also for the motion. I cannot understand why all the merits and demerits of the scheme should be dragged into the question again.

THE PREMIER: You should remember the speech with which the mover introduced the subject.

MR. VOSPER: I was not aware of that. Having explained the peculiarly anomalous position in which I find myself, I may say, in reference to the remarks on the Coolgardie convention made by the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), it is not necessary for me to say anything about the proposed annexation of the goldfields to South Australia, for that is not within the pale of practical politics, but I would like to make a protest against what was said this evening by the member for East Coolgardie in reference to that convention. It was suggested that the Government would be in some degree justified in deferring this scheme or with-

drawing it, simply because the people on the goldfields had thought fit to take a certain action. I do say it is a highly improper thing, and a most grossly irregular and reprehensible proceeding, for the Government to say that, because persons take up political views which the Government do not approve of, therefore the Government will not proceed with certain public works. People on the goldfields have surely a right to air their political grievances.

MR. MORAN: They refuse the work itself, necessarily so, by their action.

MR. VOSPER: I do not think the Convention has done that; or, if so, it has exceeded the power with which it was entrusted. As far as the claim for redistribution of seats is concerned, it is a perfectly just claim.

MR. MORAN: No one denies that.

MR. VOSPER: I do not think any goldfields member will vote against such a proposition, and I do not think the goldfields convention should be made to suffer for opinions which we all share.

MR. MORAN: We do not share opinions on that question.

MR. VOSPER: If it be true that a plebiscite of the goldfields would show that 99 per cent. of the people on the fields are in favour of this water scheme, so I say a plebiscite would equally show that 99 per cent. of the people are in favour of a redistribution of seats. I shall vote for the amendment on this question before the House, because it is essential for the prosperity of the country that this scheme should not hang fire any longer, and it is about time the colony should be in earnest on the question, and if it is not so it will make us the laughing-stock of the world at large. On the other hand, if we confine ourselves purely to the question of the motion itself, and merely ask that the House should be allowed to examine the tenders and give advice to the Government before any tenders are finally accepted, then the motion will be innocuous. If the amendment is not carried, I shall vote for the motion.

MR. WILSON (Canning): My views on the Coolgardie water scheme are so well known, that it will require very few words to drive home the argument I have made in this House over and over again

render documents given them for value received—why they should surrender them to anybody.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: That is under the insurance provision.

MR. WILSON: There is no need for that. We need not surrender. That word "surrender" appears to me a very ugly term. When I surrender a thing, I give up all hold on it, all control of it. The Government are to absolutely give up this security. I do not see why documents of such enormous value should be given back to the contractors.

THE PREMIER: All the shipments will not come at once.

MR. WILSON: But a cargo of those plates will mean a lot of money. I see no reason why these shipments should not be cleared by the Government officials, or why the documents should not be sent to the Government agents at Fremantle. Surely the contractor need not pass the entries.

THE PREMIER: I agree with you that we must be very careful.

MR. WILSON: Money can be raised on such documents.

MR. MONGER: Not much, in the circumstances.

MR. WILSON: Paragraph 11 deals with the advance payment to be made in the old country. We are to advance £8 5s. per length, I think.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: No; per ton.

MR. WILSON: We are to advance £8 5s. per ton of plates and bars shipped in respect of this contract. It has been pointed out by previous speakers that this appears to be rather excessive—more than the f.o.b. value. The Director of Public Works interjected then that he could vary it, and that he would see to it. If that condition can be altered, why cannot these other matters be altered in the contract? If the Minister can alter a provision of that description, and simply advance the f.o.b. value, I take it he can alter the other terms of the contract. I, for one, shall be very sorry to see a clause of this description remain in the contract. It ought to be clearly laid down that the sum advanced against the raw material shall be the cost f.o.b.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Suppose there is a rise in the cost of plates?

MR. WILSON: Make the £8 5s. your maximum, and make the minimum the f.o.b. cost.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Oh, that is right—"heads I win; tails you lose."

MR. WILSON: It strikes me the Director of Public Works will have some difficulty in varying this agreement. It appears to me to be pretty complete, and all signed and sealed and delivered, as far as the contractors are concerned. I hope he will find it as easy to alter as he thinks. There is only one other matter in connection with this contract; that is, the question of the joint rings, amounting to about £35,000 in value, having been let without calling for tenders.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The amount is £70,000.

