

ADJOURNMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday, July 18th.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 7-27 until Tuesday, July 18th.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 6th July, 1899.

Papers presented—Question: Federation Bill, how Distributed to Electors—Question: Indenture of Aborigines, to Inquire—Question: Penal Commission and Recommendations—Supreme Court Criminal Sittings Bill, first reading—Criminal Law Amendment Bill, first reading—Return ordered and presented: Railway Rolling Stock, Repairs—Papers ordered and presented: Diamond Mining, Reward for Discovery—Return ordered: Government Liabilities at close of Financial Year—Papers ordered: Public Battery at Norseman—Address-in-Reply; Fifth Day of debate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1. Report of Registrar of Patents, etc., 1898; 2. Commonwealth Bill as amended at Conference of Australian Premiers, ordered on motion of Mr. George.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: Return showing Expenditure, etc., in the working of Public Batteries, ordered on motion of Mr. Wallace.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—FEDERATION BILL, HOW DISTRIBUTED TO ELECTORS.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (for MR. VOSPER) asked the Premier: 1. What means had been adopted for the distribution of copies of the Federal Commonwealth Bill. 2. What proportion of the electors was known to have received copies of the Bill.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied: 1. One copy of the Bill has been already sent to each elector in the colony, and another copy, plainly setting forth that it has been issued by authority, is now again being sent. 2. A return showing the number of copies returned from each electorate, as far as at present ascertained, is attached hereto:—

Number of Pamphlets returned from various Electorates (incomplete).

| Electorate. | No. on Roll. | No. Returned. |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Fremantle ... | 538 | 153 |
| South Fremantle ... | 1,187 | 64 |
| North Fremantle ... | 864 | 133 |
| East Fremantle ... | 820 | 238 |
| Yilgarn ... | 471 | 148 |
| Coolgardie ... | 2,924 | 1,704 |
| Northam ... | 615 | 60 |
| Yalgoo ... | 210 | 7 |
| North Perth ... | 2,399 | 42 |
| Dundas ... | 571 | 49 |
| Bunbury ... | 627 | 21 |
| Wellington ... | 405 | 18 |
| Geraldton ... | 434 | 6 |
| Plantagenet ... | 386 | 7 |
| Ashburton ... | 57 | 3 |
| Swan ... | 857 | 6 |
| Toodyay ... | 406 | 7 |
| Sussex ... | 373 | 5 |
| Irwin ... | 100 | 3 |
| North Coolgardie ... | 1,306 | 158 |

Other districts not yet returned.

QUESTION—INDENTURE OF ABORIGINES, TO INQUIRE.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (for MR. VOSPER) asked the Premier, Whether the Government intended to institute any official inquiries into the system of indenturing aborigines, and into the cruelties alleged to have been committed upon natives in the north-western portions of the colony.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied as follows:—The Government do not consider that any special inquiry is necessary, as the whole of the north-west districts have for years been settled, and the aborigines have long since become domesticated, and live regularly on the stations in the districts they belong to.

QUESTION—PENAL COMMISSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (for MR. VOSPER) asked the Premier, Whether it was the intention of the Government to give effect to the recommendations of the Penal Commission, in the form of legislation, during the present session.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied :—It is not probable that legislation can be attempted during the present session of Parliament. Such, however, of the recommendations as are more strictly departmental will have early attention. Some of the recommendations have already been adopted, and others are being dealt with, such as "Classification," "Prison Regulations," "Enlargement of Cells," etc.

SUPREME COURT CRIMINAL SITTINGS BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

RETURN—RAILWAY ROLLING STOCK, REPAIRS.

MR. SOLOMON moved :

That there be laid on the table of the House a return showing the number of railway trucks, carriages, and locomotives at Fremantle undergoing, and awaiting repairs.

As he understood the Minister of Works had prepared a return he would submit the motion without comment.

Question put and passed.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) said he had had the return prepared, and would now lay it on the table.

Ordered to lie on the table.

PAPERS—DIAMOND MINING, REWARD FOR DISCOVERY.

MR. KINGSMILL moved :

That copies of all correspondence in connection with the application for, and the granting of, the Reward Claim for the discovery of payable diamonds at Nullagine be laid upon the table of the House.

Question put and passed.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) said he had had the papers prepared, and would lay them on the table. He asked, however, that the papers might be handed back to him after perusal, as they were documents which might have to be referred to in the department later on.

Ordered to lie on the table.

RETURN—GOVERNMENT LIABILITIES UNSETTLED ON 30TH JUNE, 1899.

MR. SOLOMON moved :

That a return be laid on the table of the House, giving a detailed statement of all liabilities incurred by the Government up to 30th June, 1899, and not settled during the financial year ending on that date; also showing with regard to each liability—1, Whether on Loan Account or otherwise; 2, For which department incurred; 3, For what the liability was incurred; 4, The amount.

This motion, he said, was not submitted with any intention hostile to the Government, but simply with the object of ascertaining the true state of affairs respecting the revenue. At the present time, in view of the Commonwealth Bill, it was highly desirable that there should be obtained the latest data on which to base calculations as to the exact financial position of the colony, and he felt sure that there would be no opposition to the motion.

THE PREMIER : It would take two or three months to prepare the information as to all the liabilities of the Government.

MR. SOLOMON : The motion related only to the liabilities unsettled on the 30th June.

THE PREMIER : But there were unsettled liabilities in connection with great works, such as the Coolgardie water scheme and the Fremantle harbour works.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : What the member for South Fremantle wanted to know was what the Treasurer had pushed on to July to increase the balance.

THE PREMIER : The assertion of the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) was a wild one, and ought to be withdrawn.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : No assertion had been made.

THE PREMIER : The hon. member made an assertion, and a dirty one too.

MR. GEORGE : The insinuation made by the Premier was unworthy of that gentleman and degrading to the Chamber. The Premier had no right to say that a statement made by a member was untrue or that it was "dirty." He (Mr. George) believed he was within his rights when he called upon the Speaker to protect the dignity of the House and make the Premier apologise.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER said he did not hear the remark made by the Premier, referred to by the member for the Murray.

MR. GEORGE: Hon. members heard the remark.

THE PREMIER: It was made *sotto voce*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: If such a remark had been made it should be withdrawn.

MR. SOLOMON (resuming): When the Estimates came on for discussion last year, certain information was required with regard to liabilities unsettled at the time of the balancing on the 30th of June, and in regard to which members were entirely in the dark. No information whatever was vouchsafed as to the financial condition of the colony in this respect. In fact the balance sheet published at the end of June ought to be prepared in the same way as the balance sheet of a private firm, and the unsettled liabilities shown, so that the exact position of the colony could be ascertained. It was not necessary to use laboured arguments in support of the motion, because the paramount importance of such information would be apparent.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member had not explained very thoroughly what he wanted. Was it to be understood that he meant the debts due?

MR. SOLOMON: Yes.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member meant the amounts due by the Government for work done, but for which accounts had not been sent into the department for payment, then such information might be easily obtained. But there might be a liability, for instance, on a contract half performed.

MR. SOLOMON: Then the amount was not due, and was not a liability.

THE PREMIER: Surely it was a liability.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was not a liability.

THE PREMIER: If a contract were entered into, say at £10,000, and that contract was half completed, the remaining £5,000 unpaid was surely a liability.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Not unless the work had been done.

THE PREMIER: It would be seen that unsettled liabilities and accounts unpaid were different matters, and all he could say in regard to this matter was that he had issued no instructions in regard to accounts not being paid. If anyone had an account against the

Government, and came to the Treasury, the account would be paid, whether it was at the end of the year or otherwise, and any insinuation to the contrary certainly roused his (the Premier's) ire, because that was not the way in which he was accustomed to do business.

MR. GEORGE: You might, at any rate, be courteous.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member for the Murray (Mr. George) might be courteous and a good censor of members of the House; but the hon. member would do well to be a little more courteous himself, and then perhaps his example would be good for everyone in the House. The hon. member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) did not complain of the remark made by him (the Premier), because that remark was made *sotto voce*, and perhaps the member for Central Murchison was as much as, or more to blame than himself, because he made an annoying insinuation, which perhaps was not seriously meant. The member for Central Murchison and himself were desirous of extending to each other the greatest consideration and courtesy, and all that was desired now was to know from the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) what he really wanted, because the Government were quite willing to give all information.

MR. SOLOMON: Say, for instance, that £1,000 had been spent, but not paid, it would be a liability for work done.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member meant outstanding accounts?

MR. SOLOMON: Outstanding liabilities.

THE PREMIER: There would be no difficulty in getting a return as to the outstanding accounts not paid. But in all the departments there were always a lot of accounts that really the Treasurer did not know of. These might be accounts that had been a long while coming in, and when such accounts were delayed too long they could not be charged in the year's transactions; but if people sent in their accounts it was very easy to get them into the year's balance-sheet. If that was all the information the hon. member required there would be no difficulty about it.

MR. SOLOMON: That was all.

MR. LEAKE said he understood that the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) wanted to know how much re-

mained unpaid of moneys due for works done during June. It was important to have this information, because the accounts were made up to the 30th June, and it might be to the interest of the Commissioner of Railways, the Director of Public Works, or the Treasurer, in order to show a more satisfactory balance-sheet, to defer payments until after the end of the month. He took it that the return asked for would be useful as showing more accurately what was the true financial position on the 30th June.

MR. SOLOMON: That was it.

THE PREMIER: But there were debts due to the Government too.

MR. LEAKE: Of course, and nobody denied that for a moment. It was only a question of how much was unpaid on the 30th June which ought to have been paid.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he was very sorry that the Premier had completely misunderstood his interjection, because it had led the Premier to say that which perhaps otherwise he would not have said. It was inevitable in keeping the public accounts that the accounts for one month should run into another, and in the year's balance sheet it was important to show what liabilities were outstanding. For instance, there might be a sum of £10,000 due to a contractor for some public works, and the accounts of that contractor might at the time of the balance be going through the Treasury. That would be a liability for the year ending June, but it might not be paid until the 1st or maybe the 10th of July; and what was wanted at the end of every financial year was that as nearly as possible the actual position of the public accounts should be laid before the House.

THE PREMIER: The Government were allowed ten days after the close of the financial year for the preparation of the accounts.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he had not yet seen this year a statement of the revenue returns, which was usually laid before hon. members on the 1st of the month.

THE PREMIER: There were reasons for that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Assuming the Government were endeavouring to get the figures as accurate as possible before

the accounts of the year's transactions were issued, but while the Government were obtaining figures as to the revenue, the House also desired to know as to the liabilities. If the Government took ten days to collect special returns on the side of revenue, and got no information as to liabilities, the returns were misleading. What the hon. member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) was asking for was a return which would, once a year at any rate, give as nearly as possible an accurate balance of accounts.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: It should be remembered that there were also amounts outstanding due to the Government; and to place all these in the return asked for would mean going into the whole question of public accounts and involve a lot of work. He took it that the question was asked for a certain reason, and that what was desired was that the amounts outstanding due to the Government should also be shown.

MR. GEORGE: What was wanted in this case was such a balance sheet as would be produced by a large commercial firm, suitable for placing before bankers if necessary. Mere details were not asked for. In the case of contracts for railway construction and other such works, the department might hold in hand money due on a certificate, and also money which had become due for work done since the certificate was given; and if departments were carried on in this way, the balance presented in the Financial Statement up to the end of June would not show the real position, for if there were a surplus it would appear to be unduly large, whereas if there was a deficit it might appear less than would be shown by the true position. A person carrying on a large business, and not showing his liabilities when making a balance sheet, would appear to have more assets than he was entitled to claim.

MR. A. FORREST: It was not clear that this return would do any good if produced, for all men engaged in a large way of business knew it was impossible to strike a balance of transactions up to the very day of closing accounts, there being always some outstanding assets and liabilities. Members knew that the Government must keep large deposit receipts in the hands of bankers, and it was impossible for each department to close

up its accounts in such a way as to show the exact position as to assets and liabilities at the end of the financial year. If at the end of June the balance sheet showed a little less or a little more than the actual position, the difference would have to be accounted for in the balance sheet for the next year. His own experience was that people who had accounts owing to them were pretty prompt in making a demand for payment, and he did not think any department of the Government could owe much in this way at the end of the year. Even if it were practicable to show the exact position as required by the motion, still there would be no real gain in showing that the country was a little better or a little worse than would be shown by the present system of making up accounts.

MR. SOLOMON (in reply): Large financial institutions, having transactions almost as large as those of the Government, were bound by Act of Parliament to make up an account to a certain date, and to show their assets and liabilities. The Government should do the same.

THE PREMIER: We know all about financial institutions and their accounts. The Government were more particular in that way than any financial institution.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—PUBLIC BATTERY AT NORSEMAN.

On the motion of Mr. Gregory, ordered that all papers, correspondence, and cablegrams in connection with the purchase of the public battery at Norseman be laid on the table.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

FIFTH DAY OF DEBATE.

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

MR. GEORGE (Murray): Hon. members must feel grateful to me for having taken the course I did last night, in moving the adjournment of the debate, as I thereby secured them a good night's rest, and gave them no knotty questions to trouble them when they should be otherwise engaged. The Speech of His Excellency does not contain much that calls for criticism. The question of federation will be thoroughly threshed out, and it is

unnecessary to say more about that at present. In paragraph 5 attention is called to the Coolgardie Exhibition, which is stated to have been visited by 70,000 persons; but I think that instead of 70,000 separate persons, the number of individuals actually visiting it would be thirty to thirty-five thousand. I visited the Exhibition, and I think those who had to do with it are to be congratulated on the collection of gold specimens and gold-bearing rocks shown there. But, as far as anything else is concerned, the Exhibition was about the most gorgeous failure that could be shown in this country, except as a means of depleting an already depleted public purse. Paragraph 7 deals with the much-debated question of the Coolgardie water scheme, in regard to which we know there has been some trouble as to the foundations of the dam at Mundaring. I can sympathise with the Director of Public Works and his officers on that matter, because I have undergone a similar experience in that kind of work, and I know what causes for anxiety, trouble, and expense may arise from the uncertainty of the foundations of a dam. I trust that what was reported to us the other evening as to the expectation of the Engineer-in-Chief is correct, and that he is no longer anxious as to the security of the foundations of the dam. Although last session I spoke against and did my best to defer the carrying out of that scheme, I then said that if it were passed by the House it would be the duty of every member to try and forward the scheme to completion. Therefore I think the Government in a way have been, as usual, blessed with good luck in the fact that they had placed the contracts for the manufacture of the steel pipes before the recent rise in price of material occurred; because, if they had not done so, it is clear that for this year, and probably another year or two, extra prices would have had to be paid for steel required for the manufacture of those pipes, and that increase of price would amount to a considerable sum. If that steel had to be purchased now, they would have to pay 30s. to £2 per ton more for it than the same material could have been bought for twelve months ago; and on a large contract requiring some 90,000 tons of material to be used, the difference in price would represent about £150,000, roughly. There-

fore the Government have been fortunate in escaping that increase in price. If the contractors, Messrs. Hoskins and Mr. Ferguson, had bought all their plates, and if the Government are quite assured that this is so, then the Government and also those contractors are to be congratulated. The persons who lose by that increase of price will be those who manufacture the material, though whether they may make a profit or a loss is not our concern. It is our concern, however, to be thoroughly satisfied that the contracts have been made for this material with firms of satisfactory standing, and that the contracts so made are thoroughly valid, and do not admit of the slightest possibility of repudiation. During the boom in iron and steel, in the years 1871-2-3, I was occupying the position of buyer to one of the largest firms in the South Staffordshire district engaged in the iron and steel trade, and I know the difficulty that was experienced at that time by firms which had made large contracts in getting them executed at the low prices ruling when the contracts were made. Between September 1871 and June 1872, a period of nine months, I saw marked pipes, which is the standard of price for iron in England, rushed from £7 per ton up to £16 per ton, and those firms which had been fortunate enough in having made contracts before this great rise occurred found a considerable difficulty in compelling the manufacturers to supply the iron in accordance with contract at the low price ruling when the contract was made. Therefore, I wish to impress on the Government that they should thoroughly satisfy themselves that contracts for these plates have been made, and made with firms which will not be likely to repudiate their bargain. There has been considerable trouble with regard to the cement required for carrying out this great water scheme. I understand that contracts were forwarded for the supply of cement, and a certain brand was accepted; but afterwards this brand proved to be not of the quality which it had been represented, although it stood the tests. I am informed a considerable portion of this cement has been imported and stored in the colony, and I presume the Government have paid for it. If that is so, and there

is not a satisfactory explanation in regard to it, this will be a matter for the serious consideration of the House. With regard to the harbour works at Fremantle, it is not of much use threshing a dead dog. I expressed my opinion last year that the estimated cost of this work, namely £800,000, had been already exceeded; but when I expressed that opinion, the Director of Public Works told me I was incorrect—incorrect, I presume, as usual. At the same time, I believe the member for the Murray was more nearly correct than the Director of Public Works; that is to say, if we had full accounts of the work and could understand how certain costly items in connection with this work have probably been transferred to the debit of other works. I thoroughly understand how easy it is to appear to keep a certain work within the estimate, if there are various other votes to which the items of expenditure can be allocated. At all events, I am firm in my opinion that it will be found I was not very incorrect when I stated last year that the sum the whole work was intended to cost had been pretty nearly spent. I notice that the Premier's constituency receives attention again in paragraph 9, which contains a proposal to erect a breakwater at Bunbury, and I congratulate the Premier on the fact that the trade of the town requires this work to be constructed. Personally, I have never had any doubt as to the necessity of making a proper breakwater at Bunbury, and I trust that the Government, if they have the funds, will take care to make a breakwater which will be permanent. I notice also a great redundancy of detail in connection with a number of items of public works mentioned in the Speech. If I supervise a job, I do not want to know where every brushful of paint has been spread or every nail has been driven. It may be said these matters are introduced into the Speech for purposes of record; but if the Government want a permanent record of the work they have done in the twelve months, let it be engraven on tablets on the walls of this Assembly, for hon. members to look at every time they feel down-hearted. In paragraph 16 we are told that the Royal Mint is open, but I think it would be more interesting to know how much gold has been coined. I am very anxious to see those West

Australia sovereigns in order to ascertain whether they will come a little more easily into my pockets than the ordinary ones.

