

of the House. I believe there is no one sitting on my side of the House who would attempt to raise factious opposition to any good measure introduced by the Government. I myself have always recognised that a well constituted and well managed Opposition is essential to the good government of every country. Whatever may be the opinion of the Opposition, I feel sure they take a higher standard than that their duty is merely to remove the Government with the sole purpose of occupying the Treasury benches. There is no doubt that sooner or later we can achieve federation, but at the present time Western Australia need not be anxious about joining in with the other colonies. The Government are doing the correct thing in endeavouring to meet the representatives of the other colonies at the Convention. We have made an engagement with those colonies, and that engagement should be carried out. Although we may not see our way clear to join in federation at present, a lot is to be gained by our delegates meeting and exchanging opinions on this great question with the representatives of the other colonies. If we are not in a position to federate now, we could at any rate arrange our laws so as to become more closely associated with our neighbours. We have a very different class of people in Western Australia to-day from what we had five or six years ago. The laws that suited the conditions of that time are certainly out of joint with the conditions of to-day. We ought to endeavour as much as possible to so frame our laws, that the thousands of people who have arrived in Western Australia, and will arrive in the future, will not feel they are strangers in a strange land, but rather that our laws are their laws and our people are their people. What I think is this. The one great thing that Western Australia requires now is another five hundred thousand of such people as our goldfields have already introduced to our shores, and then our colony will be able to take up her position in every way equal to her more favoured sisters who, at no distant day, will, I firmly believe, form the United States of Australasia—a great and prosperous nation under the Southern Cross.

MR. OATS: I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your position as Speaker of

this House. I have known you for several years, and I am sure that no better man could be appointed to that honourable position. I also heartily congratulate the Right Hon. the Premier, who has come back to us looking so well, and ready, I am sure, to do his best for the good of this great country. I am in rather peculiar circumstances here. I have been a mining man from the very inception of these great goldfields. I can give you facts that you want to possess with regard to the development of this great country. I was first in Southern Cross—a town in the Yilgarn district which I now represent; and at that time the difficulties were great—very great indeed. Water was scarce; but I will refer more particularly to water later on. I have been for three or four weeks or a month without water to wash my face and hands. But what is a man worth unless he conquers difficulties? We conquered that difficulty in Southern Cross; and for the last four years of my residence there I had sufficient rain water for myself and family and for my visitors. What has been done there could be done elsewhere. I am a Western Australian. I came here over eight years since; and I have thrown in my lot with Western Australia; and I wish to see Western Australia grow to an immensity far beyond the other colonies on the great Australian continent. I believe it is possible for this to be achieved. I am a goldfields member; and when I say I am a goldfields member, I do not intend to speak a word against the other sources of production in this colony. As an individual, I am willing and anxious that the other productions in this colony should be fostered. I will do all I can to bring that about. The land is waiting for the scraping of the soil, and it will grow, and grow productively—in fact, I look forward to the time when instead of importing we shall export; and in the meanwhile, as the right hon. the Premier said, we want the people here. So we do. At present the sum of £80,000 a month is going out of the colony to supply the wives and families of men who are working here. At present that money is going out; but I want to see it stop in. If these men bring their wives and families here, more money will be circulated, and it will be so much

the better for the colony. To bring about that, we shall require the same advantages in this colony as the other colonies possess. The miner comes here, and he certainly gets good pay—say £3 to £3 10s. a week. [AN HON. MEMBER: Four pounds?] Yes; but that is exceptional. Before long perhaps, the people will be able to live on £3 a week better than they can now live on £4 a week. Now about the tariff. If we could reduce the price of necessaries I would even go so far as to subsidise production. We must have these things admitted into the colony at as cheap a rate as possible.

THE PREMIER: Yes; if we cannot produce them.

MR. OATS: I glanced over the list of articles which are imported free, and I noticed nothing but food for Chinamen. I noticed nothing on which you could bring up a stalwart Britisher. Knock off the duties on the necessaries of life. Give a man a free breakfast, give him a free dinner and a free supper, and put the duties, if you like, on the luxuries of life. [AN HON. MEMBER: Free drinks.] Yes. Put a duty on champagne as much as you like; but bring in the necessaries of life free, and relieve the working backbone of the country of the duties which are now imposed on the necessaries which these men consume.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about the landlords?

MR. OATS: They are better off now than they were eight years ago. I will draw attention to the difference between Western Australia now and what it was eight years ago. There were few people here eight years ago, and there was very little money. I paid many men in Western Australia the first golden sovereign they ever had in their lives. What has brought this change about? The magic wand of gold. Gold has brought this about, and will bring about yet greater results if we treat the country right. I am not afraid to say—I stake my reputation on the assertion, and there are others who will back me up, the member for Coolgardie will back me up—that the gold production in this country will increase and go on increasing. In a year from now 100,000oz. in the month will be produced, and more than that, even, in a very few years. We cannot go on taking out the gold for

ever; but so far we have a bigger result per ton than any other goldfields in the world. I hope to see this production of gold increase; for gold will help our agriculture and will help every other industry. Let us therefore help on the production of gold. Let us help the prospector. I am not so much in favour of the capitalist, although you cannot do without capital. Let us have capital and spend it rightly. I need not refer to the great industries of the capitalist, or the moneys sent here by the capitalist. We are told that we are having hundreds of millions of money spent in this colony. It is a lie! Show me where five millions have been spent here! There are statistics showing that so much money has been spent on the mines; but more still has been spent in the offices in London and elsewhere.