MR. WILSON: I think that ought not to take place. Of course, I can quite understand that, when you are discussing with contractors a matter involving a million of money, you are apt to think very lightly of £70,000; but, if you take a £70,000 contract alone, you are apt to think it is a pretty big contract. They have no right to let a contract of £70,000 without calling public tenders within the colony and outside of it; and, further, I would like to point out that, to my mind, the price for these joint rings will leave a very handsome profit.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: It is a wrought steel ring, you know.

MR. WILSON: I know. I have roughed it up, and I consider there will be a handsome profit; indeed, I should not be surprised to see from £15,000 to £20,000 profit on the contract; and, what is more, some of our existing engineering works in the colony would have taken up the contract. Why not give them a chance? Why give this contract to men to whom we have already given such a large order?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; but we hold these men responsible for their rings and everything else. We say to them: "You are responsible for the lot."

MR. WILSON: You can hold everybody responsible. At any rate, you should have put this up to public competition. We have no right to let contracts privately; and we do not know where such things will end. I believe the members of the Forrest Ministry are pure in their motives and in their actions; but they do not know where corruption creeps in, and if they let contracts for £75,000 without calling for public tenders, corruption will creep in some day or somehow. They are opening the door to it, and must not be surprised if it stares them in the face. I consider the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) was perfectly justified in bringing down his motion. I consider the speech of the Director of Public Works absolutely proved the justice and necessity of the motion; and I consider, further, that his interjections, and the little conversations he has had with me across the House, have also proved that it is a good thing this contract has been brought into the Chamber and discussed here. We cannot have too much ventilation of a matter of this magnitude. Certainly it would not be considered a large work in the old country, where contracts amounting to millions are entered into almost every month; but for a country with a small population such as in Western Australia, we cannot but consider it a very large undertaking, and one we cannot be too careful in consenting to. I hope the Director of Public Works, when he finds he can alter the clauses and conditions of this contract, will take these matters into careful consideration, and see that the contract is altered accordingly, so that the interests of the country may be duly safeguarded. I further hope he will not ratify the proposed contract for the joint rings, but will call further tenders, and give other foundries a chance of supplying the large quantity of material embraced in this £70,000 order.

MR. OLDHAM (North Perth): Hon. members who have addressed themselves to this question have for the most part been somewhat discursive in dealing with it. From what I understand of the motion, it does not mean that the mover desires to place any obstruction in the way of this scheme being carried out. I think it is generally considered, by the

House and the country, that some system of water supply for the goldfields is absolutely necessary; and all we are at variance upon is as to what is the method by which we shall supply the goldfields people with water for domestic purposes, and supply the mines for extracting gold. We are all agreed upon that; and, as I look through the remarks I made last session, I find I then stated that it was desirable that the Government, rather than private enterprise, should control this water supply. I have not changed my opinion in that respect one iota. I believe now, as I believed then, that it would be unwise for the Government of this country to place the control of the great mining industry of this colony in the hands of a private company; and that is what it would mean, if we were to give over this water supply to private enterprise. Any person or any company having the power at any time to interfere with the working of this scheme, to practically turn off the tap when the mines were in the midst of their operations, would hold the key of the situation. But yet the motion which is before the House is not pledging us to abandon the scheme. The motion has my entire and hearty support, for it says, "No tender for the supply of pipes for the Coolgardie water scheme should be accepted without the approval of this House." I think that is a proper course for this House to adopt. Surely there cannot be any objection to the fullest information being laid on the table and given to hon. members, before they see the country pledged to this large expenditure of money. I recognise this as a somewhat unusual course for the Government and the House to adopt; but we are dealing with unusual circumstances. We all know that the custom has been followed—not in every case—the custom of accepting the lowest tender has been followed in most cases, but not in every case, without any further reference to this House. But we have built railways before. We have built a Mint before: we have built an Observatory; and I suppose that, if we keep the Forrest Ministry in office, we shall build them again.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And ball-rooms.