MR. MORAN: We are all anxious to see them.

MR. GEORGE: Passing on to paragraph 19, I notice that there is a number of Bills which Her Majesty's Government intend to introduce, and there are so many of them that I have grave doubts as to whether we shall ever see them passed into law, at all events during this session.

MR. A. FORREST: You will be here till Christmas.

MR. GEORGE: Well, I believe the country would benefit if I were here till Christmas, and I have not the slightest doubt it would also benefit if the hon. member were absent till that date. I should like the Premier to look through this list of proposed Bills and to ask himself whether he can, in decency, request hon. members to swallow the statement that the whole of these measures will be passed through this House during the current session.

THE PREMIER: They are nearly all ready.

MR. GEORGE: Yes; but the Premier, with his experience of politics, knows perfectly well that this large and overwhelming number of Bills is introduced into the Speech simply to draw hon. members on and on and on, until they are almost worn out at the fag end of the session—as was the case during last session and the session before—when a few of the Bills will be rushed through, having just the same amount of attention, or rather inattention, paid to them as was paid to the Bankruptcy Act last year.

MR. A. FORREST: There is a Municipalities Bill coming down, containing 600 clauses.

MR. GEORGE: We know all about that. I do not require the assistance of the hon. member to make a speech in this House, and if he will allow me I shall go on with my remarks. Before proceeding, I shall ask the Premier if he will do me the honour to listen to me, and not be so intent on conversations with his neighbours, which, though they may interest him, have no interest for the majority of hon. members. I know it is useless to

ask for the attention of the Attorney General, because he cannot work of his own volition: he must have the Premier's mandate. Now that I have secured the Premier's attention for a moment I would ask him, and ask him seriously—not having secured the hon. gentleman's attention, I will pause for a reply. Having secured the attention of the Premier, I should like to ask him through the Chair whether, instead of all these Bills, he could not bring in just a few, and let us get them passed. For instance, there is the Bankruptcy Act; and there is no more important measure required for the protection of honest traders than an amendment of the Bankruptcy Act. I know it is almost a hopeless task to get a Bankruptcy Act which will fit every contingency and every case; but we ought to get an Act which, at all events, will not, like last session's Bankruptcy Act, foster a whole host of harpies whose business it is to hunt around for impecunious men with offers to "put them through" by means of compositions or assignments. A few months ago some members of the mercantile community joined together to fight one particular case of this kind, for deeds of assignment had been coming down upon them, first one and then another, until they did not know where they were, or where they were likely to be. The reason was simple. It was only necessary for one of those trustees or accountants—I call them harpies; the vultures that fatten upon the refuse of trade—to go round to an intending bankrupt, call his creditors together in a private room, and there pass a certain number of resolutions in a packed meeting; and the honest debtor to whom the bulk of the money was owing was obliged to take 1s. or 1s. 6d. in the pound—practically nothing.

MR. A. FORREST: In some cases nothing.

MR. GEORGE: Some of them got practically nothing. And I appeal to the right hon. gentleman, who knows that this community, if it is to prosper at all, must have its commerce placed upon a sound basis; and I say that, while we do not wish to oppress or harass a person who by misfortune, illness, or anything of that kind, is brought down, we do say that it should not be so easy to get a man

"whitewashed." We do say that in existing circumstances too many people can go into trade on the principle of "heads I win, tails you lose," without regard to whether or not they can meet their engagements. Then again, when are we to get an Education Bill? Why not let us have it?

THE PREMIER: You have not passed the Address-in-Reply.

MR. GEORGE: I hope it will not be delayed till near the end of the session. Does the Premier wish to pass it? Is he sincere in the matter? I am afraid he is not; for I believe I am quite right in saying that when the Education Bill was introduced into this House last session it was introduced with the definite hope and trust that it would not be passed. If it were not so, how was it that these two debatable subjects—the religious question and the question of payment for tuition—were introduced for consideration in the Bill last session? The Premier knows, and we all know, that some three years ago this House passed a resolution that the education of the children of this colony should be free, secular, and compulsory. Has he carried out the instructions he received? Certainly not, because we find ourselves to-day with an education administration which would be a disgrace to any colony. We have children growing up in the country destitute of education; and why? Because of the red-tape and the regulations of the Education Department, which will neither build schools nor provide teachers, except in places where there are at least twenty-four children. I say that, even if there are only ten, or even only eight, children in a country district, those children have as much right to be educated as our own children here in Perth.

MR. MORAN: And even one child has the same right to be educated.

MR. GEORGE: Undoubtedly. And if the Education Department is not capable of framing regulations and seeing that all the children of the nation are educated, the sooner we sweep it out of the way the better. I notice that the hon. member who is now Minister of Mines, but who was formerly Minister of Education, is smiling over a matter on which one feels earnestly—a matter over which, if he had felt earnestly, he

could have carried his Bill last year. He said last year:—

It is desired by the Government that education in this colony should be made as free as possible.

What did he mean by that? Did he mean absolutely free, or simply free enough to suit the regulations prepared by the department? I have seen some letters written by the department to schools in my district (the Murray), which are an absolute disgrace not only to the men who wrote them, but to the Minister who presides over that department. I wonder whether hon. gentlemen who become Ministers of the Crown really understand that they are the servants of the people, or whether they think they are the people's masters? The House that does not bring such men to book has not risen to a sense of the responsibility of its position. The Premier has had a distinguished political career; but I say, that unless he clears that blot from his escutcheon, I am afraid his name in the future will be more hated than revered.

MR. MORAN: Poor old escutcheon!

MR. GEORGE: Last evening the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) referred in a pleasant way to the "truck" system; and with my usual impetuosity I interjected something about it. I have been in this colony for something like nine years, and was manager of what was then, and I believe is now, about the largest timber company in the colony; and so far as I am aware, there is no "truck" system in this colony, in the sense in which the phrase is understood in the old country. It is true that a number of these timber companies keep their own stores; but it is perfectly untrue to say that the Jarrahdale Timber Company—at any rate when I was manager of it—compelled their men to buy from the company's stores on penalty of dismissal.

MR. VOSPER: I never said they did.

MR. GEORGE: I know you did not.

A MEMBER: What about the Karridale Company?

MR. GEORGE: With the Karridale Company I have nothing whatever to do; but I can say, with regard to the Jarrahdale works, that no man was ever questioned with regard to his store account, unless his debit balance was very large,

and the amount coming to him in wages was only nominal.

THE PREMIER: Was there any competition there?

MR. GEORGE: Yes.

THE PREMIER: Were there other stores?

MR. GEORGE: There were other stores—not so many, probably, as there are now. At the same time, it is not right that such a statement should go forth uncontradicted from this House unless there is absolute proof of its truth—that men are “sacked” for not dealing with the different companies’ stores. If that can be proved, I will do everything in my power to support the hon. member in his attempts to reform the system; but I do not think the statement is correct.

MR. VOSPER: You have only exonerated one company.

MR. GEORGE: I am speaking of the company I know. Returning to the Speech, there is a certain amount of land legislation—taxation of absentees—which it appears we are going in for. Well, I say, tax them right away at once. If a man owns a lot of land in this country, and will neither use it himself nor allow other people to use it, put a heavy tax upon him; because the only right the State has in the first instance to part with its land is in virtue of the implied contract with the purchaser that he will use it for his own benefit, and will improve it for the use of other people. If he does not do that, he has broken his contract; and I say the State will act rightly in resuming the land, and I hope the Government will be strong enough to do so. Last year there was a considerable amount of correspondence in the newspapers, and there were also some leading articles—those articles which the Commissioner of Crown Lands never “inspires,” but seems to know all about—in reference to the Jarrahdale timber concession. The Premier was interviewed in reference to this matter, and apparently was going to do a lot about getting the concession thrown open to selection; but nothing has been done in the matter since then, and it appears unlikely that anything will be done. A fortnight ago I wrote to the Premier on this subject; but he has not had the courtesy to reply, and apparently he does not care to reply

to letters dealing with unpleasant matters. It is a peculiar fact that the Premier can give an interview to a newspaper representative on this subject, but cannot reply to a letter from a member of Parliament. A representative of the Press can interview the Premier, and, as a result, write a long article; but the letter of a member of Parliament is treated with discourtesy and silence; and from the facts I leave people to draw their own conclusion.

THE PREMIER: I sent the hon. member's letter to the department, and I expect it will be replied to. I cannot administer every department.

MR. GEORGE: I know that the Premier cannot administer every department, but I know what he can do, and has done. He has got me into a mess by what must be a lapse of memory on his part, in telling a representative of the Press that he had never been approached in regard to the opening of this Jarrahdale timber concession. It is not correct that the Premier has never been approached in that matter.

THE PREMIER: I never said I had not been approached.

MR. GEORGE: It is reported in the newspaper that you did say so, and newspaper reporters, who are intelligent men, and know their business, if the Premier does not know his, do not make mistakes in these interviews. Last year I wished to introduce a deputation to the Premier on this subject, but the right hon. gentleman told me a deputation was unnecessary, as the matter was going to be attended to. The members of the deputation then went back to their district, and now I have received a letter drawing my attention to the recent newspaper interview with the Premier, and pointing out that in the district there is a suspicion either that the deputation brought back an incorrect message, or that I told them a lie when the Premier would rather not see them. That is the position in which the Premier has placed me.

THE PREMIER: We want proof of that.

MR. GEORGE: And yet the Premier has the effrontery to lecture me on courtesy. The Premier should be careful in what he says to representatives of the Press, and if he is not cautious and sharp enough to avoid telling those representa-

tives what he does not desire to tell them, he should not see them, but should do as the Engineer-in-Chief does, namely, write a long account with five or six explanations, and hand it over to the newspapers. With such a statement we could pin the Premier down to his utterances, and he would not have an opportunity of laying the responsibility on the shoulders of poor unfortunate scribes.

THE PREMIER: I do not remember the incident.

MR. GEORGE: But I remember. Railways are mentioned in the Governor's Speech, but I find no mention of perhaps the most important railway required in the South-Western district, that is the Marradong railway, for which there has been agitation for years. The Commissioner of Railways knows more about the subject than I do, and he must know that this line has been agitated for, and that it is a necessary work. While the Government are not to find funds for the construction of this railway, they are going to provide for the construction of the Leonora railway, to which I will refer later on. Last session I was, unfortunately, absent from the House in consequence of indisposition; but I got the member for York (Mr. Monger) to bring the question of the Marradong railway before hon. members. It was agreed in this House that this railway should be made by private enterprise, but when the proposal reached the other Chamber, of which we can only think and dare not speak, it got quashed. If a proposal for the construction of this line be introduced this session, which I have reason to know will be the case, I ask the Premier not only to help in carrying the measure in this Chamber, but to bring his undoubted power to bear to that end in the other chamber. If the Government cannot build this railway for want of funds, they ought not to prevent its construction by persons who are provided with the necessary money. The Leonora railway is referred to in the Speech, and the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) has been good enough to give me a few facts in connection with that district. About a year ago, in company with that hon. member, I went through the district which this proposed railway will tap, and I am fully convinced it is a

railway needed, and, what will suit the Premier better, a railway that will pay. The Leonora line is required for various reasons; and perhaps the most important reason is that the water of the Niagara dam, if the wonderful leak can only be stopped, is wanted to run the Menzies railway. I do not know what has been done with the dam lately, but hon. members may be surprised to learn that the latest scientific engineering method adopted there of stopping a crack in concrete is to drive soft wood pegs into it and trust to the water swelling the wood. Any ordinary individual would certainly think that a remarkable way of stopping a temporary leak, because when water swells the soft wood it is not likely to close the crack, but rather to enlarge it more and more, as indeed has actually occurred. How wide the cracks are now I do not know, but what I do want to know is whether there is more than one pint of water in the dam at the present time.

MR. GREGORY: There are 12½ feet.

MR. GEORGE: Then the crack has not extended so far. No doubt the engineer will go into this matter, and I hope he will send someone with a little experience to see to the work. Such work ought not to be entrusted to boys who are not old enough to have used a razor, or whose only qualification is that they belong to one of the "six families," though we have been told there are no such families. I am told by the member for North Coolgardie that the gold return from the Leonora district for April last was nearly 6,000 ounces, and for May nearly 7,500 ounces. At the present time there are 190 head of stampers at work in one part of the district, and about 85 stampers in another part, while an additional 100 head are in course of erection. As soon as all these stampers are got into working order there is very little doubt the gold return from that district will be quadrupled before long. Then there is the fact, which I can verify from actual observation, that there is very little timber for either firewood or mining purposes in that district; and the consequence is that, if the mines are to go on, Collie coal or Newcastle coal must be used—and in either case the railways benefit—and the mines must also take jarrah or other timber for the purpose of

providing mining props. There need, therefore, be no anxiety as to whether the Leonora railway line will pay. The Minister of Mines last evening was, I thought, very funny; in fact I am not quite sure what to make of that gentleman. I remember him a few years ago, before he was a Minister, as a very quiet, self-possessed gentleman, and the reverse of cunning; but last night he broke out in a new place and got very indignant and very funny, though it is difficult to say what he got indignant about. The hon. gentleman told the House that he did not sit in his office but travelled about the country, and that he knew all about goldmining. If he does know all about goldmining it is the greatest marvel that he still retains office, because it is difficult to understand why some of the great mining companies are not offering him a salary which would tempt him even from the ease of the Ministerial chair. I myself do not know all about goldmining, and what little I do know is sufficient to make me avoid it.

MR. A. FORREST : That is a very good thing for you.

MR. GEORGE : I think it is a good thing for me. It might be thought that I, as an engineer, would know how to run a battery, but while I have a considerable knowledge of machinery, I do not know how to do that. I hope the Minister will not long occupy his present position, but will give me an opportunity of succeeding him, because if he can learn all about gold-mining in twelve months, what would the member for the Murray not learn if he had a similar term of office!

MR. MITCHELL : You would go mad properly.

MR. GEORGE : That is an insinuation. I did not say that the Minister of Mines was mad, but merely that he was funny. I notice that the Auditor General has a few words to say in regard to the Mines Department.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : That is ancient history.

MR. GEORGE : That may be so, but it is no more ancient than the twelve months in which the Minister has learned all about gold-mining, even how to deal with battery plates that have become "sickened," although it is true the Minister has not told us what to do

under such circumstances. The Auditor General says :—

The cash accounts and other books connected with this important department have in like manner been examined.

It will be seen that the Auditor General does not say anything about the accounts being satisfactory; and it is a significant fact that the Mines Department, which is said to be so splendidly managed, is the only department the Auditor General passes with a discreet silence.

MR. MORAN : He does not say that the accounts are not satisfactory.

MR. GEORGE : But the Auditor General in dealing with other departments does say whether the accounts are satisfactory.

MR. MORAN : He leaves well alone.

MR. GEORGE : I notice that the Premier the other day did a thing he had no right to do, and for which he is liable to prosecution. He is a gentleman who knows nothing about engines, and has no certificate, but he actually started to drive an engine at the Mint, and I am afraid I shall have to ask the Engineers' Society to look after him. I find the Minister of Mines speaking of engine-drivers as if he knew all about the work, and the Minister may be very clever; but I do not believe that either myself or my business partner, who has been 55 years at the trade, could pass an examination as conducted under the auspices of the Mines Department.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : I never said I knew all about engine driving.

MR. GEORGE : Section 34 of the Mines Regulation Act provides :

The said Board shall grant a certificate of service to every person who furnishes to the said Board satisfactory evidence that he has been in charge of, and has efficiently managed upon a mine, machinery worked by steam, for a period of twelve months prior to the application for such certificate, and such certificate shall confer the same privileges as a certificate for competency.

