

Legislative Council,*Thursday, 27th June, 1895.*

Sessional committees: appointment of—Chairman of Committees: appointment of—Address-in-Reply: presentation of—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 12.30 o'clock p.m.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

On the motion of the hon. the MINISTER FOR MINES the usual Sessional Committees were appointed.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES—APPOINTMENT OF.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I move, "That during the present session the hon. the President do discharge the duties of Chairman of Committees." In making this motion I feel sure that all hon. members will be pleased if you, Sir, will be pleased to acquiesce in the request. It is needless for me to point out the satisfactory manner in which you had carried out the duties in the past, and the impartiality with which you had enforced your decisions, and I am sure if you will only consent to again fill the position you will give the greatest pleasure to the House.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): I shall have much pleasure in again fulfilling the duties of Chairman of Committees during the present session, and I thank the hon. member for the reference he has made to the manner in which I have performed my duties in the past.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY—PRESENTATION OF.

Hon. members then repaired to Government House to present the Address-in-Reply.

On returning,

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) announced that His Excellency the Administrator had made the following reply:—

MR. PRESIDENT AND HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

I thank you for your Address-in-Reply to my opening Speech, and for the assurance of your desire to deal with all questions that come before you in such a manner as may be

most conducive to the continued prosperity of this portion of Her Majesty's dominions.

Government House, Perth, June 27th, 1895.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council at 1 o'clock p.m. adjourned until Tuesday, 9th July, at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,*Thursday, 27th June, 1895.*

Salary and Allowances of Future Governors—Customs Duties Repeal Bill; first reading—Address-in-Reply: adjourned debate—Standard Time Bill; second reading—Export Duties Repeal Bill; second reading; in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 p.m.
PRAYERS.

SALARY AND ALLOWANCES OF FUTURE GOVERNORS.

MR. RANDELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier:—

1. Whether any authentic information has been received by the Government, by cablegram or otherwise, of the reported resignation of Sir W. C. F. Robinson.

2. Whether, if such information has been received, the Secretary of State has been informed by the Government that the salary and allowances of any future Governor will be subject to such reductions and stipulations as Parliament may approve of.

3. Whether the Government intend to make any proposals to Parliament with a view to regulating the salary and allowances of any future Governor, so as to be more in accord with the practice which obtains, or is proposed, in the other Australian Colonies.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied—

1. No; but a despatch had been received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies

informing the Government that His Excellency the Governor had been granted an extension of leave till August 16th.

2. A copy of the regulations laid on the table the previous evening had been sent to the Secretary of State.

3. Only so far as the regulations laid on the table affected the question.

CUSTOMS DUTIES REPEAL BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), and read a first time.

Ordered, that the Bill be printed, and the second reading made an order of the day for Monday next.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The adjourned debate, on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency the Administrator's Speech, was resumed.

MR. HASSELL: In rising to continue this debate, I have to congratulate the Government on the satisfactory state of the finances of the country, and also on the successful floating of a portion of the last loan. Paragraph 5 refers to the numerous public works authorised by Parliament, and now progressing. I wish to say a few words about the new post office at Albany, the stone for which has been obtained from outside the colony; and I wish to state that stone, quite as good as that imported for the work, could have been obtained close to Albany, at a less cost. Paragraph 8 refers to the establishing of a fortnightly steam service between Albany, Esperance Bay and other parts of the South coast. I am sorry to find, however, that there is no mention in the Speech of a railway to be made between Esperance Bay and the Dundas goldfield. I had hoped that the Government, with their large surplus this year would have been able to undertake the construction of that railway. Referring to the continuance of the Fremantle harbour works, it will of course be taken as a rule that members representing constituencies so far to the south and eastward, are supposed to be opposed to the spending of large sums on harbour works at Fremantle; and I must say that, in my opinion, harbour works there are likely to be a financial drain on the colony for a very long time, and of very little benefit when completed. As to the proposed establishment of a Mint in this colony, I am not at all in favour

of it, for I think the colony cannot stand the expense of about £10,000 a year, which we are led to believe will be the probable cost of maintaining it, merely for the gratification of being able to coin gold in the colony. We have heard a great deal about the proposed removal of the railway workshops from Fremantle, but my opinion is that the time has come for their removal to a more suitable site; and, as far as I can learn, there is no other site so suitable as that at the Midland Junction, where the Government have purchased 260 acres of land. It is a very good site indeed, and I shall give the Government my hearty support on this question, and hope they will be able to carry their motion. Other subjects are mentioned in the Speech, but I shall have opportunities of speaking upon several of them when they come before us in another form. In conclusion, I must again congratulate the Government on the state of the country, and the position of the finances, although it is perhaps not altogether due to the Government that the colony is in its present position.

MR. MOSS: In common with other hon. members, I congratulate the Government on the very magnificent position in which we find the finances of the colony. The Government are no doubt entitled to a certain amount of credit, but the great factor which has led to the colony being in this position is the magnificent developments that have taken place in the eastern portions of the colony, and the consequent increase in the population coming to these shores during the last two or three years. I am glad, however, that the Government have come down to the House with some definite proposals as to what they intend to do with the surplus revenue for the current year, and I am particularly glad that this excess of income over expenditure is not to be used for the purpose of creating large annual charges on the Government of the country, but that they intend to apply the surplus to the construction of reproductive works. I hope that when these proposals do come before us, they will not include such a scheme as the hon. member for Plantagenet has just been advocating—a railway from Esperance Bay to Dundas. I think the surplus should be devoted to the construction of reproductive works, and it is to be hoped we shall not be asked to sanction any political railway such as the hon. member has suggested for his district. I am pleased to think the Government recognise the importance of the