MR. OLDHAM: Yes; I suppose we shall have more ball-rooms. But we have never built a Coolgardie water scheme; and it seems to me that the motion before the House is one deserving of the support of every member who is desirous, not of blocking or killing the scheme, but of eliciting the fullest possible information that can be obtained concerning it.

MR. MONGER: All will not agree with you there.

MR. OLDHAM: I know the hon. member who has just interjected will not agree with me there. The hon. member is not allowed to do so.

MR. DOHERTY: You may thank your leader for that.

MR. MONGER: From whom do I take my instructions?

MR. OLDHAM: Hon. gentlemen opposite are, as a rule, like a flock of sheep, always ready to follow the bell-wether. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), who charges other people with objecting to everything and never supporting anything, is himself always prepared to support everything. Nothing is too wild, nothing too mad, nothing too extravagant, for the hon. member who represents the most important town on the goldfields to support—he will support anything, especially if it goes anywhere near Coolgardie. I would like to point out to that hon. member's constituents, and to make some reference, for their benefit, to one or two remarks he has made to-night with respect to his comparison between the food duties and the water-supply. He stated, and I think his arithmetic is wrong, though I accept it for the purposes of my argument, that the food duties mean only 6d. per week per head of the population.

MR. DOHERTY: That is right.

MR. OLDHAM: One hon. member says that is right; but I think I heard him state during last session, or if it was not he it was one of the goldfields members, or perhaps it was stated this session, that if these food duties were removed we should immediately have a reduction of wages on the goldfields.

MR. DOHERTY: I did not say that.

MR. OLDHAM: Someone from the goldfields stated that the mine-owners were only desirous of getting the food

duties removed so that they would have an opportunity of reducing wages. The hon. member (Mr. Morgans) or his friends seem to me to have proved conclusively that, if 6d. per week is going to be used as an excuse for the reduction of wages, how much more excuse will there be when you reduce the cost of living by means of this water supply scheme by 10s. per week per head? If there is any truth in the assumption that the removal of the food duties would result in a reduction of wages, then the people on the goldfields must clearly recognise that they will have a reduction of wages as soon as they get the water up to Coolgardie.

THE PREMIER: They will have some comfort, any way.

MR. OLDHAM: The hon. member (Mr. Morgans) seemed to me to be very innocent in his comparisons. He endeavoured to show, in dealing with the question of pumping, that the Coolgardie water scheme was bound to be a financial success, because in America they pump petroleum oil a distance of 300 miles. I suppose we are all agreed that, so far as the mechanical or engineering portion of this work is concerned, it can be done, and that it is only a matter of money. But there is a great difference between pumping an article worth 3½d. a gallon 300 miles, and pumping an article worth only 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons 300 miles. Whilst the operation could not but be profitable in the one case, we may question whether it would pay to pump an article worth only 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons the same distance. I am surprised at the insidious arguments used by hon. members for the purpose of getting this motion rejected, and the amendment of the member for Coolgardie carried; and I am also surprised at the way in which members represent that a large amount of employment will be given by adopting this scheme. Working men are not so simple as to believe that this expenditure of money is going to provide them with employment. The working classes of my constituency fully recognise that the expenditure might find them employment, but they also recognise that, if the money is not expended judiciously, it cannot be good for them in the long run—that it cannot be good for the people who are going to stop in the colony.

The carrying out of this work may provide temporary employment for a number of people, but surely hon. members will see that if some of those ornaments which the Government have put in various quarters of the colony had not been erected, money would have been expended in other directions which would have been more beneficial to the bulk of the community. I am perfectly prepared to support the Government in carrying out this scheme. I recognise as well as any representative of the goldfields that it is absolutely necessary people on the fields should have a good supply of water; but surely the Government can have no objection to laying on the table of the House the fullest information possible before they enter into this contract. The hon. member who submitted this motion has rendered good service to the country, even though the motion be rejected. If the Commissioner of Railways will accept a suggestion from hon. members on the Opposition side of the House, he will hesitate before he gives those people, whoever they are—Mr. Mephan Ferguson or Messrs. Hoskins—the contract for the joints. There are manufacturers in the colony who can manufacture these joints quite as well as Mr. Mephan Ferguson, and it would be beneficial if the work could be distributed to some extent over various portions of the colony. I have no hesitation in saying, that in various portions of my constituency there are men who are skilled in this particular class of work, and that this work might be given to them instead of going to the Midland Junction or some other place. With these few words I leave the matter. I intend to vote for the motion, not that I have any intention of blocking the scheme, but only for the purpose of eliciting the fullest information possible.