What does that mean? It certainly does not provide that a man shall have worked an engine, and it is on this point that the Minister shows his ignorance. So far as these words are concerned it might be a lathe that is meant, because a lathe is driven by steam power. The Minister shakes his head, but I can only say that he really does not know, and while I pardon his ignorance I cannot forgive his assurance.

MR. A. FORREST: The Minister is not supposed to be a professional man.

MR. GEORGE: Then why does the Minister pretend he has the knowledge?

MR. A. FORREST: He never did pretend.

MR. GEORGE: My friend the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) was most barbarously assaulted by the Minister last night, in a tongue fight which should never have taken place.

MR. A. FORREST: You say that, because you have got one more Government supporter over to your side.

MR. GEORGE: I am now simply carrying out a pledge I gave at Menzies twelve months ago.

MR. WOOD: You were not called upon to give any pledge.

MR. GEORGE: It is very difficult to deal with gentlemen who have never served any time at all in connection with a trade or business. The member for West Perth (Mr. Wood) has never had a systematic industrial training in his life, and the same can be said of the Premier. If the Premier had had any systematic commercial training, he would not have made the blunders he has; but as it is now the Premier does not know the a b c of commercial life. At Menzies last year the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) and myself were interviewed by various engine-drivers.

MR. A. FORREST: Why is the leader of the Opposition not listening to you, instead of writing?

MR. GEORGE: As I am not compelled to answer conundrums, I shall not notice that interruption. When at Menzies we were interviewed by a number of engine-drivers, who showed us a list of questions which had been put to them in the examination test; and we found, as will always be found where there is not a properly constituted board, that a lot of the questions were mainly theoretical, such as a man who had been crammed by an expert in a few hours might be able to answer, but such as practical men could not be expected to answer. The effect of this system has been that a candidate who has answered these theoretical questions, when he was put to practical tests in the work to be done, was seen to handle the brake when he ought to handle the regulator. Such a case actually occurred at Menzies. What

these drivers complain about is that whereas a man may be thoroughly practical in the work he would be required to do, yet when he goes before such examiners as these he may have put to him some "tommy-rot" questions that only a university graduate might be expected to answer. I ask the Government to stop this system of examination, which may be well enough theoretically, but in practice is found to prevent practical and capable men from getting employment in work which they are capable of doing. The time is come when the Government should consider what they are going to do, not only with our Public Works Department, but with our Railways Department; for the burden of managing both these concerns is too heavy for any one Minister to bear, no matter how hard-working, or capable, or honest he may be. The burden results in the Minister being so oppressed and so harassed in his work, that he cannot always be as courteous to people or give as much time to them as they would wish; and only a few months ago we saw the spectacle of certain members of Parliament interviewing the Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works in his office, and saying things which they ought to have been ashamed to say. A gross injustice was done to the Minister in charge of those two departments; and I think the attention of the House and the Government should be given strongly to this matter, for the purpose of seeing whether it would not be better for the public works to be represented in this House by one Minister, and to have the public railways dissociated entirely from political management. It is not right to expect that because a member of this House has been fortunate enough to get a few more votes than another candidate seeking election in his constituency, therefore he must be loaded with the responsibility of two departments of the public service, each one requiring large technical knowledge for its successful management. The railways, especially, require a life-long training to carry them on in a thoroughly satisfactory manner.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Those in charge of the railways have not been interfered with.

MR. GEORGE: I am trying to defend the Minister, who has been accused of

having a "swollen head"; and I am trying to show that any man who is unduly harassed may be open to a complaint of that kind. A further reason for separating these departments is that we find the Auditor General, every year, has some complaint to make to this House in reference to the working of these departments; for he either cannot get his vouchers, or the departments will not keep the accounts in proper form, or will spend the money in a manner which the Audit Act, as interpreted by the Auditor General, does not allow. The whole question resolves itself into the fact that the head of these two departments has not time to give the necessary attention to the administration.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I have given too much attention, for him.

MR. GEORGE: I believe that either of these departments would tax the energies of a Minister quite as much as he is paid for, and as much as the country ought to expect. The Auditor General's report for last year contains his usual complaints; and I think we have been very unjust to the Auditor General, for he is placed in a position of trust, and he takes what he believes to be the right and proper course. This House receives from him these reports, year after year, containing complaints against these departments, and yet the House takes no notice of them. I say that either these strictures are not justified, and if that be so the Auditor General is not qualified for his position and should be allowed to retire on a pension, or these strictures are justified, and we in this House are betraying the country in not taking the matter up. We have statements that he cannot get vouchers; we have statements that, contrary to the regulations under the Audit Act, purchases are made by one or other of the departments from persons other than those who have contracted to supply the particular materials for the year. I can quite understand why purchases have to be made out of the regular course, in some instances; but these cases having been pointed out to us, we should put the matter in a proper business form, and if we do that, instead of having these lamentations of the Auditor General presented to us, his reports may then contain just sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the Act, and just suffi-

cient figures to satisfy members of Parliament. I know that some members sneer at that gentleman, because he has the courage of his convictions: but instead of sneering and ignoring him, as some members do in following the lead of the Premier, we should pay proper attention to him. In conclusion, as I cannot deal with paragraph 26, not having the power to declare the session open, I agree with paragraph 25.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle): I congratulate the colony on the improved position resulting from the completion of the various works which are enumerated in His Excellency's Speech. I am pleased also to see that the financial position is sound: but I should like to have seen a return made up to the 30th June, or the balance which is usually published of the revenue and expenditure to the end of the financial year, because that return would have given some idea as to how the colony stands. The second paragraph is important, as it refers to federation, which is a question requiring the gravest consideration; and as no doubt, ultimately, the Federation Bill will go to the people, it is absolutely necessary that every clause in that Bill should be well digested in this House. There is no doubt the public feeling throughout Australia is for closer union; but at the same time each of the other colonies has taken care, through its representative men at the Conventions, to safeguard the interests of the particular colony to the best of their ability. Indeed, some of the cleverest men in Australasia have been sent to these Conventions, having studied the question as to what is best for their particular colony; and we in Western Australia should consider this question with the same careful regard to the interests of our colony. In dealing with the Bill, the fiscal policy will be that which principally affects this colony; and we should carefully consider what this colony will lose by joining federation. It is with that view I have asked, this afternoon, for a return to be made up to the 30th of June showing the financial position, so that we may have a correct basis for our calculations; because our calculations hitherto have been based upon returns made up to 1898, and as we have since had another year's transactions, with a large revenue and a large expenditure, we require now

the latest particulars, for we are entirely in the dark as to the basis on which our calculations should be made in studying the federation question. It is well known that railways will be among the principal works taken over by the Federal Government.

MR. MITCHELL: No.

MR. SOLOMON: I say, yes; there is no doubt about it; and we have to realise the fact that we are not like the other colonies in regard to inter-communication, for they have railways running from one to the other, and they are in close connection; whereas our only means of communication with the other colonies is by water, and we must consider the position we shall be in if our railways are to be taken over and worked by the Commonwealth. There will also be the customs taken over, and I have no doubt the Mint will be taken over by the Commonwealth; so that these are changes which should be carefully considered, and it will need time to realise them in this colony. It is unnecessary to go into the matter now, but I am sure it will be found that Western Australia cannot at the present juncture join the Commonwealth. I should like to refer to a small extract from a Sydney newspaper, headed "What was lacking in the Convention Bill," to show the feeling in the other colonies with regard to Western Australia. From this it will be seen that nearly all the other colonies look upon it as almost impossible that Western Australia can come in at the present time. The passage shows "how the old trouble arose":—

There can be no doubt that the whole of the difficulties and the deadlock in the matter of finance arose from ignoring the necessities of the Australian position. The Customs, the duties, and the railways are inseparable. Whether it is right or wrong to federalise the debts and railways is another matter, but our purpose is now to prove that they are inseparable.

Now this is the part of which I want hon. members to take particular notice:—

Take the debts, excluding Western Australia, which cannot, it is now generally admitted, as yet join in the federal compact.

MR. MORAN: What paper is that, Mr. Solomon?

MR. SOLOMON: The Sydney *Daily Telegraph*. Passing that, I am pleased to think that the public batteries have been

a success. There was, of course, considerable discussion with regard to these batteries, and grave doubts were expressed as to whether they would meet the requirements of the fields; but it is pleasant to hear, especially from one hon. member who has had batteries erected in his own district, that they are working at a profit. That will be good news for the country, and I see no reason why batteries should not be erected in places where they are likely to pay. With regard to the Coolgardie exhibition, I had the pleasure of visiting it, and was much pleased with what I saw; at the same time, I think it was a fatal mistake that the exhibition was not held in Perth. I fear the pecuniary result will not be anything like what it would have been had the exhibition been centrally situated, in some place where the people could have come from all parts of the colony without paying the heavy railway fares from Perth to Coolgardie; because the gold exhibits would have given the people, more particularly those of the Central and Southern districts, some idea of the mineral wealth of the colony. At present there appears to be much ignorance as to what our mines are producing, and if the people in general had seen some of those tellurides which I saw at the exhibition, with their 40 and 50 ounces to the ton, I think they would have been greatly surprised. The Collie coalfields are rapidly progressing, and although the coal is, perhaps, not so good as we expected it to be, still, I hope that, as the mines go deeper, their product will prove equal to any imported fuel. As a domestic article, I know from my own experience that there is nothing to beat the Collie coal, and that alone will make it a great boon to the colony, more especially if railway freights can be reduced so that the coal can be taken to places where wood is scarce, and where there is a demand for it for household purposes. On the goldfields it should prove invaluable, and the reduction of freights which I have suggested would possibly create a larger demand than the mines would at present be prepared to supply.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The freight is at present very low—0½d. per ton.

MR. SOLOMON: A great deal has been said with regard to the Fremantle

harbour works. I, for my part, think the works are getting on very well. I never expected that the harbour could be made in a day. It is an immense work when we come to think of it. Of course, as time goes on some difficulties may be encountered, as I suppose there must be in all undertakings; but, so far as the dock, at all events, is concerned, I hope that matter will be put in hand immediately. It is absurd to think that large vessels coming here, as they often do, out of repair, should have to go elsewhere for repairs, instead of being docked and attended to at Fremantle, thus circulating money in the colony, and encouraging our own workmen.

MR. MORAN: You Fremantle men are always worrying about docks.

MR. SOLOMON: I speak of this because a "slip" has been constructed. Had that slip been successful, I should have said nothing about it, but I think it is well known that the slip has never proved useful for the purpose for which it was intended. All the departmental officers know that, from the Engineer-in-Chief downward. However, I will say no more about it, though at the same time I hope no more money will be spent on the slip, but that the dock, which will be a great boon to the port and to shipping, will be put in hand as soon as possible. It is pleasing to know that so many new jetties are being constructed. In regard to stock-yards, Owen's Anchorage affords a good example of the success which has attended private enterprise. The slaughtering-yards in that locality are a great success, and I hope the Government will be induced to erect a general public abattoir on that site. Such a general slaughtering place would be most convenient to the public, for it is well known that, even now, large numbers of stock come up to Perth by railway direct from Fremantle, so that the change would make no difference whatever to the meat supply of Perth. It is gratifying to note that all the railways voted have been completed, but I should like to ask the Commissioner how it is that the more railways we get and the greater the traffic, the greater becomes the proportion of our expenses to our income? Some few years ago, the working expenses of the railway

were something like 50 per cent. At the present time, though we have more traffic—we certainly have more lines—we find that the expenses have risen from 50 per cent. to 80 per cent.—a difference of 30 per cent.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: There will be a reduction to 69 per cent. this year. I explained that matter last year.

MR. SOLOMON: Possibly you did, but it is the public who need the explanation; it is for the sake of the public that I ask for it. It is a pity that there has been a hitch in the matter of the Fremantle water works, which have been a boon highly valued by the town, and the Government has already been thanked for the work done. But at the same time, it is highly desirable that something should be done to neutralise the brackishness in the water, caused by the influx of the tides. I should also like to point out to the Director of Public Works that the Fremantle reservoirs are not enclosed; anyone can throw a dead cat or a dead dog into the water; and in a place like Fremantle, where there are all sorts of people, the danger of such contamination is great. This matter requires immediate attention. I should like to know from the Minister whether he intends to do anything in this direction.

THE PREMIER: The reservoirs are fenced in.

MR. SOLOMON: Oh, the fence is useless.

THE PREMIER: Is it an iron fence?

MR. SOLOMON: No; a picket fence. I do not think it necessary to deal with all the proposed public works seriatim. I shall give the Government every possible assistance in passing the various Bills they may introduce. These are measures which should prove very useful to the colony, and they will command my very hearty support.

MR. MITCHELL (Murchison): We hear rumours of wars, we hear of the lion lying down with the lamb, and we hear Mother Shipton's prophecies about the coming of the millenium. We have heard a great deal of talk about federation. Concerning that subject I will say this much, even though I run the risk of repeating what has already been said, so that I may have a chance of referring to paragraph 2 of the Speech, which deals

with the scheme of the syndicate which I call "Messrs. G. H. Reid and Company," commonly known as federation. Some time ago, the hon. member for East Perth (Mr. James) said he had no patience with a man who never had the pluck nor the honesty to confess that he was opposed to federation. Well, I tell this House that I, for one, am absolutely opposed to federation for Western Australia, and that on account of the geographical position of this colony. We all know that inter-colonial freetrade will follow federation. The other colonies will open their ports to us, and we will open ours to them; but is there any one in this House who will say that we can participate in the advantage of that freedom of trade? I say we cannot, because we have nothing we could send to the other colonies to compete with them in trade. The member who has just sat down cannot have read up the Bill very well, and in that respect he may be like myself and other hon. members. He said that the Federal Government would take over the railways, but I have not seen any provision of that kind in the Commonwealth Bill. As far as I know, the Federal Government will not take over the railways, although they will take over the Post and Telegraph services, defence, control of lighthouses, and business of that kind. My own idea is that, if we federate, Western Australia will be ruined as a colony or State, and never be heard of as Western Australia any more. A great many people admire the pluck and perseverance of Mr. Reid, but there is no doubt that gentleman has an idea of bossing the whole show when the other colonies have placed their necks in the noose which he has prepared. Much has also been said in this discussion about parochialism, but is there anybody who can say that we will be less parochial when we get federation?

MR. JAMES: Yes, several people say that.

MR. MITCHELL: I do not think we will be any less parochial. We will not only have our local Government, or so-called Government—because I think it will then scarcely be a Government at all—but there will be in addition the Federal Government, and also that apparently innocent inter-State commission. So far as Western Australia is concerned, I am more afraid of the inter-State commission

than of the Federal Government. That commission would have the right to come and meddle with our affairs, and I hope the time will not arrive when we shall be subject to such a body, which would certainly be composed of persons who have no interest in this colony. Western Australia owns something like a third of the continent, and Queensland also owns a very large portion; and in the Bill provision is made whereby Queensland may subdivide into so many States, and, as the territory is subdivided, each new State becomes entitled to six senators. If such a concession is given to Queensland, why should Western Australia not be entitled to subdivide her large territory?

MR. JAMES: No doubt we could subdivide.

MR. MITCHELL: Subdivision would not make much difference in regard to the number of representatives, but it would certainly make a difference in the number of senators. Many of those who advocate federation ask people who are opposed to it to prove that this colony would lose anything by union. But we all know that to thoroughly prove a constitution it must be tried, and the worst is that if we once adopt federation we cannot go back again, but must remain at the tender mercies of those who will dominate us in every respect. The Premier, when representing this colony at one of the Conventions, said he would have all his time cut out to persuade the people of Western Australia to join federation; that he could not hope to show this colony could gain anything by the union, and that all he could hope to do was to show the people that they would lose nothing. I would like the Premier to be able to show us now that we shall not lose anything by federation, because I have never heard anybody make such a statement.

MR. JAMES: Show us where Western Australia will lose by federation.

MR. MITCHELL: I believe we will lose by federation.

MR. JAMES: Show us where.

MR. MITCHELL: I have just told you that in order to prove the effects of federation we must try federation, and that when once we try it we cannot go back. And why should this colony federate when we are getting on very well as we are? Our debt is a mere trifle com-

pared with our resources. We only owe something like £10,000,000, and what is that in comparison with our resources? It has been said that our debt per head is more than that of the other colonies, but this I emphatically deny. I think it will be found that the debt per head of this colony is something over £2 10s. less than the average per head of the other colonies, with whom we are asked to federate.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is not correct.

MR. MITCHELL: I am judging from information which I have received, but I ask the hon. member when he has a chance to disprove my statement if he can. I would also say that we pay a quarter per cent. less for the money we have borrowed than the average interest paid by the other colonies.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is so.

