

mination arises from the fact that the Government have realised that the administration of justice, so far as the outlying districts are concerned, is highly unsatisfactory. Such a course as that proposed by the Government appears to me absolutely necessary. Every member of this House knows that the manner in which justice, both civil and criminal, as administered here is in the highest degree improper. In the first place, the magistrate sits as a court of inquiry to ascertain whether a man shall be committed for trial or not. In the next place, if the magistrate commit the man for trial, in many cases the magistrate is called upon to decide whether the case is a fit one to be prosecuted by the Crown. And then, in the next place, the magistrate may be called upon to sit at the trial as chairman of court of sessions. That is a state of affairs not at all satisfactory, and it is a sad thing to think that the liberty of the subject in Western Australia may depend on the determination of gentlemen who, in many cases, are laymen in the law. We know that the gentlemen who occupy these positions are in most cases, if not in all, gentlemen of integrity; but the fact remains that the absence of legal qualifications renders them unfit for the performance of the duties devolving upon them. It appears to me that the Government have fully realised this when they announce their intention of establishing circuit courts. This new departure means that proper judicial authorities must visit the outlying districts of the colony. I suppose it is intended to appoint a judge to go on circuit, and another judge for the Supreme Court. [THE PREMIER: I do not know.] I did not quite catch whether the Premier falls in with that suggestion.

THE PREMIER: I said I do not know anything about it.

MR. EWING: If it is not intended to appoint another judge to the Supreme Court, I am perfectly certain that the present judges will be unable to visit the goldfields in the manner required. The only satisfactory way would be to establish district court judges, in accordance with the principle approved of in other colonies, where the plan has worked well. Those district court judges should have a civil jurisdiction, and should sit as a court of appeal from magistrates and wardens, thus saving the heavy expense

of bringing appeals to Perth. They should also act as chairman of quarter sessions in the various districts they visit. That is the plan which has worked satisfactorily in the other colonies, and I believe would work well here. I submit these views to the Government with all respect, and I hope I may not be looked upon as presuming. I regard the plan I have suggested as the only way of enabling justice to be administered, in the districts where the causes of action arise, by proper judicial authorities. It would enable men on their trial to have the satisfactory knowledge that the proceedings were conducted by men who have a knowledge of the law, and who are able to direct the jury as to their duty. I trust, if the Government intend to establish circuit courts, they will do so in such a way as to wipe out the evils which exist at the present time in connection with the administration of justice in the country. Before I resume my seat I have a formal amendment to propose, the sole object of which is to enable the leader of the Opposition to address the House on His Excellency's Speech, if he so desires. I move "That the last clause of the Address-in-Reply be struck out."

MR. SIMPSON formally seconded the motion.

THE SPEAKER (after a pause): I cannot accept such an amendment as that.

MR. CONOLLY (Dundas): Speaking to the Address-in-Reply, I would express first my regret that, although a promise has been made that the Government will take some action during the next session to provide certain places on the goldfields with better transport facilities, yet no specific statement has been made with reference to a railway from the Southern to the Northern fields. The Southern fields have for a long time had a requisition before the Government for a railway, and I have received from the Railway League of that district a telegram as follows:—"The people of Dundas district regret that the right honourable the Premier has not seen fit to provide in the Government programme for the introduction of a Bill for giving railway communication to the Norseman, and desire once more to urge on the right honourable the Premier and the Government the urgent necessity of carrying out this work." I may say that this requi-

sition has been for a long time before the Government, and that probably no goldfield in Western Australia has laboured under greater disadvantages from the very earliest period than the Dundas and Norseman fields. Other fields in their early stages have had alluvial gold to assist their development, and few places have had such arduous obstacles to contend with in the supply of their requirements. Certainly the Dundas fields are only 100 miles from the sea coast, and there are no fields which could more easily, or with less cost, be supplied with railway facilities; but up to the present moment the Government have done nothing in this respect, except by spending public money on a road. They have also spent much money in endeavouring to metal this road. It is very obvious to anybody who knows the intermediate country, that to endeavour to overcome this difficulty by metalling is nothing more nor less than throwing money away. It would be cheaper to the country, and more beneficial to the people, if, instead of spending this money in metalling, proper railway facilities were given to these promising goldfields. It is a matter which appeals to anybody who has seen this country; and, after all, it would not be asking the Government to do any more than they have done for many other places which do not offer more justification for such an expenditure. It is needless to say, as I think most hon. members of this House know, that if the Government will not carry this work out, there are numerous offers from private companies who will be only too willing to do this work. We do not ask the Government specially to do it. If they have not the money to expend on it, why will they not let others do it? Why should they discourage private enterprise by not allowing these people to develop the country, and thereby to increase the revenue of the colony? The construction of the proposed line would lead to the development of a district which has for a long time been wanting a railway to develop it, and it would materially assist, not only a prosperous mining district, but also a very prosperous farming district as well. It has certainly been argued that to develop this southern port would be to open it to the trade of the eastern colonies. I beg leave to deny