mining industry, seeing that a special paragraph in the Speech is devoted to it; and that they propose to spend money in testing for artesian water on the Eastern goldfields. It seems to me a matter of the greatest importance that the possibility of tapping artesian water in those inland districts should be set at rest, and if the experiment costs the country £10,000 or £20,000 the money will not have been ill spent, and the colony may derive from it a great benefit indeed. My opinion is that, although contrary to the theories and opinions of experts, artesian water will be found, if the Government test the ground to a sufficient depth. Therefore on any proposal the Government may bring forward for prosecuting works of this importance, I shall feel it my duty, as it will be my pleasure, to give them my support at all times. I am pleased also to think that a part of the Government policy is to further prosecute the construction of harbour works at Fremantle with special energy, and that they see the necessity of purchasing additional dredges for prosecuting those works at a greater speed than hitherto. I am particularly pleased to see the Government have thought fit to put in hand at once the construction of a dry dock, which is of great importance, not only to the town of Fremantle, but to the colony at large. It is a fact that there is no dock for taking in vessels at any point between Port Adelaide and Singapore, and I think this dock at Fremantle will be found to be a reproductive work, on which ground hon. members will, I hope, give the proposal their hearty support, when it comes before us. In common with the member for Albany, I shall reserve to myself the right, when the question of a Railway to the Collie coalfield is submitted to us, to exercise my veto upon it. It is the duty of the Government to provide for us facts and figures for demonstrating, if they can, beyond a shadow of doubt, that coal exists in payable quantity in that district; it is also their duty to do what they can for developing the coal-mining industry in that district; but until the fact is clearly proved that there is a payable seam of coal there, the Government will not be justified in asking the House to allocate any money for constructing a railway to the Collie. I would not have risen on the present occasion to comment on the Speech of the Administrator, were it not for one portion which interferes very directly with the constituency which I represent, and which interference will, to my

mind, work a great amount of evil, and cost this colony a considerable amount of money in the long run. I refer to the proposal of the Government for the removal of the railway workshops from Fremantle to a site at the Midland Junction. I say the Government, in making a proposal of this kind, are acting in the very worst interests of the colony, and in such a manner that an annual cost to the colony will be entailed which, if the workshops were kept near to the seaboard, in the vicinity of Fremantle, would not be entailed. I hope hon. members will bear with me while I point out the basis on which the Government ground their proposal. That proposal to remove the workshops from Fremantle to the Midland Junction is based practically on the opinion of the Engineer-in-Chief of this colony, and on the report of Mr. Allison Smith, of Victoria, furnished in 1892. That opinion of Mr. Allison Smith, I venture to say, is one which the Government are not justified in acting upon, for he has proved himself in Victoria to have been the apostle of extravagance and incompetence, and he has been driven from the Government service in Victoria. Yet it seems the Government here are going to commit this colony to an expenditure of many thousands of pounds, for the purpose of carrying out the recommendation made by Mr. Allison Smith in his report of 1892. In that report he appended a comparative analysis showing the large cost at which these Government railways were then being worked, as compared with the percentage of working cost in other colonies, and particularly in New Zealand, and he attributed the higher percentage of cost in this colony to the position in which these workshops were situated. It may be needless for me to point out to this House the absurdity of that comparison, for what is the use of a comparison such as that drawn in his report, unless he is able to show that the colony in respect to which the comparison is made does really stand on a footing similar to that of Western Australia? He made the comparison particularly in reference to New Zealand and the railway systems there; but is such a comparison of any value when we are all aware that the population of New Zealand was about three-quarters of a million, when he made that report, and the population of this colony was then only about 55,000? Is it to be wondered at, therefore, that the comparison he made did then bear very unfavourably against this

colony, in the comparative working cost of our railways? Mr. Allison Smith asked the people of this colony to accept it as an argument in his report for the purpose of showing why these workshops should be removed from Fremantle. His report also asks us to look at the workshops at Newport, near Melbourne, constructed under his supervision. It seems to me that the period of time which has elapsed since the date of his report, July, 1892, must have convinced the most ardent supporters of Mr. Allison Smith's scheme of removal that the statements made in that report have proved themselves, by the results since attained, to be absolutely valueless as a basis for the proposed action of the Government in this colony at the present time. The experience of two or three years has proved that the Victorian railway workshops at Newport have been the most expensively constructed and the most extravagantly managed in the colonies; so that Mr. Allison Smith has lately been thrown out of the position he formerly occupied there; the result of investigation having shown that he had been extravagant in every way and was also an incompetent man for the position. One of his great arguments, in the report he prepared for this colony, was that by removing the workshops to the Midland Junction the Government might expect to receive the greater portion of the repairing works required by the Midland Railway Company. But is it likely that the Midland Company, with their expensive repairing shops, are going to send their repairs to the Government workshops? It seems to me the Government are going on a very bad basis if they rely on that expectation, which will not stand the test of examination. Can I refer to anything better than the remarks of the hon. the Premier, in speaking on the motion of the hon. member for Adelaide, last session? The Premier then said—

“I am not one of these who believe—and I do not care if fifty engineers heard me say so—that there is any very great loss entailed, as yet, in connection with these workshops, so far as the maintenance of rolling stock and the working of our railways are concerned. I do not see where it can come in. The shops may not be so convenient as we would like them to be: but how with proper management, they should entail an immense loss on the country I cannot see. I can understand an immense loss arising from the heavy grades on our Eastern Railway; which no doubt knock the engines about a good deal; but that is being rectified, I am glad to say. I think Mr. Allison Smith did not separate the loss arising through these heavy grades from the loss arising through the want of facilities at the workshops. I believe he placed the loss from

the two together at something like £15,000 a year, but I should like to know how much was attributable to each. I am convinced, myself, that the greater amount of it was from those terrible grades. I am of opinion that the site at Guildford is a very excellent one in many respects; but it has one disadvantage, to my mind, being a considerable distance from a port, because it stands to reason that, for workshops such as these, requiring so much coal and iron and other material, which have to be imported, it is more convenient to have them near a Port than far away. I am not so sure there is no site nearer Fremantle than Guildford, but I am quite sure there is not so good a site; and you will have to place the disadvantage of being further away as against the advantage of having a better site and a larger area.”