MR. MITCHELL: A great deal has been said about our debts, but what I have said in regard to them I am quite prepared to prove to-morrow morning. What has our position been for the last six months? The revenue has, as far as I can judge, exceeded the expenditure by something like £50,000; and why should we want to federate under these circumstances? I hope the time is far distant when we shall foolishly put our necks into the noose prepared for us by the other colonies. I am pleased to observe that the question of women's franchise is to be brought forward. I have always been opposed to that movement, and fancied that even if domestic misfortune overtook me, and I was induced to enter the matrimonial market, I would still be averse to this extension of the franchise. I have always thought that the women of the colony, generally speaking, do not want the franchise; that, in fact, it was only wanted by a few of the "new woman" type.

MR. JAMES: What do you mean by the new woman?

MR. MITCHELL: I am not a good hand at definition but, if I were called upon to define the new woman I should say that she wishes to assume the breeches, while retaining all the rights and privileges of petticoats. There is another type of woman in America of whom we hear. We read that there a woman has suggested a law prohibiting kissing; but I imagine there must be

something of the "fox and the grapes" about such a proposal. It is probable that her general appearance and other attributes do not bring to that lady those little perquisites which her happier sisters attract, and her proposal would seem to have been made on the ground that, as she could not have any kisses herself, she would prevent anybody else having them.

MR. JAMES: Do you find that women like kissing?

MR. MITCHELL: Perhaps the hon. member knows more about that subject than I do.

MR. JAMES: Why do you talk about the "fox and the grapes" if you know nothing about the subject?

MR. MITCHELL: All I can say in reply to the hon. member is that as the rooster among the franchise hens, he ought to know more about this subject than myself. I now come to the most serious part of the federation question, namely, the proposal for a referendum. The referendum is not an accepted policy amongst English people, but I can see that we may probably have to come down and resort to such a method. I do not say for a moment that the present Parliament has the right to deal wholly and solely with this great question, which must be referred to the people. But I confess I am somewhat in a plight on this matter. In the first instance, I am opposed to federation, and in the next instance, I am in favour of the referendum under certain conditions; but I certainly would make those conditions before the question goes to the people. There ought to be some provision for a residence qualification for voters under the referendum, and a man to vote on this great question should have resided in the colony for at least three years. I do not think that any man has a right to vote in favour of handing over the affairs of this colony to others, until he has been here that length of time.

MR. JAMES: Why not make it 14 years, as in the Transvaal?

MR. MITCHELL: That is not necessary, and, in any case, I think the hon. member is wrong when he says that President Kruger ever imposed such a qualification. In addition to the residential qualification, a minimum majority should be stipulated for, and that majority

ought to be at least three-fifths. Speaking figuratively, it might happen that 100 people would vote for federation and 99 people vote against it; and would it be right that the destinies of this colony should be handed over to the tender mercies of unknown powers, by a bare majority of one? We never hear of a man being hanged by a bare majority; and we should certainly try, as I shall try, to have a minimum majority fixed as necessary to the carrying of the Bill. If any hon. member will read the Commonwealth Bill and refer to section 34, he will there find it provided that no person shall be eligible for election as a representative or a senator unless he has resided in the Commonwealth or in one of the States for three years; and the same disability I think should attach to voters in this colony as to the acceptance or otherwise of the Convention Bill.

MR. JAMES: That is the disability of the foreigner, who under the Federal Bill can be naturalised after three years' residence.

THE PREMIER: He must have resided somewhere in the Commonwealth for three years.

MR. JAMES: The federal constitution is most reasonable on that point.

MR. MITCHELL: There is no man who would get up in this House and say he was not a home ruler or did not wish to control his own affairs; but directly we join federation we give over our independence to a power of which we know nothing. We might do good work for true federation in trying to bring about a better understanding between the people on the goldfields and those in the coastal districts. Those two sections of the community are too little known to each other, and there is too much jealousy between them, and if a better understanding could be brought about, we would not hear so much in favour of federation with people who perhaps may never come to this colony, and who care no more about our affairs than they do about affairs which they have never seen nor heard of. I have just been up to the goldfields, and I heard the people there remark that those on the coast do not desire to do anything for the benefit of districts up country, but I think the goldfields people are very much mistaken, and that they are just as much to blame

as those on the coast for the estrangement which apparently exists.

At 6.30 the DEPUTY SPEAKER left the chair.

At 7.30 the DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the chair.

MR. MITCHELL (resuming): I was referring to Clause 34 of the Commonwealth Bill, and it has been said over and over again that this Bill is one of the most democratic that has ever been brought before the people; but on looking through this clause I do not consider it is altogether democratic, for it provides that any English-born subject has to reside three years within one of the federated States, before he can be eligible for election as a senator or a representative. It also provides that no alien can be a representative until he has been naturalised here for at least five years. I do not understand exactly what democracy means, but I am sure there is not much democracy about that. With regard to the women's franchise, I believe that if these good creatures were favoured with the franchise, they would vote almost straight against federation; and, holding that opinion, I would disregard my personal opposition to the granting of this franchise, and say I would give them not only one but two votes; because, of the two evils, federation is the greater. Reference is made in the Speech to the Mint, and if we refer to the Commonwealth Bill we find that no State, after joining federation, will be allowed to coin money. We have spent about £60,000 on the Mint in this colony, and if we are not to be allowed to gain any benefit from that, and cannot work the Mint after we federate, then what is the good of all that expenditure? I spoke on this subject to my constituents at Northampton recently, and one elector suggested that if we were not allowed to use the Mint after this colony joined the Commonwealth, the best use for it would be to make it an asylum for putting in those mad people who voted for federation. I suggested that there might be a disability about that, because the number would probably be so great that the building could not hold them. The Coolgardie Exhibition is referred to in

the Speech, and I was one of those who attended its funeral. The Exhibition has lived a respectable life, it has been buried respectably, and I am delighted to hear that it is likely to have a respectable resurrection in Perth, where it is suggested that the principal exhibits should be shown before they are sent on to Paris. It is unfortunate that the Exhibition was not held originally in Perth instead of Coolgardie, for although I feel a respect for Coolgardie, and consider that the Exhibition promoted there has been a great credit to that place, and was an agreeable surprise to myself and others, yet when I was going there last week I met a friend, who said, "They are closing it pretty quickly, they are so afraid of someone stealing the exhibits." I said, "Can they be carried away in a carpet-bag?" And he replied, "Yes, very nearly." Before going up, I had heard that kind of gossip; but I was agreeably astonished when I reached Coolgardie and saw what a creditable Exhibition had been arranged there. I hope the Government will take care to send a really suitable person in charge of the principal exhibits, when they are sent on to Paris. In conclusion, although I disagree with some items in His Excellency's Speech, I have pleasure in supporting the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

MR. WALLACE (Yalgoo): The first thing in the Speech attracting my attention is paragraph 2, referring to federation, and I would like to explain my attitude as one who voted for the amendment on the Address-in-Reply. It was distinctly understood by myself that the amendment would not be a party one, and that on the main question each member would have an entirely free hand. Those of us who supported the amendment saw that the Speech did not promise that the Federation Bill should be referred to the people at an early date, and we felt it our duty to support the amendment for getting the Bill referred to the people. I can say that the members who voted for the amendment are not ashamed or surprised by our defeat, for we knew that when the Premier announced to his supporters that the amendment would be treated as a want-of-confidence in the Government, the effect would be that the amendment must be defeated by the Government majority.

THE PREMIER: I do not think I told them that. The member for Albany said it first.

MR. WALLACE: When the Premier gave that forth, we fully realised our position, for we knew that the supporters of Government, who had always been loyal to him, would support him on that occasion. We have an instance in the most able member, I will venture to say, sitting upon the Government side of the House; for that gentleman, the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), at a dinner given in Coolgardie to the Premier some few weeks ago, alluded to the Premier as his leader — [MR. MORGANS: Hear, hear] — and was proud to say he was one of the Premier's humble followers, and would continue to follow the Premier no matter what the right hon. gentleman's policy might be.

MR. MORGANS: I never said that.

MR. WALLACE: Pardon me; the newspapers said so, and I place great reliance on newspaper reports.

THE PREMIER: Do not rely on them too much, or you will occasionally be deceived.

MR. WALLACE: Knowing that the Premier was supported by such loyal men, we Opposition members went to a division on the amendment with a full knowledge that we were going to be defeated, and we took our defeat with great satisfaction. During the division we sat on the opposite side of the House without any fear or shame, and we look with confidence to our constituents, knowing that we have done our duty to the electors of the colony. I see some reference in the Speech to the Commonwealth Bill, as amended at the Conference of Premiers held in Melbourne in February last, "copies having been forwarded to every elector in the colony." That certainly is news to me.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have had six copies.

MR. WALLACE: Since reading the Governor's Speech, I have learnt that a firm of drapers in this city issued copies of the Commonwealth Bill; but these were treated by the recipients in the way that such literature is usually dealt with, and were passed unopened into the waste-paper basket.

THE PREMIER: The recipients could not tell what the circulars were till they opened them.

MR. WALLACE: No; but you can form a good idea of the contents of a missive when you see an advertisement on the outside of it; and therefore the copies of the Bill were, by many people, consigned at once to the rubbish-bin without examination.

THE PREMIER: That was unfortunate, I will admit.

MR. WALLACE: I earnestly hope now, notwithstanding the failure of the strong appeals made to the Premier by the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) and the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), that the right hon. gentleman will announce whether it is his intention to send the Bill to the people.

MR. MORGANS: He has already promised to do so.

MR. WALLACE: The Premier has said he will not give us any information on the subject; but we have had an answer from the member for Coolgardie.

THE PREMIER: What is that?

MR. WALLACE: That it is the intention of the Government to send the Bill to the people.

THE PREMIER: You must have been absent during the discussion.

MR. WALLACE: No; I distinctly heard the Premier say that he would not give the information just yet. I hope that when he has decided to send copies of the Bill to the people, they will not be sent out in the form of drapery advertisements.

THE PREMIER: We have sent out a fresh lot of copies.

MR. WALLACE: I take the Premier's word that he has sent out copies, and that they do not bear any patent medicine or drapery advertisements, or anything of the sort, to imperil their reception. Having satisfied myself that the Government intend to comply with the wishes of the Opposition expressed in the amendment which was lost, I can now pass on to paragraph 4 of the Speech, referring to the establishment of public batteries; and there is no paragraph in the whole document which gives me greater pleasure to read than paragraph 4. It has been the subject of severe criticism from various members, but I will venture to say that if due consideration were given to the question, these criticisms would not be heard. I would ask those members who have criticised the erection

and the management of these batteries, whether similar misfortunes have not befallen batteries erected by private enterprise? It is stated in the Speech that "owing to insufficiency of water and the isolation of the localities where the batteries have been erected, considerable difficulties have been experienced." And the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) said that the question of water supply should have been decided before the batteries were erected. I agree with him there, and cannot excuse the Government on that point, because they had the benefit of the experience of those fields on which batteries had previously been erected, and in spite of that, the Government erected their batteries first, and prospected for water afterwards. And I think that on reference to the papers laid on the table to-day, it will be seen that the cost of procuring water for some of those batteries has been very much greater than hon. members will care to hear, but the public have been clamouring for batteries in various places, and I am sorry to say that the Minister has given way too much to the public. In deference to public clamour he has allowed those batteries to be hurriedly removed from one place to another, and now the public turn round and heap upon the Government every possible form of condemnation. But, after protecting the Government to this extent, I at the same time wish them to recollect that they have been guilty of a very great fault. They took this matter in hand knowing the difficulties surrounding the erection of batteries, and I blame them for not having selected their own sites, giving due consideration to the nature of the district. I think, had the sites been selected by the department, the cost of procuring water would have been in many cases reduced by one-half, and the public in the end would have been satisfied just as well as, if not better than, they are now. There was an instance in my own district. The first mention of a battery for my district took the form of an offer by some prospectors to purchase from the Government a battery on terms; that led to the proposal for the establishment of a public battery. A site on which there was a permanent shaft of water was recommended by these prospectors, but the Minister of Mines

allowed a few business men to interfere, and, after spending nearly £200 on excavations, and putting the prospectors to the expense of getting timber to sink their water shaft in order to conserve sufficient water, the Minister allowed these few business men to persuade him to remove the battery a distance of some three or four miles, to the site of an old and abandoned water shaft; whereas, had the Government kept the battery on its first site, they would have saved perhaps £700 in the matter of water supply, they would have had just as much crushing as they have to-day, and they would have satisfied the people quite as much as they have.

MR. A. FORREST : Who got the battery shifted?

MR. WALLACE : Some of the business people at Yalgoo, and that is what I want to point out. Though I have protected the Government by saying that they gave way to public clamour, still, they cannot come here and throw the blame on the people. I say that the Government might well have met the people in any reasonable way, but when they knew the difficulties of getting water, particularly on the eastern goldfields where the water is scarce, might not the departmental officers have used their own judgment in selecting sites? Had they done so, we should have had much less to say on the question at the present time.

THE PREMIER : I think a local committee selected the site at Yalgoo.

MR. WALLACE : The Minister of Mines undertook to change the site without any reference to the member for the district. It was done almost without my knowledge.

THE PREMIER : Was there not a public meeting concerning it?

MR. WALLACE : I admit there was a public meeting, but the member for the district was in Perth at the time, and I think the Minister of Mines might have extended a little courtesy to the member by asking him for his views. But, when the member returned to the district, he found that the battery was in course of removal to a distance of three miles, at an additional cost of little less than £400, while the change of site will not increase the output of stone nor the receipts of the battery. I am pleased to see that more public batteries are to be erected, and I

hope the Government will recognise that the number of batteries now running—nine—is more than the present staff of officers can be expected to attend to; and, though there is a competent, practical man at the head of affairs, I trust the Minister recognises the necessity of giving him the assistance requisite for the efficient supervision and working of the proposed new batteries. The member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) alluded to the inability of the staff to supervise this large number of batteries. That statement is quite correct, and will be confirmed by anyone who understands the subject. I hope therefore the Government will not imperil the success of the work for the sake of saving another man's salary. Of course I have been told that the department recognise a good man when they find one, and pay him accordingly, and I know they have some men in the service with whom no fault can be found—practical men, not only capable of financial management, but conversant with the working of machinery and with mining. The statements I asked for at the beginning of the session have been laid on the table to-day, and I have learnt the cost of treatment of the ore, and the tonnage, and the number of stamps at the various batteries. It appears that the average cost of crushing, taking the whole of the batteries, is 15s. 2d. per ton. This shows that the department have overcome the difficulties with which they have had to contend. The statement shows that whereas under previous management the cost of crushing was as high as 29s. per ton, with the present efficient management it has been reduced to about 18s. 8d.; so, taking that into consideration, I think we are quite safe in leaving the management of these batteries in the hands of the Mines Department in cases where the batteries are well situated, and where the stone is rich. But I should like to suggest to the Minister of Mines that some consideration be given to districts where the ore is poor. I suggested to him some two years ago that the charges should be arranged on some sort of a sliding scale. In many districts where batteries are, there is plenty of stone which could be profitably crushed at the batteries and give work to a number of men, if a minimum charge of 10s. and a maximum charge of 20s. were made, with 1s. per

ton extra for all returns over 10 dwts. On the statement laid on the table this evening, I venture to say that, on an average, the department would get 15s. a ton right through, if these maximum and minimum charges were made. There are one or two little matters of detail in connection with the batteries that I had intended speaking to the Minister about in his office, but it will not be out of place to mention them now. Some of the managers of the batteries are very much hampered by the mode they have to adopt in the payment of their men. The manager of the battery in my district has to apply to the warden for the money with which to pay the employees, and the warden gives him one large cheque for the full amount. As the manager has no bank account at Yalgoo, he has to send that cheque away to Geraldton, and in the meantime, if some of the men, as is frequently the case, want to go away, application has to be made to the local storekeepers to finance the manager until the money comes from Geraldton. That surely is a matter which could be arranged in the Minister's office, but while on the question of batteries I thought I would mention the fact in order to put on the alert other members with batteries in their districts. Such a state of affairs is a serious handicap on the manager, and places him in a very awkward position.

THE PREMIER: Cannot the warden supply money.

MR. WALLACE: No.

THE PREMIER: I think the matter has been avoided by giving the warden so much cash.

MR. GEORGE: Why does the Minister of Mines not reply? Is this money not paid by his department?

THE PREMIER: No; by the Treasury.

MR. A. FORREST: Why does the manager not give his own cheque?

MR. WALLACE: It is not desirable that the manager should finance the affair any more than that the storekeeper should.

THE PREMIER: The warden pays the money.

MR. WALLACE: Yes; but there is the resulting inconvenience, and the present state of affairs gives room for criticism, in avoiding which I wish to assist the Government.

THE PREMIER: The difficulty has been settled, so far as Yalgoo is concerned.