AN HON. MEMBER: A good deal has been spent here too.

MR. OATS: The next point I wish to refer to is that of the public batteries. I know the right hon. the Premier will carry out what he has said. I am sure he will. We don't want a toy battery. We don't want a coffee mill. We don't want a dolly. If the Government are going to spend anything in the erection of a battery, they must erect a battery which shall be a success as a business transaction. It must not be put there to pacify, but to help the industry. I know districts where a good mill put up on proper land would pay great profits, and should return the money in a very short time.

THE PREMIER: Tell us where these places are.

MR. OATS: I will. Carry out my scheme, and I guarantee success. Let me tell you what has been done in some parts of the colony. In one case they have to take the stone 40 miles at a considerable cost before they can get it crushed, and the crushing costs sometimes £3 a ton. [AN HON. MEMBER: £5 sometimes.] I am speaking of an instance that came under my notice to-day. Give me a good plant and water—there is plenty of water there. [THE PREMIER: And wood?] Yes; there is plenty of wood too, and I will guarantee to crush that stone for ten shillings a ton and less. [AN HON. MEMBER: You cannot do it.] Who said I cannot do it? The hon. member does not know anything about it.

I know what I am talking about. I think that great caution should be exercised in the matter. The Government should first determine on the district where the battery should be applied. You must first know if the stone is there, and its value; and when you have ascertained that, I think you cannot do better than erect a battery. Coming to federation, I would like to see a united Australia; but I do not want to see Western Australia absorbed in the other colonies. The time is not ripe for federation entirely; but the delegates should go to Sydney and tell the members of the Convention what we expect. They should tell it boldly and manfully. Federation will come when the time is ripe for it; and when that time comes I shall do all I can to bring it about. The next question is with reference to water. I must say something about that. You know very well that the year before Coolgardie was discovered, several prospecting parties went out and found gold. I can give the names of them—in fact, I assisted in sending these men out. They came back, and said they could not get water. Well, there are 20,000 people in a small area there now, with plenty of water for everybody. The member for Coolgardie said that he would like to see the mines at Coolgardie more advanced. I contend that in Coolgardie, within an area of five miles, there is plenty of good stone—many hundreds of thousands of tons—that can be profitably worked. When I talk of profit in gold, I do not want any two or three ounces of gold per ton. We would like to have it; but still, at the same time, it is not required for economical mining. Not at all. I am not going to say anything against Coolgardie. But someone said that there was no water there. Now with reference to drinking water. We want good drinking water—condensed water. I have lived on it for eight years, and I ought to know something about it. Water in Coolgardie was five shillings a gallon. To-day it is 1½d. or less. We must first prove what water we have, if we are to spend half a million on it. I do not object to the water scheme; only if we can do it without pumping the water up, let us do it. But let us first see what water we have. There are oceans of water there, and tanks might be erected to conserve it. Skillful

engineers might be sent there to see what is the best thing to be done. I believe all hon. gentlemen here on both sides of the House will do their best to help the country. I would like to mention that I am sitting on these cross-benches, but that I am going to do the best I can to help the Government in any good measures for the country. I shall not be afraid to cross this gangway to vote for the Government, if they produce a plan or a measure that will help this colony. I will cross the gangway willingly; and I believe others will too. Still I have come here—not to vote for a certain party or a certain man with my eyes shut. The little brains I have I will use; and they are at the service of the country.

MR. LYALL HALL: It was not my intention to have addressed the House at this stage; but I feel I cannot refrain from commenting on some of the speeches made by hon. members on the opposite side of the House. There is no necessity for me to follow the example of other members and to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker. It is the House which is to be congratulated. I would ask you to extend to me the same forbearance—the same leniency—you have always shown to other new members; and I would ask you to remember, if I should transgress any rules which govern the debates in this House, that I graduated first in the City Council.

AN HON. MEMBER: You need not apologise for that.

MR. HALL: I shall only say a few words to-night, as I intend to speak again when Parliament re-assembles; and I shall only touch on those topics already touched on by hon. members. First of all, I must deeply deplore the uncalled-for attack made by the member for the Swan on the Acting Premier. I believe that if he had commenced his electioneering speeches in the same strain he would never have occupied the seat he does.

MR. EWING: Never prophesy unless you know.

MR. HALL: I think that the hon. member went out of his way to abuse the opposite side. The hon. member went so much out of his way to be nasty that I can well understand his being told recently in the law courts that he had yet to learn the rudiments of manners. MR. EWING: Supposing you teach me.]