“Those were the views of the Premier, in which he told the House he does not care for the opinion of fifty engineers, that he does not believe all that Mr. Allison Smith alleges in attributing the loss on the railways in any way to the position of these workshops—the Premier does not believe that is really the reason at all. It is a fortunate thing that some time has elapsed since that report was printed, for we now find that instead of the railway being worked at a terrible loss, they are being run at a great profit to the country. We have heard from the Administrator's speech that not only do the Government railways pay the cost of working, but they also provide interest on the cost of construction. Yet the workshops are still at Fremantle, and the fact that the statements made in that report have been disproved by experience during the last two or three years, is another argument I put forward against the removal of the workshops. I do put it to hon. members that when the Government say they are being induced by their professional advisers to remove the workshops, the opinion of the professional adviser I am now referring to in particular, is of very little value indeed. So many inaccuracies are apparent in Mr. Allison Smith's report, for which the Government paid so dearly, that I hardly need to refer to them in detail, after the light thrown upon them by the lapse of time. When a deputation from Fremantle waited on the Premier recently, he made a promise that no expenditure should be incurred on account of the removal to the Midland Junction, until the voice of Parliament could be heard on the question. But I am sorry to say the answer since given by the Director of Public Works is entirely unsatisfactory, from my point of view, for it seems to me the promise given by the Premier has not been carried out. The action of the Government, in letting a contract for the construction of a dam at the Midland

Junction, has been thoroughly misleading to the people of Fremantle. The Director of Public Works tells us the dam is being constructed for the purpose of supplying water required for railway purposes, yet it is a singular coincidence that the dam has been constructed on a piece of land abutting on that which the Government propose to use as a site for these workshops. It is very singular that the Government, if they desired to construct a work of that kind, did not construct it near a railway station—say the Guildford station.

THE PREMIER: It is close to the Midland Station.

MR. MOSS: I should have thought the Government, if they intended to put it near a station, would have put it near their own station, at Guildford. The Government must have a great desire to do Mr. Allison Smith a good turn. I have no doubt that probably his friendship for the Engineer-in-Chief did induce the Government, through Mr. O'Connor's recommendation, to make a report on the workshops; but it is significant that Mr. Allison Smith, as a stranger visiting this colony at the time, should have hit on that particular piece of land at the Midland Junction, and hit on it accidentally. It does seem to me, however, that Mr. Allison Smith was brought here for a very evident purpose, and that the report he presented on that point looks very like a cut-and-dried arrangement. The Government have tried to shelter themselves behind the recommendation of a Commission, which was appointed on the subject of the workshops, but the recommendation of that Commission is not worth much, when it appears that, of the five members composing it, three reported in favor of removal to the Midland Junction, and the other two prepared a very able minority report dissenting from the other report in every way. The Premier has himself used the strongest argument we have to bring forward, namely the enormous cost in the haulage and cartage of material necessary for carrying on the workshops 23 miles away from a port. I now ask the Premier, does he go back on the statements made in his speech of last session? I ask him, in view of the fact that the railways have been paying the working cost and the interest on capital, what is the value now of the statements made in Mr. Allison Smith's report? These workshops

are, no doubt, not in the best position—I admit that at once, and my colleagues in the representation of Fremantle are also perfectly agreed that it is undesirable to keep the workshops where they stand; but it is idle to say there is no spot suitable for the purpose nearer to Fremantle, than a site 23 miles away, at the Midland Junction. If the Government do say that, and insist upon it, then I say they are acting contrary to the opinion of the most eminent engineers in Australia. In New South Wales the railway terminus and workshops are close to the harbour; in Victoria also they are near the terminus and port; in South Australia, which is an exception, and not a good one, the workshops are situated some seven miles from the coast. It is beginning to be realised that a great mistake has been made in having those workshops so far from a port, and no doubt before long an effort will be made to bring the workshops back to the coast. However, I do not think this colony can ask for a better precedent than that of New South Wales, for there, after much controversy, the opinion of the most eminent engineers was obtained, and a Commission was appointed to obtain evidence as to the best site, the result being that, although expensive workshops had been built at a distance from the coast, a new site was purchased close to Sydney, at a cost of £100,000, and large new workshops were erected there. Yet, with that precedent to guide them, the Government of this colony propose to commit this most terrible blunder of removing the workshops from the Port of Fremantle to a site 23 miles inland. We have heard of the Government guaranteeing the bonds of the Midland Railway Company, and assisting them in other ways to get over difficulties; but we knew the cost in that case, whereas in this proposed removal of the workshops to the Midland Junction, we do not know what the cost will be, because it will be a continuing annual charge on the colony. If the Government do come down with such a proposal as they have made in the Administrator's Speech, I cannot give my sanction to it, either as a member for Fremantle or as a representative sent here to look after the best interests of the colony. I would not stand here, speaking at this length on behalf of my constituents, if I thought this was a purely local matter; but in dealing with the workshops' question, I consider we are dealing with a large