MR. WALLACE: If so, it has been settled since I came to town. Then, at Yalgoo, we have to take Government cheques in payment for various accounts. The gold from the battery is, according to instructions—though I do not know whether those instructions came from the Minister or not—is lodged with the warden, and when people go to the warden to release the gold, he will not take a cheque.

A MEMBER: Quite right.

MR. WALLACE: It may be quite right; but why should we be obliged to take Government cheques if the Government will not take our cheques, or when the Postal Department, for instance, will not take the cheques of the Works Department at Yalgoo. The papers laid on the table by the Minister to-night, give the information I asked for, although I should have liked a little more detail set forth. As to the keeping of accounts, I would bring under the notice of the Minister a system which has been adopted by some mining companies, and under which is set forth every detail of expenditure, from that on a packet of tin tacks to a crank shaft. If such a system were adopted by the department members of the House could ascertain exactly what was being consumed and what was the stores were comprised of. This system adopted by some of the local mining companies is a beautiful system, under which, as I say, every detail of expenditure can be ascertained in an instant. I cannot of course criticise the system of accounts in the department, because I have not seen it, but the system I have referred to strikes me as one eminently suited for the purpose. Had I known of that system when I put these questions to the Minister I should have asked for much fuller information, although what information I have is perfectly satisfactory to me. The Minister of Mines has admitted that the public batteries are not being run at a loss, and I am just as proud of that fact as the Minister himself. But I hope the Minister will consider the system of a sliding scale which can be adopted in many districts with considerable benefit where there are poor class ores. I know the Minister has his own views in regard to the Yalgoo public

battery. I have never attempted so far, but I am going now to attempt to alter the opinion of the Minister in regard to the public battery at that place. The Minister is one who listens to opinions from everybody and from every direction. From a remark made to me I am satisfied that the conduct of the Mines Department is influenced by certain statements made to the Minister in connection with this battery—that the Minister believes, as he was told by a gentleman introduced to him by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) that this particular battery is a “white elephant” and the laughing stock of the country.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No.

MR. WALLACE: This gentleman admitted that was the opinion of the Minister. Now we have a statement from the Minister which shows that at the Yalgoo battery the cost of crushing is 12s. 11d. per ton, while the department receives 15s. per ton from the owners of the stone. This is the only five-head battery in the colony, and I believe it is called “Wittenoom’s coffee mill.” It is a new kind of mill known as a unit battery, and, when one takes into consideration the time lost in cleaning up, and that it is only a five-head apparatus, and compares the quantity of stone put through it with the quantity put through other ten-head batteries, the conclusion must be arrived at that the Yalgoo battery stands foremost amongst the batteries of the colony. No doubt the battery has had broken time, and has met with accidents like other machinery, but calculating that broken time the battery has done wonderful work. I feel assured that the Minister of Mines, with the superintendent of public batteries, will develop the system with satisfaction to everybody, and will, ere long, be able to reduce the price for crushing. I have seen crushing done on the eastern fields for results as low as 2dwts. These bad results the member for North Coolgardie attributed to bad management. I myself do not know any of the managers, but if there is only bad management 10dwts. could not have been lost.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: You cannot get gold if it is not there.

MR. WALLACE: That is a question I will leave in the hands of the Minister and of the member for North Coolgardie.

though I do not know whether the department is taking the latter gentleman’s advice. As to the Coolgardie Exhibition I, like many others from the northern portions of the colony, thought the Exhibition would be a perfect frost. So much was that impression of the people in the north that it was difficult to get anybody to send exhibits, but, having taken a little interest in the exhibits which were sent, and having visited the Exhibition and seen not only the mining but the agricultural exhibits, I venture to say, without posing as a mining expert, a mineralogist, or a geologist, that, if that Exhibition is only to cost £7,000, as has been stated, it will be £7,000 well spent.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Is it only £7,000?

MR. WALLACE: The member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) said that it would have been better had the Exhibition been held at Perth or Fremantle. I agree with that, and so does every hon. member looking at the Exhibition from the point of view of public attendance; but there is no denying that the fact that the Exhibition was held in the centre of the mining community resulted in one of the best mining exhibits. I understand, in the world. If the Exhibition had been held at Perth or Fremantle there would, no doubt, have been a larger attendance of people than we have seen at Coolgardie, and the revenue would have been considerably enlarged; but as a standing advertisement, not only of the mineral wealth, but of the agricultural wealth of the colony, I think it was very wise to establish the exhibition on the goldfields. Held at Coolgardie, the Exhibition has been the means of bringing agriculturists and miners together; and there was a gathering of the two classes at Coolgardie some three weeks ago. The Commission appointed to take charge of the exhibits and send them to Paris in 1900 is composed of mining men of energy and tact, and, if the matter be left in their hands, the desire of the Government, which is to have a thorough representation of the colony, will be carried out to a most successful issue. I do not think that members should have wasted time in referring to the method by which the number of visitors to the Coolgardie Exhibition has been arrived at. I do not see how it would have been possible to ascertain the

number of visitors without counting those who go every day and every night. No doubt the statement that 70,000 people visited the Exhibition does not mean 70,000 different people; but, inasmuch as there were no other means of taking the census of attendance, hon. members might have left unmade comments on that point. The next paragraph in His Excellency's Speech refers to the Collie coalfields. That is a matter I know little of, and not sufficient to express an opinion as to the ultimate value of the fields to the colony. But I would like to ask why it was that when the Government had the work in hand they could not prove payable coal. About twelve months ago a Parliamentary party was invited to visit the coalfields in charge of the Commissioner of Railways, and at the pit's mouth we were then shown stacks of fuel, which at the time made a bad impression on people who knew anything about coal. But I am pleased that, with the assistance of the Government, an energetic company has taken the matter in hand, and is developing a coalfield which promises to be a valuable asset to the country, and more valuable when we recognise that sooner or later fuel will either have to be taken to the mines or ore brought from the mines to the fuel. In paragraph 10 of the Speech it is stated:—

The whole of the railway lines authorised by Parliament have been completed and opened for traffic. The railways so completed during last year are:—From Mullewa to Cue. And so on. I am sorry the word "completed" is placed there, because any one travelling on the line can see that it is not completed. There is a beautiful equipment in many ways, but the line is not completed in a way satisfactory or advantageous to the persons using it. At Yalgoo, for instance, they raised the bank something about 2ft. 4in. The public have the use of the trains and platforms, but the Government were so economical with their ballast and embankment that it was found wagons had to pull in at one end of the yard and go right out at the other, making nearly half a mile to travel. The Commissioner of Railways, when he was up in the district, might have given instructions to have the embankment widened and thereby made it convenient for teams loading and unloading at the goods sheds

and at the various platforms. But I take it that, inasmuch as the Commissioner of Railways is not listening to what I say, he knows that such a state of affairs exists, and I hope that in the very near future he will give instructions to have the necessary alterations carried out. There are other little items in connection with the Yalgoo railway system that I pointed out to the Premier when he was in the district, and these will require attention from the Commissioner of Railways before long. There is, for instance, the stone used in the building of the various railway stations on the line to Cue. Paragraph 12 refers to the number of wells sunk and the many miles of new roads made during the year by the Government and through the agency of the roads boards. In the reply given by the Premier to the member for the district as to a bond store at Port Hedland, it seems strange that so many works could be carried out there, and yet proper provision could not be made by the customs department with regard to the bond. He told us an officer had been sent to protect the revenue; and the Premier was careful to put it in that way, because if he had said it was to collect the revenue, he would have been asked what revenue there was to collect, when he knows that goods coming from Singapore have to pass Port Hedland to be cleared.

THE PREMIER: The boats do not call there coming down the coast.

MR. WALLACE: The reason why the larger boats do not call in is because the buoys have not been placed there to make navigation safe, as was promised last year. The Speech tells us that many miles of new road have been constructed by the Government and through the agency of the roads boards. When I was at Coolgardie, I attended a conference of roads boards delegates, and I remarked at their social gathering that too much credit could not be given to the gentlemen who originated these conferences of roads boards. I believe the idea was started at York. It has created amongst the members of those boards the opinion that they are regarded by the Parliament of the country as responsible local bodies, who are recognised as the medium for expending public money in the construction and maintenance of roads. In connection with this sub-

ject, I am reminded that the Speech refers to the construction of the Northam-Goomalling railway, and I say we have in these roads boards a number of persons entrusted with funds for constructing feeders to our railway lines. The Government are no doubt satisfied that, in handing over sums of money voted by Parliament to be expended by these public bodies, they are taking the best practicable course for expending the money economically; although I hope that the vote for the roads boards this year will be larger than it was last year, and that when the Estimates come before us the requirements of the various roads boards will receive more consideration from the Government and hon. members. Paragraph 13 refers to public buildings completed, and mentions schools finished at Albany, Boulder, Coolgardie, West Perth, Belmont, Bridgetown, Leederville, and South Perth. I have heard the member for the Murray complain about the neglect shown to school children in his district; and I sympathise with him, because I have experienced the same at Yalgoo. I did not write to the Education department about it, because I knew it would be of no use unless I could be present to enforce my statement. What I complain of is that the heads of the department who have some tact in retrenching, instead of controlling the retrenchment, have placed it in the hands of some officers who go at it recklessly, and unfortunately those country places which require more consideration in the way of education are made to suffer. In the district I represent, the school-building was condemned as unsuitable by the Government architect and by the local board of health; and the Education Department was compelled to rent the miners' institute from the local committee for carrying on the school work. Apparently a misunderstanding occurred between the Inspector General and the local committee, the whole difference being half-a-crown a week. The department would not clean the school, and the local body proposed to clean it and charge 2s. 6d. extra per week. Letters were exchanged, and the reply from the Inspector General shows how little consideration has been given by the department to children in the country districts. The roll of the school shows 42 children in

attendance at Yalgoo, and it appears now that those children are to run wild for the sake of saving 2s. 6d. a week. I blame the Government that they did not take a firm stand in the matter of 2s. 6d. a week. The institute is a public building, and had the Government demanded the use of it for the Education Department, they would have got it; but they left the question to the Inspector General of Schools to fight out, and the local body said that if he did not pay the half-crown a week for cleaning the building, they would give him notice to quit. To that the Inspector General sent a reply, accepting the notice to quit, and stating that the department would endeavour to use the old building for school purposes. This reply shows that the heads of the Education Department are only too anxious to get an excuse for depriving these children of a little education.

MR. MORGANS: Why did the committee of the institute ask for any pay in such a case?

MR. WALLACE: I understand that the Education Department would not clean the building, but expected the institute committee to clean it, and naturally the committee charged 2s. 6d. extra a week, which the department refused to pay; and hence the action of the institute committee in giving notice to quit. It was a Government building, and I contend that the Government ought to have taken action and got the building free.

MR. MORAN: Those institutes are all vested in local trustees.

MR. WALLACE: This incident shows that the heads of the Education Department have not the interests of the children at heart, and have been only too anxious to close this and many other public schools; for what do we find in that portion of the letter from the Inspector General which says "I will endeavour to get our old building?" Last session, £650 was placed on the Estimates for the erection of a school and quarters for a teacher at Yalgoo. Tenders were called for pulling down the old building and the re-erecting of it, instead; and in order to have a larger building, the department took three feet six inches off the length and added it to the width. The contract price for this work was £221. Therefore, if something like £430 is left

after re-erecting the school, together with teacher's quarters—and the Government did fulfil a promise by providing quarters for the teacher—there should be something still available. The quarters were erected, but they comprise only two small rooms, which are not equal to the police stables at Yalgoo; and these are the quarters which the schoolmaster is expected to live in during hot or cold weather—two poky rooms, built under the control of the department!

MR. MORAN: No scarcity of room outside, is there?

MR. WALLACE: And with no regard to the health of the master or of the children, the master is expected to occupy that poky building. I hope the Director of Public Works will tell the House what he intends doing with the surplus of that vote; and if £650 was placed on the Estimates last year, I do not ask that the whole sum should be spent, but I consider that I, as representing the district, have some claim on a further portion of that vote. I hope the Minister will find time to visit Yalgoo and look round to see what improvements are necessary in the public buildings and the railway station. The main road also is in such a bad state, that vehicles get bogged in the public street.

THE PREMIER: When I was there I did not notice that.

MR. WALLACE: Since the Premier was there we have had rains, and our carts and buggies have been bogged in the public street, which ought to have been macadamised. If Ministers make promises to do works in various districts, and do carry them out as this work has been carried out at Yalgoo, there is no wonder that members of this House say they can place no reliance on the promises of Ministers. Paragraph 17 refers to the expansion of the gold-mining industry, and says: "It renders it obligatory that the railways should be extended to all those centres which warrant it," and so on. Last session I opposed the whole of the railway Bills before the House, and said I did so because I could not see where the funds were to come from for constructing them. I said also that it was merely a desire on the part of myself and others that the Government should "go slow" with the railways. Having since learned that

there is just a possibility of sufficient money being raised to construct a railway to Leonora, I intend to give that proposal my support, for I recognise that this line will open up country that will be profitable to the State, and be a trunk line in the direction of Lawlers and out that way. I believe the Government will now have the support of every member of the House in proposing to construct a railway to Leonora, though I hope it will not be necessary to involve the country financially, in raising the money. Paragraph 19 refers to the various Bills that the Government propose to bring forward this session. The member for the Murray considers the number of the Bills very large, and fears that few of them will get through. I agree with him; but if we settle down to work in the early part of the session, as we have not done in any session yet, we can get through a lot of work. I am sorry the Premier did not propose that the House should sit on Fridays as well as Thursdays, but of course the city members seem to think three days a week are sufficient to give up to parliamentary duties, though I think those members would consent to sit on Friday nights, say from 6-30 onwards. If we go on only three days a week, I am afraid many of these Bills will not pass into law this session. I am pleased that a Bill for electoral reform is promised, and I hope this will be amongst the early Bills brought forward. A Bill to appoint conciliation boards for industrial disputes is a desirable measure, though I would go further and advocate compulsory arbitration; for neither side will be satisfied with half a loaf, and I would prefer that these industrial disputes should be settled by compulsory arbitration. I am pleased to notice the reference to the Foreign Companies Local Registers Act, and to see that, notwithstanding the attempted intimidation by Adelaide stock exchange speculators, and people of the stock exchange in London, notwithstanding all their threats against this Government, the Ministry have no intention of repealing the very salutary Act passed last session. Many members in this House can give instances of men who have been very badly and sadly dealt with by English companies, owing to there being no local registers in the colony.

Coming to paragraph 22, I find that

The question of a re-arrangement of the boundaries of electoral districts, owing to the disproportion of the population in some districts, will require consideration. My Ministers think that the subject might well be discussed during the present session, and still further considered during the next.

I earnestly hope the Government will place no obstacle in the way of the discussion of this question during the present session. It is the cry of the people of the country that we shall have better and fuller representation, and I am sure it is the desire of every hon. member to give the people the rights to which they are entitled. I am sure there is no member here who will object to going to the country again, after this redistribution of seats has been effected.

MR. MORAN : We are all most anxious to get there.

MR. WALLACE : If, by this re-arrangement of the boundaries of the electoral districts, I lose a seat in this House, I will not care one jot, provided I know that the boundaries are fairly and honourably fixed.

MR. VOSPER : Good-bye, Yalgoo !

MR. WALLACE : Yalgoo, sir, is quite satisfied to stand out, if the people get the representation to which they are entitled. In conclusion, I am pleased to give my support to the various proposals I have mentioned, and I hope hon. members will throw what light they can on all these questions, so that the House, in supporting or opposing the measures, will not be working in the dark.