MR. WALTER JAMES (East Perth): On several occasions on which this matter has been before the House, except perhaps the first occasion, I have not addressed myself to the question. At first I thought we were perhaps committing ourselves to a work which was greater and more burdensome than our shoulders could bear. Whether the result will or will not justify the anticipations of the Government, and I hope most sincerely it will, yet I would prefer to see this burden-

some responsibility placed upon other shoulders. I have often expressed my opinion adversely to putting into the hands of private individuals work which can be undertaken by the State, and I realise there is perhaps no work which has more urgent reasons for being done by the State than this. Realising all this, I cannot hide from my mind the fact that the risks are great, that the results of failure might be disastrous; and I would not run the risk, but would put the work on private enterprise, and would pay one million more for an assured success, rather than have on our shoulders the responsibility of the undertaking. My doubts are not altogether removed by the fact that we have expert testimony in favour of the scheme. I admit the weakness of my position, and that we ought to bow to expert testimony. But as one finds in private life, so we find in public life, that there may be a feeling within oneself that there is a certain amount of risk, and that however good the promise may be, one feels disinclined to accept the responsibility which may be entailed. I hope I am entirely wrong in this case, and that the success of the venture will more than justify the faith of those who have committed the country to it. The matter has been discussed frequently, and the time has arrived when we should recognise it is too late to reverse the decision of the House and the country. The matter has been before the House and the country, and has been discussed thoroughly. So long as we have responsible government, and we are committed by a majority to this particular policy, if we were to retrace our steps we should be open to the accusation, not so much that we are afraid of the work, but that we are afraid of the colony in connection with the work. That should be borne in mind; and therefore we should recognise the decision of the House, and see that the work is carried out. Whilst I recognise that, I do not think the time devoted to the discussion has been wasted. This is a most important contract, involving a larger sum than any other contract carried out in this colony. When I say a larger sum, I do so by way of comparison, bearing in mind that, in this particular instance, we are dealing more or less with a new work not very common in

any part of the world. If it simply involved a question of spending money for railway construction, we should be dealing with a matter of which we have had a large experience. But in such an enormous system of canalisation as that proposed, one cannot shut one's eyes to the risk we run; and, for that reason, I should be glad to think the Government, in settling the terms of the contract—not only the legal terms, but the practical professional terms—have taken into consideration the opinions, not only of the London experts, but also of some men who can bring to bear, on the subject, that practical knowledge which is so essential. I understand from the Director of Public Works that the contract has been approved in London. I do not want to say anything very heinous or shocking, but that statement of the Minister does not altogether reassure me. I should like the contract to be submitted to practical men, who have a knowledge of local conditions which cannot be conveyed by words or written descriptions. No money would be wasted in obtaining local professional assistance and guidance on the contract. If we are to spend this money, members should bear in mind that what we have to secure is not perhaps the full value for the money, but rather that claims which might involve three times that amount may not be brought. We have to guard against disappointment and failure which may subject us to a loss of three times the amount now involved. A few weeks delay might be desirable in connection with a work like this.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A little delay might save money.

MR. JAMES: The urgent pressing of the work forward might in itself cause delay. Hon. members can realise how serious a delay would take place if there were some little breach in connection with the contract. Look at what has cropped up in connection with this work, which we have been talking about almost for years. We have had before us suggestions and professional advice from advisers of the Government, as to the construction of a dam at Mundaring; and it has only recently struck the advisers of the Government, and members of the House, that there were certain things called "riparian rights" to be provided

for. As a lawyer who ought to have seen this clearly, I am as much to blame as any member of the House for not pointing out the difficulty.

A MEMBER: You did not get a fee.

