

ployed to convince me that such a step is wise or necessary. It is certainly not two years since this matter was considered in this Chamber, and then it was decided that an increase of members was necessary in the best interests of the State. I have yet to learn what has occurred in the meantime to justify a reduction of members. It has been said that with federation there is no necessity for an increase in membership, but I maintain that with federation there is more necessity for an increase of members, for unless we have a fair number of members the interests of the country will suffer through the advent of federation. I hope the measures introduced to the House will prove of acceptance to members, and beneficial to the best interests of the State.

HON. A. JAMESON (Minister) : I do not propose to reply fully to the very able criticisms which we have heard from the members of the House, except in so far as they affect myself as a member of the Government. It falls to my friend, the Minister for Lands, to reply more fully to all questions of detail which have come before us during this debate. As this is the first occasion in the annals of this House that an honorary Minister has addressed you, I think it is well for me in a sense to assert my position at once and say that I am a responsible Minister of the Crown. I take upon myself the same responsibilities as every other Minister, and I say that I am responsible not only to the people but to the members of the House.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : You are responsible for the whole Cabinet.

HON. A. JAMESON : I am responsible for the whole Cabinet truly. It has been pointed out by some, and it has been suggested by others, that, being without a portfolio, I should not take the same position in the Ministry as other Ministers do. This is entirely a mistake ; as a Minister without a portfolio, I am in the same position as other Ministers. That should be clearly understood at once. I say it at the present time because no other honorary Minister has ever addressed the House previously ; they may do so subsequently. We have a precedent for honorary Ministers in the Eastern States, and I presume in the future this House will not meet without

a honorary Minister in it. With regard to the different sentiments expressed with regard to our policy, I cannot go into all the questions, there are so many, but, generally speaking, the members who have dissented from our policy have done so on two grounds : firstly, that our policy is not sufficiently progressive—that it is a non-progressive policy—that we are not sufficiently careful about the pests, the codlin moth and honorary Ministers without portfolios. These are the pests we are bringing into existence, and some of the members here think we are a little over-progressive in these measures, but not with regard to our public policy. I think you have only to look at the *personnel* of the Ministry to see how unreasonable that suggestion is. We will suppose for a moment that it is not a progressive policy. Let me point out that all the members of the Ministry are young men in the prime and vigour of life ; they have looked for, and worked hard, with ambition, to gain the positions they now hold, and it would be a simple thing for them to bring forward a great policy which would mark them for all time, and stand out as the first Ministry to carry out a great policy. And, being young men and anxious, and naturally ambitious, it is to be expected that they would look forward to carry out some great national work, but they find this absolutely impossible under the conditions in which the State is to-day. It would be unwise to do so, and these counsels prevailed to get over that natural feeling. There is no Government which would not like to carry out new works ; and though not a financier, I have looked very carefully into the financial position, comparing it with that of the Eastern States, and I have no hesitation in saying that our position is better than that of any other State in Australia. At the same time, as Mr. Lukin, I think, pointed out, we have “ an ugly business ” to deal with. We have fallen upon evil times, not owing to any fault of the previous Ministry, but simply to the present condition of the money market, resulting from the South African war, and from other difficulties which have arisen. So we have to look back a long way before we come to a time when money was so dear as it is to-day. A very large sum has to be raised to carry out the en-



terprises of the previous Ministry; and that being so, we have to move very carefully indeed. No doubt it would be pleasant to progress rapidly in the construction of a large number of railways and other public works; but there is such a thing as progressing too fast. A man may jump over a precipice, and he will progress with great velocity till he reach the foot. It is far better to go round, and get to the bottom of the precipice by the ordinary path. If we go plunging ahead, we shall be dealt with pretty much in the same way as the man who jumps over the precipice. But we do not propose to do any such thing. We intend to move carefully and cautiously, and with honour to ourselves; and I think we shall be able to win the day if hon. members will give us their cordial support. In this connection, there is a matter which I should like clearly to place before the House, as several members of our Ministry, myself included, have repeatedly spoken in public—I do not know whether it has come up in this House—in reference to the Coolgardie water scheme. It is well known that most of the members of this Ministry have always opposed that scheme. They have looked on it as a rash scheme, though possibly good in itself: they have looked on it as too large a scheme for a State of this size. Mr. Maley, I think, has suggested that even now it would be well to forego the scheme, and not to carry it out to its issue.

HON. W. MALEY: I said it was a question.