and national matter, and I have deemed it my duty to point out to this House the absurdity of relying on statements made in the report of Mr. Allison Smith. The Government were very anxious to get the report of this gentleman, and they presented him with a fee of fifty guineas for eight days' work, or at the most ten; and, in view of the absurdities which are now manifest in that report, I venture to say the Government frittered away fifty guineas for services which, as one hon. member remarked, were worth hardly fifty shillings. It was not my intention to have preceded the member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion), on this subject; but I asked him to-day whether he intended to speak in this debate, and he said he was not certain whether he would do so or not. Therefore I have deemed it my duty to take the earliest opportunity of expressing my dissent from the portion of the Administrator's Speech, which refers to the removal of the railways workshops from Fremantle. Not that it is a matter of purely local concern, for I am strongly of opinion it is a matter affecting the finances of the colony, and a very serious matter indeed. In conclusion, I presume that, as the Government merely intend to recommend this matter, they will during the session probably bring it before the House in the shape of an application for a specific allocation of moneys for the erection of new railway workshops at the Midland Junction. I give the Government notice that I shall use every effort for the purpose of fighting and resisting them in obtaining an allocation of moneys for the purpose. I hope that, in the meantime, the money will not be spent, and the approval of the House sought afterwards.

Mr. WOOD: The Speech of His Excellency the Administrator must be acceptable to this House as very satisfactory; and it is a record of the great developments in the general revenue, in the railway revenue, and in the gold bearing resources of this country. Everything in the colony at present seems to be booming. I, personally, am quite satisfied to leave the management of this colony's affairs in the hands of the present Administration, because I think the Ministers have done their work well in the past, and there is no reason why they should not do it well in the future. Some hon. members have criticised the Speech as a progress report. Even if it is a progress

report, it is a splendid record and a splendid report.

Mr. GEORGE: Where is the balance-sheet?

Mr. WOOD: The balance-sheet, I reckon, will be produced when the Premier makes his Budget Speech. The making of the Governor's Speech is not an occasion for giving a financial statement. The finances of the colony are in a splendid position—better than at any time since the colony was founded in 1829. The surplus is a good one, and I think it may be well expended on roads, bridges and other useful works, either for connecting the producing districts with the centres of population, or to facilitate the agricultural traffic in feeding the railways. The Speech refers to Federation, but I think Federation is a question of the very distant future. The powers of the Federal Council might, in the meantime, be extended, and every year additional subjects might be dealt with by that body, so that it might gradually take a firm hold of the colonies, and prepare the people for Federation. As to the Collie coal and the proposed railway, our recent visit to that field was most satisfactory. We saw a large body of coal, and, as to the quantity, it is a saying in mining that the cleverest experts cannot tell what there may be beyond the end of the miner's pick. So we must take for granted that the coal is there in quantity, as estimated in the reports of experts. I am quite satisfied to believe there is a very large body of coal there. There is only the question of quality, not of quantity; also the question whether the price at which it can be delivered to consumers will compare favourably with that of imported coal. As regards boring for artesian water, I am glad to find the Government intend to set that question at rest once and for ever. Experts and geologists say artesian water cannot be found in that granite country. That may be so; but there is a feeling among our people that a thorough test for artesian water ought to be made on the Eastern goldfields, and I am certain the people of this colony will not begrudge the spending of a large sum in making a thorough test. As to the purchase of the rights of the West Australian Timber Company, I think the Government have made a splendid bargain in getting rid of that concession for about £3,000. It has been a bugbear to this colony for years, and if there had been any life in the company, we might have had all our town lots at Coolgardie taken up

by them. It is satisfactory to know the Agricultural Bank is going on all right. I think that is one of the best pieces of legislation ever dealt with by this House, and, having given my warmest support to it, I shall also support any extensions of the Bank's operations that may become necessary in the future. The Stock route from the North I regard as most important, and I would like to have had more information on the progress of that work. I know that arrangements have been made for pushing on the work. I hope also that proper accommodation for shipping stock will be made along the coast from Derby to Carnarvon, so that we may get rid of the necessity of having to import any stock for feeding our population. The Fremantle harbour works are always a pleasing subject to me, and, as far as I can understand, the work there is a succession of successes, and is being done a long way below the estimated cost. I look on that great work as a splendid legacy which we may leave to posterity, and a lasting monument of the energy and foresight of the present Government, and of the Engineer-in-Chief. The new legislation promised in the Speech seems rather scanty; but although this bill of fare does not seem a large amount for the session, yet the record of last year's debates will show that, with the other matters that are likely to come before us in ordinary course, the time of the session will doubtless be fully occupied. As to the Ecclesiastical Grant, I shall be in favor of dealing very liberally with the churches, and, in reference to the fear expressed by the hon. member for Northam, I hope the Government do not intend to propose a niggardly arrangement. Whether the sum is to be paid in one or two instalments, I should prefer that a good round sum be given, so that the churches, which have been doing a lot of good work with their small means, over thousands of miles, may receive a good sum which they can invest, and so provide a permanent income for carrying on their work in the future. The Tariff Bill, read a first time to-day, raises a big subject for this House to deal with, and probably neither the Government nor hon. members can foresee how it will end. Many necessary articles in the present tariff are at such a high rate that the cost presses heavily on the poorer classes. Relief should be given especially on tea, sugar, kerosene, and such articles of every day consumption; and I feel sure these will be dealt with. As to the complaints of the high cost of living, I think that, excepting meat, fruit,