this. The port which the Norseman fields require opened to them would not in any way open up a trade with the eastern colonies more than any other port at the present moment in Western Australia. Take any port on the west coast, and it will invariably be found that the largest amount of shipping and imports comes from the eastern colonies. So far from increasing the trade of the eastern colonies, the opening up of this southern port would encourage the enterprise and energies of the people on the south coast to enter into agricultural enterprise. They have already done so to a certain extent, and the honourable members who visited there recently saw results that were most excellent, and, in fact, they were of such a nature that, if the least encouragement were given to the inhabitants, they would embark very considerably in agricultural and pastoral enterprise, and by so doing would not only supply the Dundas and Norseman fields, but would emancipate the people there from the importations of the eastern colonies. We might look forward to seeing such immediate results follow the construction of the line I am advocating. There would be a very large reduction in the amount of importations which at the present time are coming through that port. It would encourage the enterprise and labours of people who have settled there, and are willing to make this colony their home, and to cultivate and produce on land which is at present lying useless. I might also mention that the Government have spent some money in erecting condensers in that district, which the people there fully appreciate. In addition, I can only say that I very sincerely hope that the right hon. the Premier and the Government will see their way clear at a very early date to do something substantial for the assistance of the people on the Southern goldfields. I would also mention that I think it would be advisable for Western Australia if some legislation were introduced with reference to the rabbits which at the present time are coming along from South Australia. I think there are very few people in this colony who are aware of the rapidity with which these rabbits are encroaching into this colony. If this colony wishes to eradicate a great trouble, which has

overwhelmed the pastoral and farming industries of the eastern colonies, they cannot take this question up too early or with too much energy; and I hope that before the encroachment of these rabbits continues any further, the Government will take steps to prevent it, either by fencing or by any other means which may be considered advisable. I would also like to bring under the notice of the Government the necessity of taking some steps to light the southern coast. At the present moment this coast, which is probably the most stony and one of the roughest coasts in Australia, is entirely without lighthouses right away from Eucla to Albany. More especially is this noticeable as you pass from the South Australian coast, which is well lighted. After passing that coast and coming to the West Australian coast, there is not a landmark of any kind to guide steamers or to assist navigation.

MR. DOHERTY: The accidents all happen on the other side.

MR. CONOLLY: I do not know that they do, and I think that the proportion of accidents is greater on the Western Australian coast than on any other. [MR. DOHERTY: Not on record.] I hope the Government will at an early date introduce legislation for the revision of the Electoral Act. It is a question which cannot be taken up too soon, as under the present system the mining industry is placed at a great disadvantage. I do not think that the miners—owing to their occupation, which leads them to pass from one district to another a great deal more than the agricultural population—are fairly dealt with. I consider that, taking the generality of miners, they are quite as capable of exercising the franchise intelligently as any other class in this colony. Many of them have been here three or four years, and, because they have been unable to remain for a certain length of time in one district, they have been entirely disfranchised. I hope that the miners may be placed on the same equitable footing as their brothers in the farming industry. I do not wish to detain the House any longer, except to hope that, with all good-will to other districts and to honourable members representing the interests of other people, this Government and honourable members on both sides of the House will remember that

the people of the Dundas district have for some considerable time been neglected, and I hope that honourable members will assist one another in trying to further the endeavours which these people have, by their enterprise and energy, initiated for the development of a large district.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I had not purposed to speak to-night on the Address-in-Reply, and I should not do so now were it not that appeals have been made to me by hon. members to inform the House as to the intentions of the Government in regard to one or two questions. I do not think that it is a convenient time to make explicit statements upon the Address-in-Reply in regard to particular subjects, but I have not the slightest desire to avoid doing so. I think, however, that in regard to the great scheme of supplying the Coolgardie goldfields with water, we shall have another opportunity of discussing it, and anything I may have to say might perhaps be said more fittingly on that occasion. But as my hon. friend, the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), has asked me to give some assurance to the House in regard to this important project, I have not the least disinclination to do so. Hon. members are no doubt aware, and it is a patent fact, that the Government are authorised by statute to raise the money and to carry out this work under the law. Of course it is also well known that the Government are forbidden to expend money without the authority of Parliament, even after an Act authorising a particular work has been passed. For that reason, every year annual estimates in connection with expenditure from the consolidated revenue, and estimates in connection with expenditure under the various Loan Acts, are submitted for the information and approval of hon. members of this House; and last year we put on the Loan Estimates a sum which we considered would be sufficient for the year ending the 30th June last, in connection with the Coolgardie water scheme; but, as hon. members know, very little of that amount has been expended, for various reasons, the principal being that at the time we embarked on this great work and obtained the approval of Parliament, we also obtained the approval of Parliament to bor-