MR. RASON (South Murchison) : I do not wish to prolong this debate more than a few moments. The ground already travelled over covers such a wide range, that there is hardly anything further left for me to say. The only matter for congratulation I can find in connection with the debate has been that so many subjects have been dealt with that I cannot imagine how there can possibly be any grievances remaining to be aired during the remainder of this session. It seems to me that every possible grievance has already been produced and magnified. Seeing the number of important questions with which the House will be asked to deal during the session, I think it will be better for us to get rid of the Address-in-Reply as soon as possible,

and to settle down to the real work of the session. I may, perhaps, be allowed very briefly to touch upon a few points in His Excellency's Speech. Undoubtedly, the most important subject there is the great question of federation. This is hardly the time for a lengthy discussion of the merits or demerits of federation as applied to Western Australia, for, after all, it is a matter for the people themselves to decide. But I will say, in reply to a remark of the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty), that I do not think there will be any delay, or that there is any wish for delay—indeed, we now have an assurance that there will be no delay—in bringing the Bill before the House, and then it will rest with Parliament to say when the referendum shall be taken; and, in the interim, the time will be well spent if spent in further enlightening the people upon this great question. I hope those gentlemen who have been leaders of the agitation, both for and against federation, will try for the future to put the case fairly and honestly before the people who will have to decide; that they will not exaggerate either on one side or on the other; that they will put a plain and unvarnished issue before the electors. We are told we may endeavour to obtain better terms. Well, it is undoubtedly our duty to obtain the best terms for this colony that are procurable, and I think it is most vital to this colony that we should have a railway connecting our capital city with the capitals of the other colonies. I think that is absolutely essential before we proceed any further with the question of federation. But apart from that main object, I trust undue prominence will not be given to the question of terms, to the question of bargaining; for it seems to me that the huckstering spirit is hardly the spirit in which to approach such a question as the founding of a nation. I wish to say a few words about public batteries. A great deal has been said on this question by members on the Opposition side of the House. It is well known that I have always supported and advocated the erection of Government batteries, and I rejoice that the Government still intend to persevere in that policy by erecting more. I recognise that by means of Government batteries, we are giving assistance and encouragement to the very

class of miners, which, above all others, deserves assistance and encouragement—those miners who are working and developing their own holdings. If it is necessary—and I admit that it is necessary—to encourage in agriculture the yeoman farmer—[MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear]—so it is equally necessary and essential to encourage in mining the yeoman miner; because the few men who are working their own holdings, with the assistance of Government batteries, are frequently of more direct benefit to the State than is many a wealthy mining company. But, though I have always advocated public batteries, I have pointed out in the past, and I am sure the Minister of Mines will pardon me if I again repeat the statement, that, in erecting public batteries, the Government is incurring a very grave responsibility, not only to the mining community, but to the country. Those batteries have, in several cases, supplanted private enterprise. Private enterprise, as applied to a battery, depends for its success and for its need of encouragement, upon the proper working of that battery; in other words, the battery depends for its existence upon the satisfaction it gives to the public. Having interfered—and, I say, properly interfered—with private enterprise, and having taken the place of private enterprise, it behoves the Government to be exceedingly careful that the batteries erected are entirely up-to-date, efficient, properly managed, and in every way satisfactory. Once let there be a suspicion on the part of the mining community that the gold return from such batteries is not all that it might be, or that the management is not what it ought to be, and you at once discount, to a very great extent, all the good that public batteries might otherwise do. The Minister of Mines has been greatly blamed for several mistakes in connection with these Government batteries. In the first place he was blamed by the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) for a remark which appears in the Speech, to the effect that considerable difficulties have been experienced owing to insufficiency of water and the isolation of the localities where the batteries have been erected. I think that statement was particularly ungenerous on the part of the hon. member. He should have known

—if he did not know he could easily have found out—that the first few batteries erected were erected purposely in isolated localities, because it was precisely in these isolated localities that public batteries were most required, such places being beyond the reach of private enterprise; and if the hon. member did not know, he might easily have ascertained, that, before any one of those batteries was erected—and I am rather surprised that the Minister of Mines did not tell him so, it must have been his inborn modesty that prevented him—that before any one of these batteries was erected, the fullest and every possible inquiry was made at the time as to whether the step was justified by the circumstances of the locality. Full inquiries were made as to the quantity of ore likely to be crushed, as to the water supply—as to whether, in fact, the battery in that locality was justified, and whether it was likely to be worked with advantage to the public. After having made those inquiries—the most searching that could have been made at the time—I think it is hardly fair to turn round on the Minister in charge of that very important department, and to blame him for accidents which no mortal man could have foreseen. Accidents have happened in connection with Government batteries, but they are merely the accidents to which, as every mining man knows, any such enterprise is liable, and which, as every business man will admit, are likely to occur in any commercial undertaking. I trust the Minister will see that, for the future, due care is exercised in the management of these batteries. I believe that the possibility of accident can be reduced to a minimum. The Minister can effect this improvement if he likes; I believe he will try, and I believe he will succeed; and I am sure that the House and individual members will be only too glad to render him any assistance in their power in this direction which they can reasonably offer, and which the Minister, in justice to his position, can reasonably accept. So many things have been found fault with that even the statement that the position of the colony is satisfactory, has almost been objected to, and also the announcement that there are marked signs of the country's progress. Exception has been taken even to those statements—I

am sure I do not know why, unless it be that some people seem to have no object in the world except to take the most gloomy and despondent view of everything, and to draw upon their imaginations for their facts. If an increase in the revenue for last month of £50,000, if an export of gold of, roughly, 162,000 ounces, if an increase in arrivals over departures by sea of above 700 souls, are not marked signs of the colony's progress, then I fail to understand what signs can possibly be taken as indicating progress. There is just one other point to which I wish to refer—the proposed dividend tax. I think a dividend tax perfectly justifiable, seeing the amount of the dividends paid by companies deriving their incomes from this colony. Such companies can well afford to contribute something to the colony from which the dividends are procured, and I consider a dividend tax much preferable to any other form of taxation as applied to gold. It would never do, as an hon. member opposite (Mr. Vosper) has very tersely put it, to tax the product itself. There is one point in connection with the Mint and this dividend tax to which I would refer. I hope my fears will prove groundless. We have, at a very great cost, provided a local Mint, which undoubtedly is capable of coining gold, and it should coin the gold produced in the country.

MR. MORAN: That is what it is meant for.

MR. RASON: It is meant for that. If it should so happen that certain financial institutions prove so selfish as still to send away our gold unminted; if, for reasons I need not explain, they should not take advantage of the opportunities afforded by that Mint, then the Government might well put a tax on the export of unminted gold. I hope my fears in this respect will prove unwarranted, but there is a rumour in the air, and I feel it my duty to point out, even at this early stage, how, if that difficulty does arise in the future, it may very easily be overcome. I will not detain the House longer, except with one concluding remark. Reference has been made to the existence of parties in this House, and some hon. members regret that there should be such a thing as party government. As a matter of principle, they do not believe in it. They are of course entitled to their

opinions; I, certainly, am equally entitled to mine; and I believe that without party government you can have no good Government. I believe that, without parties, any Government will, sooner or later, fall into absolute ridicule and impotence; and for my part I will rejoice greatly when parties in this House are better divided and more evenly balanced than they are at the present time. That would be better, I am sure, for whatever Ministry is in power, better for any party who may happen to wish to turn that Ministry out, and better for the country as a whole. But even in party Government there are exceptions, and one exception which presents itself to my mind is the question of federation. I hope that when that great question is discussed in this House, it will be made an exception to party Government, and that there will be no attempt at party influence; that party considerations will not weigh in the discussion for one single moment, but that each member in dealing with it will be actuated only by one motive, namely, the advancement of the colony of Western Australia, and if possible the advancement of a united Australia.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra): The fact of my rising in a portion of the House to which I have hitherto been unaccustomed, brings back to my mind a prediction made on the first occasion on which I had the honour of addressing the House. That occasion was when I moved the Address-in-Reply in the first session of this Parliament, and the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), when I expressed the hopes I had about the course to be pursued by the Government, told me frankly that I had very little to hope for from the present administration. Perhaps at that time my method of looking at things was more academical and idealistic; and I flouted the assurance of the hon. member, thinking that it could not be true. Next session, however, I began somewhat to doubt, and, at last, I have come to the conclusion that what the hon. member said was perfectly correct; and hence my presence in Opposition to-night. If there was one thing more than another that, as it were, crystallised the doubts within my mind about the efficiency of the Government it was their action during last session, in

spite of the warning which I held out to them, regarding the granting of a certain reward area for the discovery of alleged payable diamonds in the district of Nullagine. I am glad to say that I can to a certain extent exonerate the Government from much blame I was attributing to them. I find from the papers laid on the table of the House to-day that the sins of the Government have been more sins of omission than of commission; but the fact remains that the Minister of Mines is, to some extent, at the root of this evil, because of the course he pursued upon the representations of a wily old gentleman who came down from that part of the country—which representations were afterwards found to be totally false—in passing what I can only particularise as the most ridiculous regulations which have ever been framed under an Act of Parliament. Any hon. member who goes to the trouble of perusing the papers laid before the House will see that I am perfectly right in exonerating the Minister from all further blame in this transaction; but the damage, to a certain extent, has been done. In this district of Nullagine there are 1,680 acres of ground locked up, and the labour done on that ground since it was taken up six months ago is that of six men for five weeks, while the results, so far as I can learn, have been absolutely *nil*.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Why is forfeiture not applied for?

MR. KINGSMILL: Up to the present time I have not known the circumstances which the papers produced disclose, and I cannot say at the moment what the inhabitants of the Pilbarra goldfield thought had been done or was about to be done. It is possible the Pilbarra people may think the occupiers of the land have protection, and if these occupiers said they had protection they apparently have so much influence that the Pilbarra people would be quite justified in believing them. Perhaps the clearing of the atmosphere which may result from the laying on the table of the House of these papers, may have the desired effect, and I earnestly hope it may.

MR. GEORGE: Have you got all the papers?

MR. KINGSMILL: I have got enough of them.

MR. GEORGE: You have not got the lot.

MR. KINGSMILL: I was about to explain that the reason I feel rather excited on this subject is that Nullagine has always been the place where the old diggers of the district have made a home, and where men who are too old for the rougher work of prospecting have established comfortable little homes, and are prepared to there peacefully end their days. Now people for speculative purposes—because their action since taking up the ground shows the purpose can be no other than speculative—have deprived the miners of the means of earning their livelihood; and that they should do this, and practically deprive the miners of their homes is, in my opinion, particularly iniquitous.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: How many men have been deprived of their homes?

MR. KINGSMILL: That is not the question. If one man has been deprived of his home that is enough for my argument. The Government, in the first place, passed these ridiculous regulations, and, in the second place, they did not exercise sufficient precaution in granting this reward claim.

MR. MORAN: Have these men not miner's rights?

MR. KINGSMILL: The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), from his experience on the goldfields must be aware that on ground which is only used for what is known as fossicking, it is very often the custom for men not to peg out claims. These men require to shift about from place to place, and if they are not debarred from doing this by the present holders of the land it is because the holders know that, if they were to do such a thing, an outcry would be raised and their methods would be exposed. As I say, the present occupiers do not hold the ground for the purpose of working it but for the purpose of selling it. There are no other labour conditions so far as I can learn.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If anybody questions the right of these people why is forfeiture not applied for?

MR. KINGSMILL: Because I do not believe that the people of Pilbarra know the conditions under which the land is held.

THE PREMIER: Why did you not tell them the conditions?

MR. KINGSMILL: I confess that only a few days ago I myself did not know the conditions under which the ground was held, but I shall now make it my business to explain to the people the exact circumstances. I have much pleasure in passing from this subject, which I can assure the House has few attractions for me, and possibly still fewer for hon. members. I have waited until the close of the debate before speaking, in the hope that perhaps the Premier might have issued, as it were, a kind of second edition of the Governor's Speech. Members on the Opposition side of the House are more or less in the dark as to what the Governor's Speech really contains, or rather what it really means.

THE PREMIER: They do not want to know.

MR. KINGSMILL: We hear rumours about a redistribution of seats.

THE PREMIER: It is not rumour; the information is laid on the table of the House.

MR. A. FORREST: The member for Pilbarra, like myself, may be wiped out under a redistribution of seats.

MR. KINGSMILL: But there is nothing definite in the Speech about redistribution of seats or the other proposed legislation, and that puts us in the position of having to speak on subjects of which we are not so fully seized as members on the Government side of the House. I think paragraph 2 of the Speech had such a very severe handling the other night that it would be as well to pass it over practically in silence. The only thing I have to say is that I hope the proposed legislation will be brought before us as quickly as possible, in order that it may be discussed by the House and amendments made if necessary. On the whole I think I may congratulate the Minister of Mines upon the explanation he gave us last night of the public battery scheme which has been carried out by the Government. As one connected with batteries for some time, I consider the price of 15s. 2d. a ton—I think that is the cost of crushing—extremely moderate, bearing in mind the localities of the batteries. The member for Yalgoo referred to the system pursued by the Government in conducting their financial arrangements in outlying districts. Members who have

been in outlying districts may know that in the Government offices payment has to be made in actual coin of the realm, whilst on the other hand, the Government disbursements are made in paper; the result being that the Government are one of the greatest absorbers of coin in districts where banks are very often few and far between.

MR. A. FORREST: They will cash their own cheques, will they not?

MR. KINGSMILL: No; they will not cash their own cheques.

MR. A. FORREST: They ought to, then.

MR. KINGSMILL: It would be better for the Government to send coin for the purpose of disbursements, so that it may circulate in the district, and not take coin away, as they are doing at present.

THE PREMIER: It is a difficult and troublesome question, where there are no banks.

MR. KINGSMILL: The Government may well be congratulated upon the magnificent mineral wealth that exists; but I have no wish to say a great deal about the goldfields, because we have heard so much on that subject from other quarters. I would like to congratulate members regarding a district which has been little heard of, the South-Western district, and to congratulate the Premier upon at last practically joining the ranks of the goldfields members, because he has within the bounds of his constituency a goldfield which, judging from the last crushing and former crushings, promises extremely well. Several very unkind remarks were made last night by the member for East Fremantle about a port which is the gateway of my electorate; I refer to Port Hedland. I believe the hon. member was mistaken, and that events will prove him to have been so. I would like to take this further opportunity of calling the attention of the Premier to the fact that the arrangements for the buoys to mark the passage into Port Hedland are not yet made. This stupendous work was put in hand by the Government about twelve months ago, if I remember correctly, and, as far as I can ascertain, the work could have been done for about a hundred pounds. It is still in hand, I suppose, for it is not finished, and steamers are not yet able to go in there. When it is finished the Govern-

ment will receive my most hearty congratulations.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: All for the cost of one hundred pounds?

MR. KINGSMILL: Yes, but of course there will be expenditure in certain directions. The railway policy of the Government is very much the same as last year. Perhaps they have made it more acceptable to the House, but they have not been quite as explicit as to the method of financing these railways. All of us, or at least most of us, acknowledge that the railway from Menzies into the Leonora district is both necessary and advisable. It will be carried to one of the most promising districts in Western Australia, and there is little doubt as to its being a reproductive work. We have served up to us again that same little old railway, the Bonnie Vale, and I suppose it will have just about the same chance of getting through this session as last.

MR. KENNY: It is only six miles.

MR. KINGSMILL: Exactly, it is only six miles. I am afraid I cannot promise the member for Coolgardie that I will give the railway my support. As to the Coolgardie to Norseman line, I think that this session I will, if the financial arrangements admit of it, be prepared to give my support, regarding the line as a first step towards tapping the southern coast at Esperance. I desire to make my position perfectly clear, and not to support the line under false pretences. A member remarked to me, "What a remarkably fine lot of Bills the Government are about to introduce." I said I agreed with him; at least to this extent, that the Bills had very good names, and if they turned out as well as their names promised, they would indeed be a remarkably fine lot. I think about the pick of the basket is the proposal to impose a dividend tax. While the British Government have the audacity to place an income tax upon, or to deduct an income tax from, dividends that are produced in Western Australia, the least that Western Australia can do is to have a little cut out of these dividends for itself. Then we find—and this is a familiar feature of a Governor's Speech—that a Bill dealing with electoral reform is to be introduced. We have often seen this Bill in the Governor's Speech, and I suppose that possibly we may at some time see

it on the table of the House, but I would like to know what form this electoral reform is to take. Is it women's suffrage under another guise, or do the Government this time intend to sweep away the present iniquitous Electoral Act, by which a man may move across the street and be disfranchised for a period of six or nine months? If they do intend to sweep away the present Act, I can promise them my unqualified support. There are one or two Bills, the names of which I do not see in the list the Government have placed before us, and the first is a Bill for imposing a tax on unimproved land. I do not regard this Bill as necessary in the interests of revenue, and it would be a pity to expect to obtain revenue from it; but I look upon it as an incentive to the cultivation of land, which should be the means of producing revenue. The measure will be a most valuable one; and to anyone who has travelled through the southern district and seen the magnificent land, with little patches of ten acres cleared, and old houses standing in the midst of them, the advisability of having a Bill of this sort comes home very forcibly.

THE PREMIER: Where are those places?

MR. KINGSMILL: I have seen them in the neighbourhood of Bunbury. (General laughter.)

THE PREMIER: I do not think they are very big. They are very small estates.

MR. KINGSMILL: Within 30 miles of Bunbury?

THE PREMIER: Perhaps it was not freehold land at all; perhaps it was a run.

MR. KINGSMILL: I would like to see a Bill to amend the Mineral Lands Act introduced. I may say the Mineral Lands Act was passed about the same time as the old Goldfields Act, and, while the old Goldfields Act has undergone some amendments, several of which are for the worse, the Mineral Lands Act has not been amended at all.

THE PREMIER: The Mineral Lands Act was passed many years after the first Goldfields Act.