and vegetables, every other article in general use is lower in cost now, as the result of competition and railway facilities, than at any period since I have had to do with business. By taking the duties off necessary articles which we cannot produce, the people will be better able to live in fair comfort. Coming to the question of the railway workshops, I am entirely opposed to their removal from Fremantle. It would have been better if the Government had allowed this question to be brought before the House on the motion of a private member. As to a new site, there must be better places between Perth and Fremantle than the one chosen at the Midland Junction. If the workshops are removed so far from the port, I prophesy that they will have to be removed back to their port within ten years. Besides, there is the question of the rights of the people of Fremantle. These workshops were promised to the people of Fremantle years ago, in exchange for the land on which the Fremantle railway station was erected; and if the promises of a Government cannot be depended on, I do not know where we are to look for security of tenure. It is gratifying to me, as member for West Perth, to see that the Government intend to undertake the survey of the city with regard to sanitation. That has been urged on the Government session after session by the hon. member for the Greenough (Mr. Traylen). I was glad to support him last year, and I am glad now to know that the Government have really awakened to their responsibilities in the matter. It is a work beyond the resources of the City Council, and I am glad to see the Government have tackled it, and hope also they will go through with it, and give us a clean and healthy city. That should be the desire of every man who occupies any public position in the colony. I am sure every householder in Perth will cheerfully pay the extra rates; for if they do not pay in that form they may have to pay in doctors' bills. Referring to the complaint made by the hon. member for the Williams, as to the large amounts of compensation for lands taken at the Vasse and elsewhere for railway purposes, I think the Government have themselves to blame for the very high prices they have had to pay. They have, in the first instance, offered a price ridiculously low for a piece of land taken, instead of offering the market price according to what such land has been sold for in the neighborhood. The owner will not accept the price offered,

being ridiculously low, and the question goes to arbitration. We all know what arbitration means when the claim is against the Government. It means that if arbitrators can give to a private owner a little more, they will do so. I hope that, in the future, the Government will be more discreet in the original price they offer for land taken for railway purposes. I trust we shall get through our work of the session as well as we did last session, and not be quite so long over it. I congratulate the Government on the great success of the past year; and if, as the hon. member for Albany said, they have only carried out the wishes of this House, then the House ought to be perfectly satisfied so long as those wishes have been carried out well.

MR. LONDON: At this somewhat late stage of the debate I do not propose to inflict many remarks upon hon. members. In the Speech submitted to us, however, there is a slight inaccuracy. I believe this Parliament was called together and assembled on the 4th of June, and I notice in the proceedings as reported upon that occasion, that the hon. member, the head of the Government, moved that the House at its rising adjourn to a certain day. The House did adjourn on the 4th of June until the 25th of June. When we did meet on the 25th of June I notice that the print of the Speech delivered by His Excellency states that the Speech was delivered on the occasion of the opening of the second session of the second Parliament on the 25th day of June; but it seems to me His Excellency could scarcely have opened the second session on the 25th of June, when it was really opened on the 4th. The words are—"Speech of His Excellency Sir Alexander Onslow, Kt., Administrator on the opening of the second session of the second Parliament, on the 25th day of June, 1895." I submit that the opening of the second session of the second Parliament did not take place on that date, but that Parliament had been opened already on the 4th of June, and that it was adjourned until the 25th of June, on the Premier's own motion. In the first and second paragraphs of the Speech we are congratulated upon the progress and advancement of the colony, and also upon the fact that the finances of the colony are in a thoroughly satisfactory condition, and that the revenue for the year will considerably exceed the estimate. These points ought to be a source of pleasure to

every honorable member, though some honorable members may be inclined to say, if a Treasurer is not able to estimate his revenue within a hundred thousand or two hundred thousand pounds for the year, he is not much of a financial authority. I am not, however, inclined to take that view myself, because I think during the past year or two it has been quite an open question and a difficult one too for any hon. member, occupying that position, to closely estimate what the revenue for a coming year might be. It was however, pointed out during the last session—I think on this side of the House—that the revenue would most likely far exceed the estimate. It now appears that that has been the case. With regard to the progress of the colony and the statement that everything is satisfactory, or as the hon. member for West Perth put it just now, that everything is booming, I should be glad if I could follow him in those words, that everything is booming, but I regret to say I cannot, and even the Government, although they are pretty sanguine, have taken notice of the fact that in one particular direction there is a dark spot. What is the cause of the finances being in such a satisfactory condition and the revenue increasing as it has done so extraordinarily during the last six or nine months? We can easily point to the cause. It is the attraction of our gold mines. Those have attracted a very considerable increase of population to our shores, and this increase has led to a large importation of food, and other things for supplying the needs of this increased population, which again has been affected by the tremendously high tariff at our Customs House. That is one direction in which to look to for the cause of this particular increase; and the other is the increase of receipts from our railways. In this last direction I am very glad indeed to have it stated on this occasion that the railways are not only paying working expenses, but are also paying interest on the cost of construction. But in what way has this extraordinary revenue from railways been made up? Mainly through the special extra rates charged on materials being sent to our goldfields and the extra traffic in that direction. That is the main source of the increased revenue in connection with the railways, and I think those hon. members who supported the policy of an extra high tariff for the transport of goods to the goldfields, ought now to be satisfied with a policy of that kind, seeing that

the Southern Cross line is purely and simply a goldfields railway; but the question is how long is Parliament to continue a policy of that description. There was an agitation for the lowering of rates, and there will be further agitation; at the same time, although we all believe our goldfields are rich and lasting, we cannot look upon these railways in the same way as we look upon the railways to the settled portions of our agricultural and pastoral lands. There is, to a certain extent, an end sooner or later to rich goldfields.

Mr. FORREEST: I hope it will never come in my time.