MR. JAMES: I do not think any hon. member would say I require a fee for pointing out a matter of this kind. It has been my fortune to refuse fees for coming into this House, and I hope I shall continue to refuse them. The instance I have given is a glaring one of a point overlooked. I should like the Government to have other advice besides that of the Engineer-in-Chief and the London engineers. If we can by an expenditure of money, even though it be thousands, obtain good professional advice here in Australia, we ought to do so. Such money would be well spent, and in the long run would prove to be time saved. There is also a very important question in connection with the legal aspect of the case. I am not at all satisfied that the contract is sufficient, simply because it has been prepared in London. We know out here, perhaps more than they do in England, of the wiles of contractors. My experience of them is this, that if they see any possible loophole in a contract, they will seize on the opportunity to take all the benefits they can from that loophole. The legal aspect of the contract should be looked into carefully. The Government ought not to sign this contract until they have submitted it to the best legal authority in the colony; and let the Government pay a good fee for the services of that legal authority, so that we may see that all possible contingencies are provided against. Even if the Government spend £1,000 or £5,000 in obtaining this legal opinion, the Government may thus save ten times that amount before the work is finished. The country is pledged to the scheme and, beyond taking steps such as we have suggested and proposed, which might not result in the good we expect, still these steps should be taken out of abundant caution. We are committed to the scheme, and our main object should be to secure as great a benefit to the colony by the construction of these pipes as we can. The Government have done that by providing that the pipes should be made in the colony, and I hope they may be successful in obtaining great

we have had the best of the money, and we have tested it. I am calling for the cement, the value of the £7,000 largest peruse work would be der. I involving pipes, of bulk.

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benefits from that. But I should like as far as possible to make that step—which I believe is a wise step—as effective as possible, and to see that it will serve and secure all the good objects that the Government have in view. We are launching ourselves on this great Government scheme which will employ a large number of men. It is the one scheme out of which the colony should receive the most benefit. In connection with railway contracts, the greater part of the money is spent outside the colony, but in this scheme we should receive the greater portion of the money in the colony. I hope the Government will avail themselves of the benefits which the contract offers. There is a risk of the contract leading to the importation of an undesirable class of cheap labour, and I want that to be avoided. I want the Government to secure that the money will be spent among people who will ultimately become settlers in Western Australia. I do not want to see introduced here a lot of cheap labourers who will leave behind them an undesirable class of immigrants. Opportunity should be taken of attracting a working population, so far as these works will attract, and of absorbing the present unemployed, and others as well. If we want to attract working men who will settle amongst us—if we want to attract married men—we must not offer wages which are comparatively small, and on which a married man cannot live, and we shall only secure the best results from the expenditure of the money by the Government, through their ensuring that the works are carried out as far as possible by day labour, employed on the eight hours system. I want to move an amendment to that effect in connection with the amendment now before the House. I want the Government to adopt that system, the theory of which has been adopted in connection with Government contracts in the past. I want the Government to insist on those who carry out the contract, that the work shall be done by day labour employed on the eight hours' system. If we adopt that principle now—I simply think we are more attached to the theory than the practice of it—but if we adopt that principle, we are adopting a theory which has been recognised in the old country in works far greater

than we are committing ourselves to now. Therefore I desire to move the amendment which I have indicated.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot move that now. The hon. member must wait until the House has agreed to insert the words of the amendment now before the House.

MR. JAMES: I shall be able to move it then?

THE SPEAKER: If the House agrees to insert the amendment of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) and the words are inserted, then the hon. member can move to add the words to the motion, as amended.

MR. JAMES: Then I shall propose my amendment subsequently.

MR. HOLMES (in reply): When moving the motion which we have been discussing to-night, I think the House will admit I was perfectly candid in the statements I made. I stated I had a dual object in view. One object was to peruse the tender about to be accepted for this gigantic and important work, and the other was to delay the scheme until the prospects of the colony were brighter. I feel I have not wasted the time of the House in the action I have taken, and I feel also the result will be beneficial to the country generally. I thank the Director of Public Works for having laid the particular tender about to be accepted on the table of the House, and given us the opportunity of perusing it. He has given us the opportunity of having some light thrown on the tender referred to. I think, to elicit the statement we have from the Director of Public Works to-day, is in itself sufficient to justify my action in this matter. When moving the motion, I never suggested that I had any suspicion as to the manner in which the department were dealing with this tender. I never attempted to cast reflections on any individual connected with the department. I wanted full information on this tender, which is without doubt the biggest we have ever undertaken or will ever undertake.