MR. KINGSMILL: The Mineral Lands Act was passed in 1892, and to bring my argument up to date I will say that since 1892 the Goldfields Act has

undergone many improvements, while the Mineral Lands Act has remained untouched. There is one feature in the Mineral Lands Act which applies to the subject that I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, the working of gold found in conjunction with other minerals, and this portion of the Act should be revised. In the other colonies when gold is found in conjunction with other minerals, areas are granted for the working of the more valuable product. In this colony the system is that if gold is found in conjunction with other minerals, the public do not get a chance at all of getting any ground. The simple procedure is for the lessee to pay a royalty of 2/- an ounce to the Treasurer. This is very good for the Treasurer when he gets the money, but it is of no benefit to the outside public. That is one feature of the Mineral Lands Act which should be eliminated. It might naturally be expected that I approach the question of the redistribution of seats with a good deal of trepidation, since I have been informed by the hon. member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) that I am about to be wiped out. I must say that I have to be very careful in what I say about this matter, but at all events I do not think I shall be wiped out to as great an extent as the hon. member for West Kimberley. I have a few more electors I know than the hon. member has, but the hon. member for West Kimberley has a lot of electors if he can catch them. What I want to point out to hon. members who are fortunate enough—I suppose I may say fortunate—to possess 5,000 or 6,000 electors is this: that they have the electors, but the industries have a certain right to be represented, and as long as the redistribution is not conducted on too much of a population basis I shall be glad to give my support to the measure. In conclusion, I simply have to express my opinion that the Governor's Speech seems to be just about the same old kind of Governor's Speech. There are a lot of things in it that we well knew, and there is a good deal about the intentions of the Government, and I suppose towards the end of the session we shall know more of the intentions of the Government than we do now. I hope the good intentions of the Government will be carried to a successful issue.

MR. MORGANS (in reply, as mover): When I had the honour of addressing the House in moving the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, I expressed myself strongly, so I am told, upon the question of federation, and I fear that I acquired for myself the displeasure of a large number of my constituents; and I may say that, notwithstanding that it was my desire to be explicit as to my real position on the question of federation, I was entirely misunderstood. I was particularly careful to say that there was no more ardent federationist in the House than myself, and I now repeat that statement, and I may say also that on the same occasion I explicitly stated that it was my fixed opinion that the question of referring the important issue of federation to the people was of vital importance, and I supported the principle of allowing the question of federation to go to the people to let them decide it. That is my opinion now. For the benefit of the public and some of my own constituents in Coolgardie and other places who may have misunderstood my position, I take the opportunity of asserting and stating that there is no one in the House who desires that the question of federation should be settled by the people more than I do, and it will have my strongest support.

MR. LEAKE: When?

MR. MORGANS: The member for Albany asks "when?" I say, as quickly as possible. Having put myself right with regard to this matter, I do not think I shall say anything more with regard to the question of federation, except that my own ideas are—and these are the ideas which I shall express when this important question of federation comes before this House—that without the consummation and construction of that great railway which will place the capital of Western Australia in direct communication with the federal capital, federation for Western Australia is impossible. That is one of my grounds; and the next ground will be, although I do not consider it of such vital importance as the other, that owing to the peculiar financial position of Western Australia, our fiscal system should not be interfered with for a considerable time. If these two conditions were granted to Western Australia, then we would be in a better position to

federate. I take it that no one in this House, nor any one outside of this House nor any one who has the colony's interests at heart, would object to any member of Parliament trying to do the best he can for the interests of the colony and getting all he can out of federation, the same as the other colonies have done. I will not refer further to federation to-night, as we shall have an opportunity at a later date to express our views. I should like to refer to a matter mentioned by my friend Mr. Kingsmill (Pilbarra) when he gave his reasons for passing from this (the Government) to the other side of the House. I can only say that as a compatriot and sitting near him formerly on this bench, I much regret that he has thought fit to leave this side of the Chamber and to go into Opposition.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If you had stayed where you were he would have come to you.

MR. MORGANS: At the same time I congratulate the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) on having acquired such a useful helper. [MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear.] However, the reason I understood him to give for having gone over did not appear to me quite a sufficient reason for such an important step; but probably my friend did not consider that he was offering to this House a full explanation of his reasons for having changed sides. At any rate, if we are to take what he said as the main or principal reason for his having gone over, I must claim to disagree with him and to say that I do not think he made the change on sufficient grounds.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You have never yet given your grounds for changing sides.

MR. MORGANS: Oh yes, I gave my reasons. When I came from that side of the House I left it with much regret.

MR. VOSPER: And you are much regretted.

MR. MORGANS: I regret it very much indeed, because I have some good friends on the other side of the House, and I especially regret having had to leave the elbow of my friend the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), but at the time I did explain that I was not so fully in accord with the views and principles expressed by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House as I was with those of the Premier and his supporters on this

side. I felt I was a little out of place there, and so I came over to this side. I think that is a very good reason indeed for such a step.

MR. LEAKE: Not to mention the Bonnie Vale Railway.

MR. MORGANS: I wish to refer to some of the remarks of the hon. member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory). I had not the privilege of listening to his speech the other night, or at least I only heard a small portion of it, but I had the advantage of reading this morning in the newspaper a more or less complete report of what the hon. member said—[MR. VOSPER: More or less]. In touching on the question of federation he spoke about the wine industry, and I must say I entirely disagree with his views as to what would happen to that industry under federation; but as that question will be discussed later, I will not cross swords with him now. However, in connection with some further remarks of his the hon. member, speaking on the financial issues involved in federation, said that we ought to raise our taxes in some other direction. Well, there is one very strong financial objection I have to federation—that under federation it would be impossible to raise taxes in this country from any other source than the customs house. In the first place the only direct tax of any importance that could be imposed would be an income tax; and I contend, and it can be shown, that the collection of an income tax in Western Australia would cost more than the resulting revenue.

MR. VOSPER: First catch your income.

MR. MORGANS: Precisely — first catch your income. There are no incomes in this colony on which to levy a tax; at any rate they are so few that the collection of an income tax in Western Australia would mean an absolute loss to the revenue. Therefore that is not a tax which can be relied upon for the development of the great resources of this country. An income tax is altogether out of the question. Next we have heard something of a land tax. Let me ask hon. members: Suppose you tax all the unoccupied lands of this country, how much would that tax return to this colony? I contend that it would not add £20,000 a year to the colony's revenue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It would make the land-owners use the ground.

MR. MORGANS: That is not the point. Let me remind the hon. member that I am now speaking of what a tax would do for the revenue of this colony.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am with you.

MR. MORGANS: I am not questioning that you may promote the improvement of land by imposing a tax; but I am stating that a tax placed upon it would not result in any revenue worth having, and I think I have made myself clear on that point. Therefore I think the argument used by the hon. member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) was fallacious, that it was not well grounded, and that it is not desirable that the public of this colony should be led to believe by any hon. member that after the wiping out of taxes, direct or indirect, other means can be found for making up the deficiency caused by such a step. That is impossible.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What about the dividend tax?

MR. MORGANS: The dividend tax is one of which I have already expressed my strong approval, and I think there is nothing fairer, nothing more just, than that a mining company which has the privilege of taking up mining leases in this country under the most favourable conditions—because the rent of a mining lease is very small—should pay a tax on its profits. I am not now speaking of the conditions of working a lease, but of the conditions of taking it up; because the conditions of working are entirely different. They are in many cases very expensive, and they are often very delicate. But the conditions of taking out a lease under the Government are highly favourable; and I contend that it is only fair and reasonable that any company which is making a profit out of the working of a mine placed in its hands by this colony should pay a five per cent. tax upon its profits. That is perfectly just, and I shall be one of the first who will have to pay that tax, and I shall be frequently called upon to pay it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I wish we were all in the same box.

MR. MORGANS: The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) says he hopes he will have to pay the tax. I earnestly hope he will be called

upon at an early date to pay a very heavy dividend tax.

MR. A. FORREST: But he does not gamble.

MR. GEORGE: Such speculations are investments. They do not constitute gambling.

MR. MORGANS: The next point on which I should like to touch is a reference by the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) to the public batteries. I think his criticism of the administration of the public batteries by the Government is not fair. I do not think he has done the Government justice in his criticisms of their management of those batteries. I am prepared to admit, and I agree with the hon. member, that mistakes have been made in such administration, but deny that there has been any wilful maladministration.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He never said there had been.

MR. MORGANS: I believe we can find a greater number of mistakes made by private individuals who have erected batteries in this colony than we have been able to find in connection with Government batteries. And I do not see why the hon. member (Mr. Gregory) should expect this or any other Government to be infallible.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But the Government claim infallibility.

MR. MORGANS: They claim it? Well, I congratulate them on the courage. I say that the hon. member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory), in discussing this question, has not been quite fair, and that the criticisms he has levelled at the Government, and especially at the Minister of Mines, are not justified.

MR. GREGORY: They were more than justified.

MR. MORGANS: I should like to refer to the criticism indulged in by the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory). That gentleman laid it down as an axiom, and I quite agree with him, that no Government should think of erecting a battery until it is known there is water sufficient to work the machinery. I do not think any prudent Government would do otherwise.

MR. GREGORY: I did not say the Government did otherwise.

MR. MORGANS: If the hon. member tells me he did not say that, I will with-

draw; but I take it that this was the idea he desired to convey to the House. The Government sent a manager to Yerilla to inquire about the erection of a battery, and he was told that at a certain place there was an inexhaustible supply of water. Acting on that statement, which was made by the people of the district, who ought to have known better than anyone else the exact circumstances, a battery was erected. But the supply of water ran short; and I am prepared to admit that it would have been much better if steps had been taken to see whether there was a supply which would last.

MR. GREGORY: Instead of going to the expense of sinking a well at Yerilla, an excellent supply of water could have been got for nothing within a quarter of a mile.

MR. MORGANS: I thank the member for North Coolgardie for that little speech; but considering the interest he undoubtedly takes in this question of public batteries, it is strange that he did not assist the representative of the Government in finding a more suitable site for the battery.

MR. GREGORY: I did not interfere at all.

MR. MORGANS: The hon. member says he knew a spot within a quarter of a mile where there was an inexhaustible supply of water, and yet he did not take the trouble to point out to the Government representative where that spot was.

MR. GREGORY: I did not go out there. I simply state the fact that the water was there.

MR. MORGANS: The hon. member tells the House that he knew of this site, and yet he did not take sufficient interest in the matter to advise the Government representative.

MR. GREGORY: I did not indicate any site.

MR. MORGANS: I accept the hon. member's explanation, and at any rate we now know from a member who is supposed to be more conversant with this question than anyone else here, that there is a plentiful supply of water within a quarter of a mile from the spot where the battery was erected. Reviewing the criticism of the hon. member in regard to this battery, I contend that his position is absolutely untenable. He has emphasised

his objections very much, but I would like to ask him why it was that, before these batteries were erected, and with the many opportunities he had in this House, he did not call the special attention of the Minister of Mines to this important question of water supply. Although the hon. member has had all these opportunities, it is only now that he comes to the House and complains that, in reference to this battery, the Government did not do certain things which he, with a little kindly advice, might have helped them to do.

MR. GREGORY: The Government would not have taken the advice.

MR. MORGANS: Before leaving the member for North Coolgardie, I should like to call attention to the attack he made on my friend, Mr. Warden Burt. That attack I regret exceedingly, because it was absolutely unjustified. Mr. Warden Burt is a gentleman who has occupied his present position since this goldfield was established. As one who knows him not only as a friend, but also in his official capacity, I do not think there is a man in Western Australia to-day who more deserves the esteem of his fellow colonists. I cannot think for a moment that the member for North Coolgardie intended by his criticism in any way to attack Mr. Warden Burt personally.

MR. GREGORY: I only criticise him professionally.

MR. MORGANS: The member for North Coolgardie spoke of the administration of the law by Mr. Burt, and drew attention to an inquest held on three unfortunate men who, I regret to say, lost their lives in a mine with which I am connected. No one felt that terrible calamity more than I did. These men went down the shaft, and it is believed that a charge of dynamite which had been put in a hole during the previous shift and had not exploded was, when these men were busy, struck with a drill and ignited, with the result that these miners, and splendid men they were, met their deaths. At this time Mr. Burt, to whom the member for North Coolgardie attaches some blame so far as the inquest was concerned, was away at the Diorite King mine, a considerable distance from where the accident occurred. The unfortunate men met their death about five o'clock in the morning, and Mr. Burt

was communicated with by wire as quickly as possible. As soon as the information reached him, Mr. Burt telegraphed to the inspector of police to empanel a jury, and gave most implicit instructions in regard to the nature of that jury. Mr. Burt desired to have empanelled two miners and one representative business man, but nobody in any way connected with the mine at which the accident had occurred.

MR. GREGORY: Mr. Burt mentioned the names of two men.

MR. MORGANS: Mr. Burt mentioned these names because he knew the names to be those of men not in any way connected with the mine where the men were killed. The jury selected were Mr. Ross—though I am not sure of this name—Mr. Lathom, manager of an adjoining mine, and a prospector or working miner, also from an adjoining mine, but whose name I cannot remember. These were the three names mentioned, and I take it that Mr. Burt simply carried out his duty. What else could be done under the circumstances? He had to ride 80 miles during that day. He arrived at the Mount during the night, and the bodies were viewed on that occasion, but naturally they were undergoing decomposition very rapidly, and they were buried. Next day the inquest was held in proper form, and a verdict passed in the usual way. I would ask members if the Inspector of Mines had anything to do with the holding of that inquiry.

MR. GREGORY: He asked the warden to adjourn the inquest until he arrived.

MR. MORGANS: He could not do it. The whole inquest was carried out upon legal, proper, and satisfactory lines. It is perfectly true that the Inspector of Police at Mount Margaret was dissatisfied. With or without reason—it is not for me to say—he has some strong feeling against the warden, and he raised points with regard to the illegality of the inquest, the result being a lot of correspondence in the newspaper, and I regret to see the matter brought into this House by the member for North Coolgardie. I wish to enter my earnest protest against the practice of bringing the names of prominent officials employed by this or any other Government before the House when they have no opportunity of defending themselves. [SEVERAL MEMBERS:

Hear, hear.] I do not think it a practice that should be encouraged.

MR. MORAN: That is what the House exists for, all the same.

MR. MORGANS: In some instances it is absolutely necessary, but in a case of this sort an official should have the opportunity of defending himself through some other channel, before the matter comes under the notice of the House. Let it come before the Department in the usual way, and at least give him an opportunity of saying something in his defence. I am only too glad to have this opportunity of saying I consider Warden Burt to be worthy of the confidence of the House and the Government he serves, and that there is not in the employ of the Government an abler or better administrator of the mining laws. Then there is another point. The member for North Coolgardie has the misfortune to be the proprietor of a newspaper.

MR. A. FORREST: I am sorry for him.

MR. MORGANS: No doubt it is a great misfortune, but at any rate it is a dangerous weapon in the hands of a man.

MR. KENNY: Hear, hear.

MR. MORGANS: A very dangerous weapon. I am bound to say that the newspaper owned by the member for North Coolgardie has made many severe attacks upon Warden Burt. I have seen them times out of number, paragraph after paragraph, and still the mouth of this official, who occupies an important position in the administration of the laws of this country, is closed, and he cannot say anything. I do not consider that a proper way of dealing with an official, and I express my sympathy with Warden Burt, and again assert that he is one of the best officials in the Mining Department of the colony. With regard to the Leonora railway, naturally I strongly advocate it, and I am gratified to know that the member for North Coolgardie is also in favour of it, and is doing his best to assist the great enterprise forward. I am looking forward with much interest to the time when we shall hear his voice raised in support of the enterprise, and when we shall have the pleasure of seeing his vote recorded in its favour. The railway is an absolute necessity, but I am not going to weary the House to-night by giving proofs that it is so, because the time for the discussion of it will come later on. I desire

also to thank the member for Yalgoo for his kind expressions in regard to the Coolgardie Exhibition. We heard what the member for North-East Coolgardie said on this question. He stated that he thought the exhibition fairly successful, but thought that if it cost £70,000 it was too dear.

MR. VOSPER: I was under the impression that there was a deficit of £7,000 over and above previous expenditure.

MR. MORGANS: I am glad I am able to correct that impression, and I thank the member for Yalgoo for his kindly expressions in regard to the enterprise. I took a very active part from the beginning to the end of it, and I believe it has done an immense amount of good for this colony, in not only advertising the industries abroad, but also in West Australia itself. I believe that nothing has ever previously happened which has done so much good in creating a great amount of interest in relation to the mining and industrial pursuits. The Minister for Crown Lands, in whom we all have great confidence, says the fact that such prizes were gained for West Australian flour against all comers is alone worth at least £50,000 to this colony. I am glad to know it, and although no power on earth would ever induce me to attempt to start an exhibition again, I am pleased we started that one, and made a success of it. Something is said about the water scheme, but I have dilated considerably upon that before, and I do not think I will touch upon it on this occasion. The member for Yalgoo referred to the fact that I said I was going to follow the Premier of Western Australia anywhere.

MR. WALLACE: Quite right.