Mr. LOTON: We all hope that, but I am holding out a warning to hon. members to stand by a railway tariff revision policy, so that we may not have an extra encumbrance in that direction. I notice there has been a proposal to deal with the surplus by expending it upon reproductive works. I trust the money will be expended upon reproductive works, and that we shall not put too much of it into bricks and mortar, or stone and concrete. It is necessary and right that reasonable accommodation should be provided at outside townships, and other places for the accommodation of the people who have to do official work in connection with the Government service. I do not say these buildings should be too temporary; let them be sufficiently sound. But we cannot at present afford to go in for too much ornamentation. We want more money expended on roads and bridges as feeders to the railway lines we have already constructed. It is in this direction that not only will the settlement of the colony be assisted, but encouragement will be given to other people to settle on the soil, and it is only by permanent, though perhaps it may not be very hasty, settlement and development of the soil and the industries connected with the soil, that this colony can permanently progress. I notice, also, in connection with this large increase in revenue, that it is proposed to a certain extent to relieve the taxpayer through the Custom House. A little Bill on that subject has been submitted to us this afternoon, containing some twenty items. I was going to suggest, but I see they are in the Bill, that such articles as fencing materials, which are used not only in the agricultural districts, but in pastoral districts also, should be struck off and appear in the free list. Also that woolpacks and sacks and

other articles of that description should be on the free list. It may be said of what assistance will these paltry things be? We know perfectly well that even the smallest obstruction in a running stream will turn the flow of the water, and when an industry is being worked at a loss even a small assistance in various directions will tend to turn that loss into a profit. I should like to see in connection with the tariff revision, one, if not two of the schedules struck off entirely. I think it is time this colony attempted to come somewhat nearer the principles of Free-trade, for we may depend upon it that whatever we want to use or consume, that we cannot produce ourselves, the less money we have to pay outside the more money we shall have inside, to develop the industries we are engaged in, and I submit, the nearer we can get to Free-trade principles the better. For those reasons I trust that before this session is ended, we shall see a considerable further reduction in the Customs duties of this colony. The tariff is extremely high, and there is no necessity for it to be so when the population is increasing so very much, and the consumption of articles increasing accordingly. At the same time we are going on fairly freely in borrowing money and spending it on public works. It is necessary, of course, that we should provide a revenue to meet the expenditure of the Government Departments, but still we should endeavour to see that this colony is governed at less cost than it is at the present time, and I hope that, with the improved internal communication we now have, the Government will see its way clear to carry on the business of the country without much extra cost, and in some instances at a decreased cost. In connection with the reduction of the tariff and the state of the finances, I would like to draw attention to paragraph 22, which refers to the low prices of many of the products of this colony, and particularly to the low price of the staple products of the colony and of Australia. To the north of Champion Bay we have an immense pastoral territory. It is not fit for much else besides pastoral purposes, but it is an immense area, capable of raising stock for a very large population. At present however, that industry is being carried on, and has been carried on for some years past, at a considerable loss to the people engaged in it, who, after working and slaving, are in a worse position now than they were 15 or 20 years ago, not from want of intelligence industry, or

economy, in many instances, but simply through the decline in the price of products. Some years ago we had a severe drought followed by an extensive flood, and that again was followed by a series of droughts, and in this unfortunate position a number of these settlers are still struggling. Some years ago the residents in the Southern portion of the colony used to allude to the North-West as their outlet for trade and their inlet for products. It was then the bright spot in the colony, the pastoral and the pearling industries of the North-West were prosperous; but what is the condition of the North-West now? It is in a very pitiful condition, and it is our bounden duty to strain every effort to do what we can to help those struggling people.

MR. FORREST: Reduce their rents.

MR. LUTON: Well, reduce in every direction you can. Increase the facilities, the stock routes and water supply. Make improvements in the ports for shipping, both for stock outward and for taking goods inwards. It is in these directions that we must endeavour to encourage these people to still go on struggling and trying to overcome the difficulties they have had to contend against for years. I am one of those who, when difficulties appear in the way, do not like to shirk them, but would rather endeavour to fight and get rid of them, and that is what we must try and do with the difficulties in the North-West. I am glad to see that the establishment of the Agricultural Bank is attracting attention and business, and that the Government are fully satisfied of its ultimate usefulness. In connection with this, I have given notice for a return, because I want some information which will show the progress of the Bank up to the present time. I have asked for the particulars, simply because I want the information, and I have no desire to work against the interests of the Bank itself. I trust it will be a success in every way. I notice the hon. members who moved and seconded the Address-in-Reply, have not found it working to their satisfaction. I do not know the reason for that; whether it is that the money is too tightly tied up; or whether it is they have not been able to handle it freely either for themselves or the people they are connected with. If it is possible to clear away any of the difficulties that have been alluded to, I trust they will be cleared away, and that the money which is available for the purpose, from whatever source it is taken, so