MR. DOHERTY: I hope not.

MR. HOLMES: But having perused the tender, and having elicited this statement—which I will deal with later on—from the Director of Public Works, the least we can say is this: the depart-

die now. You will not get the scheme farther than Coolgardie for £2,500,000. If you can sell 5,000,000 gallons per day as suggested, and want to increase your supply, this scheme will not provide an increased supply.

THE PREMIER: It would do something at any rate.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Let us get rid of the 5,000,000, first.

MR. HOLMES: We have it that an enormous sum has been spent for tanks all over the colony, that the tanks will not catch the water, and that if they catch it they will not hold it. The department admit they cannot build a proper tank, and yet this House has confidence to let the Public Works Department carry out this scheme!

THE PREMIER: I do not think they ever admitted it.

MR. HOLMES: This motion has only been in the House a week. Judging from the remarks of the Director of Public Works, people immediately became depressed, and now they see there is no hope of the motion being carried the depression is gone. We have heard from him the result of interviews which had been held between him and his department and the contractors. It would be interesting to know what arrangement was arrived at between the contractors, Messrs Ferguson and Hoskins. It seems to me that Mr. Ferguson knew his pipes were the pipes that were to be decided upon. We all knew, in fact, that his pipes were to be used. I am quoting from the Director of Public Works himself. Ferguson puts in a very high tender; Hoskins has a somewhat similar pipe which he quotes very low. Now they have a low tender from Hoskins, but they want Ferguson's pipes. Then they tell Hoskins to go to Ferguson and make the best of this job.

THE PREMIER: You have not heard the true version of it. It is the other way about.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: He knew of it because it was announced in the tender.

MR. GEORGE: Was there not a conference in the Engineer-in-Chief's office, for the purpose of bringing these gentlemen together? That is another fact.

MR. HOLMES: There were conferences, and all manner of things. Mr.

Ferguson knew that his pipes were the pipes required. Hoskins and he were told to put their heads together, decide on the matter and come back.

MR. GEORGE: It took place in the Engineer-in-Chief's office.

MR. HOLMES: Now, if this is the way the contracts have been run, I have not much confidence in the manner in which the scheme will be carried out. We have an admission by the Director of Public Works—

THE PREMIER: Interpreted by you.

MR. HOLMES: Well, interpreted by me. We have the absolute facts. I am gifted with ordinary common sense though I am not an expert on this matter. The Premier admits himself that when it comes to a deal, I can make a very fair deal; and if I had anything to do with this transaction, it would have been dealt with in a far more business like way than it has been dealt with. We have already had an admission from the Director of Public Works that the contractors made an allowance, when adjusting, of £15,000. Well, if the screw had been put on, and competition brought in, there might have been considerably more allowed. The contractors were there to make the best they could of the job, and they worked it in such a way that the officers of the department were wedded to the Ferguson pipe and the contractors, who were going to get the best price they could, actually took £15,000 less than their original quotation. If they had been forced by competition, they might have reduced the price still further. It is proposed to advance the full value for the steel in London. It is also suggested that the price of steel might advance, at any time £2 a ton. If it does, what is to prevent the contractor from supplying his steel as long as the price is low, and immediately the price is raised, forfeiting his £5,000, and leaving the Government to get the material at the higher price a best they can? There is no provision made against such a contingency.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There is no penalty whatever.

MR. HOLMES: There is no provision to secure the Government against anything of that kind. It is admitted, I think, by the Director of Public Works

that the price of steel may advance. If it does, in what position will this country be in respect of this work? We will have to pay £2 a ton increase on steel, and the contractor will forfeit his £5,000.

MR. GEORGE: The contractor will make a contract with the makers of the steel.