MR. MORGANS: I never said so, but as long as the Premier goes right I intend to follow him, and up to the present I have not seen him take a single false step where I could not follow him. For that reason I have followed him, and I intend to do so as long as he continues in that path. The member for Yalgoo also referred to the public batteries, and could not let alone the Minister of Mines, but was obliged to have another shot at him. I wonder there is anything left of the Minister of Mines, seeing the way in which he has been shot at in relation to the battery in Yalgoo. What are the facts? The member for Yalgoo worried the

department until they gave him that battery. He worked well, and I congratulate the district on having such an energetic member. He worried the life out of the department, and a battery was put up, and now they have crushed all the ore in the district. (General laughter.)

MR. WALLACE: The member for Coolgardie knows that he is speaking falsely. If he looks at the statement laid on the table by the Minister of Mines, he will see that a five-head battery will not crush equal to a ten-head battery in some of the eastern fields; that is, in proportion.

MR. MORGANS: I have listened to the explanation of the member for Yalgoo with much pleasure, but I say he has thrown no light into my mind. We must admit at least that these public batteries have done a great deal of good, whatever mistakes may have been made. The member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory), out of nine public batteries, through his zeal and energy has managed to secure four. I say the member for North Coolgardie has a very capacious maw for batteries. He has obtained four, and he is representing a district that should have 40. I am bound to say that the capacity and prowess of the hon. member for North Coolgardie does him credit, and that is one of the points which the hon. member overlooked. He managed to secure four of these batteries—to annex them carefully and very properly—still he comes down to the House and growls at the Government for having given them to him. I will not take up the attention of the House longer. There are many points that have been discussed and debated which I should, if time had permitted, have taken an opportunity of discussing. But other opportunities will be available to me, and in these circumstances I shall only say that, taken as a whole, the programme of the Government is a most satisfactory one. There is, however, before I close, one point that I desire to mention; I notice it on my notes, but I had overlooked it. I wish to refer to some statements made by the hon. member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes). I did not hear his speech, but I read it, and I am bound to say that the reading of that speech created in my mind strange feelings of surprise and astonishment. In the first place, I notice the hon. member criticises the work of the

Engineer-in-Chief with regard to the Fremantle harbour works, and the hon. member said that the engineer had carried out the works all wrong; the engineer ought to have done the work in some other way. What is the hon. member for East Fremantle—he is not in his place. I am sorry to say—but what is he? What is his profession? These great works at Fremantle harbour were carried out at a cost of a million of money to this country, under the supervision of one of the ablest engineers, and the hon. member comes to the House and says that the work is entirely wrong, that it ought to have been carried out in another way. It requires the possession of a certain amount of swollen head and conceit for a member to talk in the House in that way about a great work like the Fremantle harbour works. I am astonished that any man should have the courage to do such a thing before a body of intelligent gentlemen such as I hope we are in this House. Of course the benefit of the ability of that hon. gentleman has been lost to this side of the House. Last session he had a seat on this side near me. He has gone over to the other side, and I must again congratulate the member for Albany on having annexed another late partner of mine. The hon. member (Mr. Holmes) has gone over to the unknown quantity. At all events, there is no doubt that if the member for East Fremantle is a great engineer, he is also a great financier, for I notice that his criticisms of the financial policy of the Government are most trenchant. They always have been. He knows more about the administration of the Railway Department, too, than all the officers of the department put together. My friend, the Commissioner of Railways, knows nothing about railway administration. Mr. John Davies, the General Manager, knows nothing either. In fact, there is nobody connected with the Railway Department who knows anything: it is only the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) who understands railway administration in this colony. What did the hon. member tell us in that speech which he made in East Fremantle when giving his reasons for going over to the Opposition? He said the Government were going on with the Coolgardie water scheme. That was one point; but let it

be remembered that the hon. member sat on this side of this House last year and voted for the scheme; yet such is the reason he gives for changing sides. Next he said that the Government had refused to build a school at East Fremantle. That was no reason for going over; and then there was some question of a post office which the Government would not build in the same electorate. Here we have another member who has a grasping maw for the requirements of East Fremantle. He wants a large amount of money spent in his electorate. He did not get his school, and there were various other things also he did not get. But there was one thing that struck me as peculiar, as a reason why the hon. member left this side of the House; and that was that the Government refused to build a gaol at East Fremantle. It appears to me to be a most extraordinary reason. For my part I should prefer to congratulate residents of East Fremantle on not requiring that institution. I do not see why the Government should be worried to death because they will not build a gaol in a place where it is certainly not required. Such were the reasons that the hon. member gave for passing over to the other side. Of course we regret his absence from our ranks. We congratulate hon. members of the Opposition on his presence and usefulness on their side of the House; and I am sure that when the leader of the Opposition on a future occasion has laid a trap for the Government—a skilfully woven web for them to put their feet in, an illustration of which we had in his amendment on the Address-in-Reply, a skilfully woven web, a skilfully laid trap—I can only hope he will have the advantage and the privilege of the brains and the help of the member for East Fremantle.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piessé): It is not my intention to delay the House for any length of time, but I certainly consider it necessary to deal with some of the subjects touched on by hon. members during the debate on the Address-in-Reply. On the whole, I feel very thankful to hon. members for the generous way in which they have dealt with most of the matters connected not only with the Public Works Department but also

with the Railway Department. Any Minister in the position I occupy who expects to get through the debate on the Address-in-Reply without some comment on the working of his departments, expects that which can hardly be realised. Hon. members will agree with me that when comment of a condemnatory character is made on the administration of departments, it is only reasonable to expect that that comment should be fair and such as the administration deserves. The departments which I have to administer, particularly the Railway Department, are closely connected with the public interests, and frequently bring the Government into conflict with the people. The reason is that public works are not always carried out to the satisfaction of those interested, and, without taking into consideration all the circumstances, the public are apt to make comment of a character not quite deserved. I do not intend to defend the Public Works Department against all the charges that are made. I dare say that at times the administration is to blame, but on the whole, we may congratulate ourselves on the reputation and official position of the number of useful men in the Public Works Department and on the success with which many of the works have been carried out during the last few years. Surely amongst the public works of the last three or four years, which have cost, perhaps, £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 of money, there must be some which have given satisfaction and are entitled to praise. On the whole I think the Public Works Department gets more than a fair share of condemnation. It is well known that the Fremantle Harbour Works had to be carried on when labour and material were very costly, and other difficulties presented themselves. Latterly conditions have been much more satisfactory, but, remembering the circumstances under which that and similar works have been carried out, we ought to be thankful for the success met with. A great deal was said by the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) as to the way in which the jetty has been constructed and also in regard to the pumping connected with the dredging work. But surely the hon. member's statements are those of assumption on statements made to him, of which statements he can

give no authentic proof, and which can be denied throughout. There may have been cause for complaint, but I think the hon. member made reckless statements in regard to much of the work done at Fremantle. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) has also spoken of the Public Works Department as overmanned. We all know there is a great deal of work to be accomplished, and that the Government have unfortunately had to retrench very heavily, but I think that now we have reached the bedrock of retrenchment; and I can say for the department that, with very few exceptions, it is difficult to see how the number of officers could be further curtailed. There is no one who would be more satisfied than myself if a committee of this House, or a Commission, were appointed to inquire into the administration of the Public Works Department, over which I preside. I am sure it would be found that the expenses in the department in connection with the staff have been cut down as far as is consistent with economy and good work. We have dispensed with one officer receiving a salary of £800, another receiving £500, and several receiving salaries very nearly approaching that amount. If we were to dispense with all the heads of departments, the officers who are to conduct the business, we would only bring about one result, and that would be disorganisation. We would very soon find that without some official heads to conduct the business of the departments there would be chaos.

MR. GEORGE: You are not going to clear out the Engineer-in-Chief of the department.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Then too, with regard to a remark relative to the Under Secretary for Public Works, that officer certainly did have leave during the recess, being absent from the colony for about four months, and that leave was well earned. Under the regulations governing the granting of leave, he was justly entitled to it, having served for many years. He was, I repeat, entitled to the rest granted to him, and if anything is to be done in the direction indicated, we should bring forward some change in regard to the regulations. The regulations provide that after a certain term an officer is entitled to relief, and

the Under Secretary applied for it under those regulations. Even if persons look at the concerns of private people, they will find that those filling responsible and onerous positions obtain relief from time to time for the purpose of getting recreation and rest, and in this respect the Government Departments are not singular. It was mentioned that during the time the Under Secretary was away the work of the department went on satisfactorily, and I am glad to say it did, but we must remember that those who had to take charge of the work during his absence had to carry it out at a loss of much of their time, men putting in extra hours, and it does not follow that they could continue to carry on their own work and cope with the additional work. Anyone who can follow all the working of a department, such as this, will see that, if an officer be absent for the short time I have mentioned, it results in his coming back with renewed vigour to undertake his work. Anyone who would be opposed to an officer in a large department like this, after serving so many years, having the necessary rest he deserves, knows very little of the way in which such a department should be worked. A subject touched upon by the same member has reference to the railway rates, a subject mentioned in the Governor's Speech. This subject will require very much more time than I am able to give it to-night, but I intend later on to take the question into consideration, and I hope that when we have been able to deal with it, the result will give a certain amount of satisfaction. That we shall be able to please all sections of the community, no-one can expect, because no matter what rates we bring into existence, there is not the slightest doubt some will be dissatisfied. Our desire is to foster all industries as far as possible, and endeavour to serve the people in the best way we can; but at the same time we must not neglect the interests of the country. In regard to our railway capital account, if it is to be understood that interest is to be paid on the capital cost of the railway at the rate that should be paid, that, I take it, will be the first consideration after maintenance. With regard to the amount earned over and above maintenance expenses, and interest on capital, the question should receive consideration.

Of course we should not forget there are other matters in connection with the working of the railways to which I might call attention, the outside maintenance, and the improvement of lines, and so on. In a new country such as this there are so many claims on us that whatever profit is made should be judiciously spent in carrying out works which are so necessary in different parts of the country. There was one point which was mentioned by one hon. member, and I will just state it as an instance to show how erroneous is the information which is given. He said it cost 24s. to take a ton of salt to Newcastle, a distance of 63 miles, the cost of a ton of salt being 27s. The hon. member was wrong in both sets of figures, because it only costs 22s. 8d. to carry a ton of salt to Newcastle, and the cost of a ton of salt, according to the ruling rates in the city, is £4 15s. So that you see both the items mentioned were inaccurate. I call attention to this case because I would like hon. members to be as accurate in their statements as they can be, and not misrepresent in dealing with matters of this kind. It does no good to place matters in the wrong light before the public. There are other misrepresentations which have been made, probably not with the desire to misrepresent, but the information given has been inaccurate. An hon. member said that in one instance the consignors were not able to ascertain what were the proper rates under which to book certain goods. We do all we possibly can to give information to the public by issuing books of rates, which are obtainable at all offices, but there has been some complaint in this matter. The public think they do not receive that attention from the railway officials in regard to information which persons desiring to consign goods should receive. To set at rest all these difficulties, I have taken the opportunity recently of instructing the officers to give the public all the information they can, and to give people some idea of the cheapest way of booking goods, so that the public can get the best advantage for the carriage of their goods over the Government lines. This should set at rest any dissatisfaction which has existed in regard to this question. I may say, on the whole, it is my desire, and I am sure it is

the desire of the Government, to see that the railways are carried on in the best possible manner to the satisfaction of the people. At the same time I would like to say that it is not to be expected we shall ever be able to please the whole of the public who use the railways. There is bound to be some dissatisfaction, which is the same in all businesses of this character; but we wish to, as far as possible, lessen the causes of dissatisfaction, and meet the public in every way we can. I shall have another opportunity of dealing with this question of rates, because there is no doubt they have caused a great deal of comment recently, but we must not forget this fact, that if we are to make a success of the railways, pressure must not be brought to bear on the Government, or upon me as Commissioner of Railways, to carry goods at a non-paying rate. If we are to do that, the profits in future, instead of paying the interest on the capital, the maintenance expenses, and being able to carry a little forward to revenue, we shall come to the same state of things as the railway departments have in the eastern colonies. Now, that we wish to avoid. We are to-day making a success of our railways as regards their earnings, and I hope this satisfactory state of things will continue; therefore, I wish to impress upon every member, and also upon the public, that compliance with the demands which have recently been made from time to time that the Government should carry goods on its railways at non-paying rates is simply out of the question if our railways are to continue to be successful; therefore I take it that, before we adopt a course which will result in a loss to the railways, the public should do their best to assist us in maintaining our present position by doing our business upon what may be termed payable lines. There are one or two minor subjects upon which I will touch to-night. Mention was made of the cheques which are paid by the Government to various creditors. In some instances there have been payments made by cheque for public works carried out in different parts of the colony, and it is complained that post offices and other public institutions will not take the cheques of the department. I take it, however, the reason why those departments do not receive such cheques

or orders is because a person presenting, say at a post office, an order for an amount like £5 or £10, desires to pay for a telegram or some such small matter of a shilling or two, and perhaps the office is unable to give him the change. That is an instance in which payment would be refused. I know of other instances where change was probably not available, and in such cases the people who held these cheques condemned the Government for not making some arrangement; but wherever a bank is situated, we have made such arrangements as will enable the holder of an order to have it cashed; so that we are endeavouring as far as possible to remove this difficulty in respect to the negotiation of cheques or orders which may be paid from time to time. With regard to post offices and similar Government institutions, the difficulty is that a man may present an order for £30 or £40, the amount of which often exceeds the usual cash balance held by the post office. This, in some cases, only amounts to £8 or £10, and even if it amounted to £20, how could they cash one of these orders for a larger amount? As I said before, I do not propose to touch upon all the various matters which have been dealt with by hon. members; I shall have many opportunities of doing so during the session. I am thankful to the various speakers for the very moderate way in which they have dealt with my departments, and I hope that some improvements have been made in the manner of carrying out works in different parts of the country. My endeavour has been, and so I am sure has always been the endeavour of the officers of both the departments with which I am connected to carry out the departmental work to the satisfaction of the public with as little friction as possible, and in the most satisfactory way that can be devised. That we are going to succeed without giving some dissatisfaction I am afraid will never be the case, but our only desire is to do as well as we can. I hope that this year I shall have an opportunity of again doing these works which we have in hand to the satisfaction of the country. My principal object is to economise as far as possible and to obtain the greatest satisfaction for the money expended, while endeavouring to meet the convenience of the public. Of course, as I said before,

both the Works Department and the Railway Department come into contact with the public, and, possibly, are blamed for more small failures than any other departments in the service. In matters of small detail, complaints are frequently made, and many infinitesimal complaints, which might have been brought under the notice of the Minister and dealt with immediately, are brought up in Parliament. But when we look round and see the numberless works which have been carried out throughout the length and breadth of the country, it may be perhaps admitted that the Public Works Department and the Railway Department deserve a meed of commendation rather than words of condemnation.

MR. WOOD (West Perth) moved that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting day.

MR. LEAKE: Let the debate be finished.

MR. WOOD: That was all very well; but six or seven members had occupied five hours, and it was not right that the time of the House should be so monopolised.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): If the legislative programme as set forth in the Governor's Speech had to be carried out, it would be necessary for hon. members to work, and it was desirable that the present debate should be brought to a conclusion. If more progress were not made, there would be the usual congestion of business at the end of the session.

Motion—that the debate be adjourned—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:30 p.m. until the next Tuesday afternoon.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 11th July, 1899.

Papers Presented—Question: Grazing Lands, Victoria District—Question: Mineral Leases, Northampton District—Truck Bill, Dividend Duty Bill, Weights and Measures Bill, Dog Act Amendment Bill, Rural Lands Improvement Bill, Noxious Weeds Bill, Pawnbrokers Bill, first readings—Return ordered (Federation): Bonuses to Industries in Eastern Colonies—Motion (urgency): Municipal Conference, Railway Passes (out of order)—Address-in-Reply: Sixth day of Debate, conclusion—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: Correspondence as to public battery at Norseman, moved for by Mr. Gregory; these papers containing all the information in the possession of the Department relating thereto.

By the PREMIER: Report of Lands Titles Department, 1898.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—GRAZING LANDS, VICTORIA DISTRICT.

MR. MITCHELL asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands,—1, How many applications were received by the Lands Department for Grazing Lease $\frac{1}{2}$ s., Victoria District. 2, The respective dates on which such applications were received, and the names of the applicants. 3, Whether notice of the ballot was sent to each of the applicants. If not, why not? 4, Whether in granting the land to the successful applicant the provisions of Section 69 of the Land Act were complied with.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell) replied:—1, Five. 2, March 6th, 1899, Turner, R. A. M.; March 7th, 1899, Murphy, P.; March 8th, 1899, Clifford, M.; March 8th, 1899, Glacken, P. W.; March 8th, 1899, Davis, J. 3, No; it was not considered necessary. 4, No.

QUESTION—MINERAL LEASES, NORTHAMPTON DISTRICT.

MR. MITCHELL asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands,—1, How many leases, other than for mining purposes,