long as it is safely and judiciously invested will be advanced at as a low rate of interest as possible, and thus set an example to the financial institutions of the colony. The hon. member for West Kimberley referred to the establishment of a branch of the Royal Mint, and his words were that it was the most important subject alluded to in the Speech. The hon. gentleman went on to show that the Banks are making a little fortune out of the gold they are exporting. I rather felt that the hon. member would like to have a share in the plunder. With his immense amount of financial ability, he does not like to see a small percentage like that passing his hands. He controls the meat market, I believe, and it has been said, although the Premier runs the Government, the hon. member for West Kimberley controls the Premier; so that the hon. member for West Kimberley at the present time controls Western Australia. I am very glad the hon. member has so much ability; and he makes very good use of it. But this 2s. 6d. an ounce charged by the Banks on the gold exported through them is a sore subject to him; and, although he has such an immense amount of power in other directions, it appears he has to draw the line at the Banks. I think the figures quoted by the hon. member were not exactly so full as they might have been. He made the charges in connection with the sending away of gold amount to about 9d. an ounce actually, as compared with 2s. 6d. charged by the Banks. I believe the charge from Cue and Mount Magnet, made by the Banks does amount to 2s. 6d. an ounce. But the Banks have to pay, out of that charge, 3d. an ounce for escort, and 3d. for cartage to Geraldton. Every person cannot act as a gold escort on his own account; and, if the hon. member did escort a parcel of gold on one occasion as he says, he should have included the cost of his travelling expenses in the figures he gave us. At all events those two charges I have mentioned amount to 6d. There is also the freight charge of 2½d. and, in addition to that, there is insurance—about another 2d. making, in all, 10½d. Then there is the Mint charge—another 2d, making the total charges 1s. 0½d. by the time the gold reaches Melbourne, and there is return freight and insurance or exchange about 1d. an ounce. So that really the charges which the Banks have to pay, per ounce, on the gold sent through them amount to about 1s. 6d., and that leaves a

balance of 1s. on the price the hon. member quoted. I suppose the hon. member would not expect a Bank to keep up its establishment and various branches, with their staff of officers and clerks, besides keeping the hon. member's account for him, and paying money out when he wants it,—I suppose the hon. member does not expect the Banks to do all this for nothing. I am not a banker myself.

MR. A. FORREST: A Bank director.

MR. LOTON: It seemed to me the hon. member was making a slight onslaught on the Banks. As a matter of fact, the Banks do not charge 2s. 6d. an ounce on the gold sent away through them. The profit to them would be about 6d. an ounce on any gold sent by them from Perth. Banks are perhaps necessary evils, and we must make the best of them. So much for the Mint. I notice that the hon. member for West Kimberley, who generally supports the Government policy, does not seem anxious to support them in the proposed removal of the railway workshops from Fremantle to another site. I would simply put this to the House, and even to the Fremantle members, and to the Fremantle people themselves, through their members and the Press. It has been admitted that these workshops must be removed from their present site; that they cannot remain where they are; that there is not sufficient room for them,—in fact, they never ought to have been erected there. There is more damage caused to locomotives and the railway plant lying near the sea than persons are generally aware of, and there is more loss in other ways than some hon. members may suppose. Looking at the other works going on at Fremantle, for the improvement of the Port, I am surprised at the action of the Fremantle people and the action of their members in this matter of the removal of these workshops—merely because a paltry establishment is being removed and causing the removal possibly of an expenditure of £15,000 or £20,000 a year from that town to a place 10 or 20 miles away, as the case may be. It is not in the interest of Fremantle that the necessity for the removal of these workshops has arisen; it is in the interest of the railway service of the colony. I ask those people who say the workshops are not to go to the Midland Junction to tell us where the site is, near Fremantle, where they would place these workshops.

MR. CONNOR: Rocky Bay.

MR. LOTON: Oh! Rocky Bay. I would point

out that the workshops are not to be removed to Guildford, but to a place two miles away; and, although representing the Swan district, I can advocate a public work in another part of the colony with as much effort as I could a work in my own district. I say there is an excellent site at the Midland Junction for these workshops—a level piece of land close alongside the Government railway, and in a very suitable position, to which all the "lame ducks" that have to be brought down from Coolgardie and elsewhere up the line can be conveniently taken for repair, instead of having to be taken a further distance to Fremantle and then brought back. As to the alleged enormous cost for the transport of material to a point removed 23 miles inland, I submit that when the material is once landed at Fremantle, it has to be put on trucks. There is the handling. The further cost of conveyance 10 or 20 miles (as the case may be) is not of very great importance, because, after all, the material, whether in its raw state or made up, has still to be transported further inland, and if taken to the Midland Junction, it will not have to travel so far afterwards. As to the hauling of coal to the Midland Junction being an extra cost, we know that the Collie coalfield has sprung up recently, and I hope the Collie coal will not only be of sufficient quantity and quality, but that we shall be able to use that coal at or near the cost of the imported article. If the coal from the field has to be used on our railways eastward of Fremantle, will it cost any more to take it 10 miles inland from Perth than 12 miles to Fremantle? This is a mere myth. The question really is—which is the best and most convenient site for these workshops to be placed at? I am not wedded to the Midland Junction site, but I do not know of any better site at present; and that seems to me the site they will have to go to. Another thing is, we have a splendid water supply there, of first-class quality; and what supply have you at Rocky Bay?

MR. CONNOR: Plenty of water.

MR. LOTON: Yes, any amount of salt water. There is one point alluded to by the hon. member for Albany (Mr. Leake) which I must touch upon. I do not agree with him always, though on the same side of the House; and I must say I am not here to do the utmost I can to "oust the Government." Although I sit on the Opposition benches, I have never had any desire to occupy any of

those seats which members of the Government occupy. My desire is that we should have good and honest Government—the best we can get; and although I sit on the Opposition side and occupy a front seat, if any member—the hon. member for Albany, for instance—in his modesty, is particularly anxious to occupy a more prominent position on these benches there is a vacant chair in front here.

MR. CONNOR: He is prominent enough where he is.

MR. LEAKE: He might move to the other side.

MR. LOTON: I am prepared to support any sound measure which the Government propose; and I am prepared to say (as I have said before) that I do not think we have at present arrived at a stage when the lines of party politics are so clearly defined that we, on this side of the House, cannot support Government measures if they are sound measures. I think it is well—and it has been well hitherto—for the people of this colony, those who are here and those who may come here, that such is the case. Let us criticise their scheme of policy as closely as you like,—I am prepared to do that, when I see an absolute necessity for it. But I am not prepared to get up simply for the sake of criticising or opposing, or simply for the purpose of attempting to "oust the Government." I do not know whether the hon. member exactly meant that.