MR. HOLMES: Yes; but if the Government had made the contract with the makers of the steel, they would have known exactly what they must pay for the steel. The contractor would have had the responsibility on his shoulders instead of the Government. Apart from altering the tender altogether, we do not know what other concessions have been made to these contractors, which were never offered to the public when tenders were called. I am sure, if it had been known throughout the civilised world, it would have been different. But it was not known everywhere that the Government were prepared to finance any contractor in this manner. If tenderers had known that—if they knew they could speculate in this way on a contract running into about 1½ millions—they would have risked the forfeit of their £5,000, and made the most they could out of the contract. The Director of Public Works said to-day the Government had a month in which to sign this contract, and in the meantime the Government would carefully go through it, and make the necessary alterations. Now I should like to know how that compares with the statement made by the Premier the other night. He told the House that, if it had not been for the motion of the hon. member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) the tenders would have been signed that day. Now we have the Director of Public Works, who says they have a month to reconsider the contract, and make the necessary alterations. If that be so, my motion has only got the department out of a fix, and I am to be thanked rather than blamed by the Government and the country. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) referred to my action in regard to the reappropriation of money for the Fremantle harbour works. My action in that matter was perfectly clear. I stated distinctly, when the Reappropriation Bill was introduced, that I would oppose any item of new works; but it

was different with the case of works in hand which had to be completed, such as the Fremantle harbour works. If we do not continue that work, and keep ahead of the accumulation of sand, the money already spent will be wasted. My action in supporting the reappropriation of money on that scheme, which was in hand and must be completed, was therefore perfectly justified. The member for Coolgardie also stated that if my motion was carried, it meant death to the scheme, and that just brings me back to where I started from. I stated distinctly that, if this scheme now came before the House for the first time, hardly any member would be found prepared to support it; and here we have to-night the member for Coolgardie deliberately stating that, if you do not strike the iron when it is hot, you will never get it. Suggestions have been made about want of confidence, and all manner of things. Well, I am just about tired of them.

A MEMBER: Why do you not sit on the other side of the House?

MR. HOLMES: I will tell the hon. member and this House that I will sit where I like; and if it comes to a vote of want of confidence, and I think it is in the interests of the country to do so, I will vote—

MR. GEORGE: With the Government.

MR. HOLMES: No; against the Government.

MR. DOHERTY: You and the member for the Murray (Mr. George) would be a fine pair.

MR. HOLMES: There are other matters connected with this scheme that appear to have been altogether overlooked. They seem to have made up their minds that it will cost 2½ millions, and that here the thing will end. The Premier has overlooked one item of about £200,000. If I am wrong, he will correct me. When this scheme was brought before the House, the Premier stated he would be able to borrow this 2½ millions at par. I think it is now pretty generally admitted that, with a 3 per cent. loan on the London market, if we get it at 93, that will be about the best deal we can make. The result is we lose £7 on every £100, or £70,000 on every million. If the work

cost 3 millions, there is £210,000 that has been lost and not accounted for.

MR. GEORGE: It is not lost, but gone before.

MR. HOLMES: That is about a quarter of a million of money, which has never been taken into consideration at all.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It has to be provided for.

MR. HOLMES: It all leads to this, that the work will not be constructed for 2½ millions; and, if it is not constructed for 2½ millions, you will have to sell more than 5 million gallons of water a day to make it pay; and you cannot sell more than that quantity, for the present scheme will not take more than that to Coolgardie.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: That is the minimum quantity.

MR. MORGANS: We can easily get 8 million gallons through.

MR. HOLMES: I notice that, although the clauses in the proposed contract are very loosely prepared, there is one clause that protects members of the Government from being personally liable. When it comes to a matter of self, they can look after themselves; and when it is a matter for the country, they should be equally careful. That is a very desirable clause for members of the Government.

THE PREMIER: It is in every contract.

MR. HOLMES: It is very desirable in this one, at all events. I need not say more, because the matter has been decided. We know that. We can gather from the debate that many members are here to-night to vote who would not be here if their votes were not required by the Government. It is amusing, when a vote is to be taken, to see these hon. gentlemen turn up from all directions, and disappear again almost as suddenly when the thing has been decided.

THE PREMIER: That is good.

MR. HOLMES: I feel sure I have done my duty in bringing this matter before the House.

THE PREMIER: We are much obliged.