HON. A. JAMESON: I can assure hon. members that so far as I am personally concerned—and I can speak for the other Ministers—I intend to strain every nerve to see that the scheme is carried out as rapidly as possible. It is now absolutely impossible to go back on it. If we did, we should have to bear the burden of an enormous debt, which might be for years a crushing burden; whereas, if we at once push it on as rapidly as possible, we may get at all events a return. The loss will not be so heavy. And I for one will hope that in this matter I have been always in error, and that the scheme will prove successful. Certainly I shall leave no stone unturned to see that it is brought as rapidly as possible to a successful issue. I should

like to thank Mr. McLarty, who, I am sorry to see, is not here, for having brought up the motion in regard to those natives who have for several months been imprisoned. That is a matter which very closely appeals to me. I shall have it thoroughly looked into, and shall do my utmost, after consulting with the Attorney General, to have any wrong that has been done remedied, in so far as may now be possible. The rabbit question I leave entirely to my colleague, Mr. Sommers, for it is a matter of which I know very little. However, with respect to this very important question of apples, my own sympathies have always been with freedom in regard to the importation of food stuffs—with getting in food as cheaply as possible. Naturally, in my professional position, I see the great necessity of keeping up the standard of health by the supply of fresh food; and with the restrictions which will be placed on the admission of apples, and the care which I understand will be taken, I think it will be possible successfully to prevent the introduction of the codlin moth. But where we have a population so large as that on the goldfields, where there is great difficulty in getting fresh food, we require every facility for the cheapest possible supply of fruit and vegetables; in fact, we cannot expect our population to increase unless in this respect we give them every accommodation. Most hon. members will agree with me that in this unfortunate question there is something to be said on both sides; but on the whole, it is well to remove these difficulties and restrictions, and to have apples brought in cheaply. I should like to say just one word regarding this matter of honorary Ministers. Mr. Moss has suggested that their appointment is a dangerous policy, dangerous because it is done simply with the view of gaining for the Government a numerical majority.

HON. M. L. MOSS: No; I did not say that: I said it was open to that objection.

HON. A. JAMESON: Well, I do not think that is a very sound objection; for, after all, no Ministry would think of offering a portfolio to a man in any way opposed to them. Before making the offer, they would be very sure that he was at one with them in sentiment, and that he would be sound and true to their policy.



Here it would be a most dangerous policy to bring over one of the enemy into the camp.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Has not that been done?

A MEMBER: Not here.

HON. A. JAMESON: It may have been done, but very rarely. I am informed it has never been done with honorary Ministers; and that I can quite understand, because on such members of the Cabinet the Ministry have absolutely no hold.

HON. J. M. SPEED: Only when the honorary Ministers have been bought.

HON. A. JAMESON: You can have no firm hold upon an honorary Minister; and therefore, if he be not a man you can trust, if he be not really on the same side with you, he will undoubtedly be a most dangerous member of the Cabinet, for he can discover the workings of the Government, and will be the very man who, above all others, will be most likely to upset the Ministry. Therefore it is very improbable that Ministers would try to increase their numerical support in that way, and I doubt whether it has ever been done. Certainly, I am quite sure it has not been done with regard either to another place or to this Chamber. In reference to the appointment of honorary Ministers, there is another consideration. I speak of this because it is an innovation; and this is, of course, a very conservative Chamber, and I can see there is a certain amount of feeling on the subject, and that these innovations are not liked by some of the older members of the House. I may say again that such appointments are particularly advisable in the case of this Ministry; for, as everyone will, I think, admit, the Government of this colony for the last 10 years has been an autocracy. Nobody doubts that the Government has largely been a one-man Government.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: And so was Parliament.

HON. A. JAMESON: Possibly it was. That may have been a very good thing. Certainly, we were very fortunate in the autocrat, a man who knew the colony from end to end, and who had its interests at heart. And, speaking personally, there is no one in the State whom I admire more than our late leader (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) as a man, though

as politicians, perhaps we may differ on several points. However, by his great personality, he practically controlled this State. Now it is very difficult for a new Ministry, consisting of comparatively young men, to go in and take the place of such a Minister; and therefore it was necessary, to render the Government as stable as possible, that we should have a broad basis, and have the interests of the different sections of the community fully represented. Of the members of the Ministry, three represent the goldfields, and three the coastal interests. In this Chamber, we have one representing the gold interest and the other the coastal. Therefore, geographical representation is equally divided, and the Ministry really represent the whole of the State. In that way the interests of every part of the State have been very carefully guarded.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What about the agricultural interest?

HON. A. JAMESON: The Minister for Lands (Hon. C. Sommers) is a member of this House.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: He is not an agricultural member.

HON. A. JAMESON: Still, he combines agriculture with his other pursuits; and I think many of the Ministers have agricultural interests. As a matter of principle, it is highly advisable that the Ministry of the day should represent the greatest possible number and variety of constituents. With questions of detail, I, not being in any public department, shall be unable to deal. These will be dealt with by Mr. Sommers. But all broad questions of policy I shall be prepared to take up, and to assist every hon. member in having his desires carried into execution, so long as they are in accord with our principles, and with what we believe to be for the best. In conclusion, I thank hon. members who have given me their sympathy and support in the somewhat novel position I occupy to-night. I hope that as the session goes on, it will be found that a Minister without a portfolio is not a mere appendage, but may be a useful member of the Government. Certainly, it shall be my endeavour in this Chamber to do my very utmost to further the interests of the State.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers): Knowing this House as I