MR. LEAKE: I gave my reasons.

MR. LOTON: Then perhaps the hon. member wants to occupy a seat on the other side himself.

MR. LEAKE: No. Faulty administration—of the railways in particular.

MR. LOTON: Whatever Government we have in office, we shall have faulty administration; and, when we see sufficient fault to justify us in doing so, we should endeavour to turn them out. Even some of the strongest supporters of the Government, who generally support them through thick and thin, may have to go against them at times.

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved that the debate be adjourned until Monday next, 1st July.

Question put and passed.

STANDARD TIME BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: Hon. members are no doubt aware the Eastern colonies

have adopted what is called a Standard Time, or what may perhaps more correctly be called the hour zone system. In South Australia, the mean time is found on longitude 135, because it is just 9 hours from Greenwich; and that is the mean time for the whole of South Australia. In regard to Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, they have each adopted the mean time of the 150th meridian of east longitude. That is exactly one hour's difference between the time of South Australia and the time of those three Eastern Colonies. In Tasmania, which is within the hour zone between 150 and 165 to the eastward, and between 150 and 135 to the westward, the intention is to adopt the mean time of longitude 150, which is just 10 hours from Greenwich. So that those colonies will be in this favorable position, that Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, will all have the same time, the time of longitude 150. Then, in regard to ourselves, if we adopt the time of 120 longitude, that is, a line somewhat near Coolgardie, we shall be adopting a pretty central time. There will be something like 7 degrees to the westward and some 9 degrees to the eastward of the 120th meridian, and we will then know at once that South Australia will be exactly one hour in advance of our time, and the other colonies will be two hours in advance of our time. It will be very convenient for business people, in telegraphing, to know at once, without calculation, that South Australia is exactly one hour in advance of our time. For instance, if it is noon here, we shall know it is one o'clock in South Australia and two o'clock in all other parts of Eastern Australia. Some people may think there will be objection to our having a time that is not the mean time of the place, but, as a matter of fact, no one will notice it in practice, and we do not have the mean time of the place at present. Geraldton adopts the same time, I expect, as Perth; I do not know whether Coolgardie does; but at any rate we know there is a considerable difference. The Coolgardie people will have the mean time as nearly as possible, and no alteration will be needed there under the new system. The difference in Perth will be something like 4 deg., and will affect Perth to the extent of 16 minutes faster than at present. We all know that the time we use at present is not the solar time of the place. There is the equation of time at

different periods of the year, and it varies as much as a quarter of an hour, accordingly as the sun is over the meridian at 12 o'clock. I do not anticipate that any difficulty will be found under the new method. Our time will be a little faster than it is now. We will be using Coolgardie time, practically, instead of the mean time of Perth. I have said so much to show hon. members that it will not be inconvenient to make the change. It will be convenient to know exactly that our time is just 8 hours in advance of Greenwich, and that it is just one hour different as compared with South Australia, and two hours different as compared with the other colonies. The new method of fixing the mean time has been adopted by all the other colonies except Tasmania, and the Government of that colony propose to adopt it this session. The new plan will be convenient, and be no disadvantage to any one; and I think we cannot do wrong in following the example of the other colonies of Australia.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

EXPORT DUTIES REPEAL BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: The only export duties existing at present are two: the one on pearl shell, and the other on sandalwood. Of course I think we are all opposed, in principle, to export duties, unless we cannot do without them. In regard to the pearlshell industry, it is not flourishing, as it used to do, and those engaged in it have great expense to bear, while I am sorry to say their industry is not so flourishing as we would like to see it. The least we can do, in these circumstances, is to remove this burden. There is no reason why we should charge a duty on pearl shell, any more than that we should charge a duty on gold. Both are exhaustible products. In regard to sandalwood, I do not know how the export duty ever came to be put on. Timber cutting has to be licensed, but there is this difference, that if a man cuts down jarrah he may cut hundreds of trees in a short time, for they are close round him, and the license fee is small; but if he goes out to cut sandalwood, he will have to look about the bush for it and travel some distance in a day, and he has to pay a license fee of 2s. 6d.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I am sure this Bill will pass. There will be no objection to the repeal

of these duties. Unfortunately the price has fallen so much now, in both pearl shell and sandalwood, that it hardly pays those engaged in these industries to prosecute them; and considering our large surplus revenue, I think the time has come when export duties should be taken off these commodities. In the old days I have paid some hundreds of pounds for export duties on pearl shell; but the industry was carried on with little expense at that time, and large profits were made. The colony was then much in need of revenue, and I believe if it had not been for the pearling industry in the North, the Southern part of the colony would have been in very straitened circumstances. It can be borne out that the pearling industry was prosperous at a time when the Southern parts of the colony were anything but prosperous, and that industry was then of great assistance to the colony. That fact is now lost sight of by some members who speak about the Northern Districts. The price of pearl shell is less now than it was at the time I allude to, and I think we may well remove the export duty now. The same applies to the sandalwood industry. We are well aware that many people in the colony have large stocks of sandalwood on hand, which does not fetch a payable price; and I dare say those firms which have large stocks would be glad to get rid of them for what they cost, and perhaps for 25 per cent. less than the cost. I am glad the Government have brought in a separate Bill for repealing these duties, because there is another Bill on the table, dealing with duties, in which these duties might have been dealt with; but for that other Bill I think the Government will not receive the same congratulation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Bill passed through committee without comment.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6:37 o'clock p.m.