MR. HOLMES: And my duty will be, when the amendment is carried, to do the best I can to further this great work, which will either make or break the country. If I can assist in helping it to make

the country, I will do so. Then I shall be sorry for all I said to-night, and glad the undertaking has realised the anticipations of the Government. My opinion is, and I am going to express it, that the Government will be in trouble; and I shall then be able to say, "I told you so."

THE PREMIER: Oh, you will not do that I am sure.

MR. HOLMES: Hon. members, in discussing this matter, have gone pretty wide of the mark; but my motion is that "In the opinion of this House, no tenders should be accepted for the Coolgardie water scheme without the approval of this House." Any member who listened to the statement of the Director of Public Works this afternoon would come to the conclusion that no tender should be accepted for such an important work without the approval of the House. My motion says we should not accept tenders without the approval of the House, and we have evidence which justifies me in asking the House to support that motion.

Amendment (MR. MORGANS'S) put, and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	25
Noes	...	...	...	4

Majority for ... 21

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. S. Burt	Mr. George
Mr. Connor	Mr. Leake
Mr. Doherty	Mr. Wilson
Sir John Forrest	Mr. Holmes
Mr. A. Forrest	(Teller)
Mr. Gregory	
Mr. Hall	
Mr. Higham	
Mr. Hubble	
Mr. James	
Mr. Kenny	
Mr. Lefroy	
Mr. Locke	
Mr. Monger.	
Mr. Morgans	
Mr. Oats	
Mr. Oldham	
Mr. Pennefather	
Mr. Piesse	
Mr. Quinlan	
Mr. Throssell	
Hon. H. W. Venn	
Mr. Vosper	
Mr. Wood	
Mr. Moran	
	Teller

Amendment thus passed, and the motion amended accordingly.

FURTHER AMENDMENT PROPOSED.

MR. WALTER JAMES (East Perth): I beg to move as a further amendment, that the following words be added to the motion:

And to provide that such works shall, as far as possible, be carried out by day labour, employed on the eight-hours system.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I am sorry I cannot support the hon. member for East Perth in this matter, and I will briefly tell the House why. The House has decided, rightly according to the majority and wrongly according to the minority, to accept the contract. It is too late to impose conditions to hamper the persons whose tenders have been accepted. The carrying out of the work will necessarily have to be carried out under the rules of the different trades unions. The Iron-plate Workers' Association work under the eight-hour principle, the Amalgamated Engine Fitters' Association work under the eight-hour principle, and no firm connected with any engineering establishment in the colonies would have any idea of working under any other system than the eight-hour system. The hon. member may say, that being so, why not add the words to the contract? There would be no objection, but it is just possible in the manufacture of pipes there may be a question of piece-work. In the handling and stocking of the plates, for instance, if I were carrying out the contract I should carry out that portion of the work by day labour; not for the purpose of "sweating" the men, but with a view of getting the work done more expeditiously. The amendment must tend to hamper the contractors. I shall oppose the amendment.

Further amendment (MR. JAMES'S) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	9
Noes	...	...	...	19
—				
Majority against	...	...	...	10

Ayes.

Mr. Gregory
Mr. Holmes
Mr. James
Mr. Kenny
Mr. Oldham
Mr. Vosper
Mr. Wallace
Mr. Wood
Mr. Doherty
(Teller)

Noes.

Hon. S. Burt
Mr. Conolly
Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. George
Mr. Hall
Mr. Higham
Mr. Hubble
Mr. Leake
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Locke
Mr. Monger.
Mr. Morgans
Mr. Pennefather
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Quinlan
Hon. H. W. Venn
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Connor
(Teller)

Further amendment thus negatived.
This concluded the debate.

JURY BILL.

The Legislative Council having sent a message, stating that the Council insisted on certain amendments previously made in the Jury Bill, the message was read by the Clerk.

Further amendment thus negatived.

Motion as previously amended put, and passed on the voices.

THE SPEAKER: I wish to mention, with respect to this message, that no reasons for insisting on the Council's amendments have been sent to this House, as is provided for both by the Council's Standing Orders and by those of this House. This message can be considered to-morrow; but I think the proper course will be, when it is considered, to send the message back and ask the Council to forward the reasons to this House.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.16 p.m. till the next day.