

**AYES.**  
 Mr. Darlôt  
 Sir John Forrest  
 Mr. A. Forrest  
 Mr. D. Forrest  
 Mr. Harper  
 Mr. Higham  
 Mr. Hubble  
 Mr. Lefroy  
 Mr. Locke  
 Mr. Mitchell  
 Mr. Monger  
 Mr. Morgans  
 Mr. Pennefather  
 Mr. Phillips  
 Mr. Quinlan  
 Mr. Rason  
 Mr. Sholl  
 Mr. Throssell  
 Mr. Wood  
 Mr. Doherty (Teller).

**NOES.**  
 Mr. Connor  
 Mr. Ewing  
 Mr. George  
 Mr. Gregory  
 Mr. A. Y. Hassell  
 Mr. J. F. T. Hassell  
 Mr. Holmes  
 Mr. Hutchinson  
 Mr. Illingworth  
 Mr. Kingsmill  
 Mr. Moran  
 Mr. Solomon  
 Mr. Vosper  
 Mr. Wallace  
 Mr. Wilson  
 Mr. James (Teller).

Motion for adjournment passed.

### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10-20 o'clock until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th August, 1900.

Petition (Private Bill): Electric Supply, Cottesloe, etc.—Papers presented—Question: Great Southern Railway and Status of Officers Transferred—Address-in-reply, fifth day of debate, Amendment (no-confidence) negatived, Division, adjourned—Adjournment.

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

### PRAYERS.

### PETITION (PRIVATE BILL)—ELECTRIC SUPPLY, COTTESLOE, ETC.

MR. MOORHEAD presented a petition from the Electric Supply Company of Western Australia, praying for leave to introduce the Cottesloe, Buckland Hill, and Peppermint Grove Electric Lighting and Power Bill (private).

Petition received and read.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: 1, By-laws of Southern Cross

General Cemetery, also of Bulong Roads Board and Nelson Roads Board (additional); 2, Regulations under Lands Act, prohibiting cutting of timber in State forests in certain localities, also Timber Regulations.

By the PREMIER: Correspondence as to alleged irregular issue of voters' certificates (referendum) at Kalgoorlie, etc.

Ordered to lie on the table.

### QUESTION—GREAT SOUTHERN RAILWAY AND STATUS OF OFFICERS TRANSFERRED.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL asked the Premier, Whether, for the purposes of promotion and standing in the Public Service, the date of entrance of those servants taken over by the Government from the W.A. Land Co. would be counted from the date of entrance into the service of the said company.

THE PREMIER replied:—No; the promotion and standing in the Public Service of late servants of the W.A. Land Co. is governed by the position which they now hold in the service, the date of their service with the Government being counted from the date of their entrance thereto.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### DEBATE (AMENDMENT), FIFTH DAY.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the motion for adoption of Address in reply to the Speech of the Administrator, and on the amendment by Mr. Illingworth affirming no-confidence in the Government.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): The amendment which is now under the consideration of the House certainly contains one of the gravest charges that could be brought against the Government of the country. I think it is the gravest charge brought against the Government of the colony during the last ten years, that it no longer retains the confidence of a majority of this House. The question has been dealt with at length by those who support the amendment, and in many cases not in terms that can be called moderate by any means, although I will say the member who leads the Opposition approached the subject in a dignified and moderate manner, a manner in which I trust all

serious amendments such as this will always be approached by those who have so responsible a duty cast upon them. I have noticed throughout the debate on the amendment an amount of levity which I extremely regret. The charges brought against the Government have been numerous and extensive. This is a Government which has been in power for the last ten years, led by the right hon. gentleman on my left; and I think it is a Government which has performed the duties of the position not only with credit to itself, but with satisfaction to the country. I have listened very attentively to this debate and have tried to see if I could discover logic in arguments that have been brought forward in support of the amendment introduced by the leader of the Opposition, but I have heard nothing which appeared to my mind like logic. I have heard nothing but a whiz of stones hurled from the sling of Opposition, and directed at the political giant who leads the Government and members on this side of the House. I do not wish to use the word "abuse," though I think I might very well do so. I desire to give the Opposition every credit for the position they have taken up with regard to this matter. It is their duty to criticise the actions of the Government, to watch its doings most carefully, and, if they consider it has not the confidence of the majority of the House, to endeavour in the most marked terms to express their views for the guidance of members. Many pages out of ancient history have been brought up here; matters that have been threshed out over and over again, and have been explained by members of the Government, have been brought up as allegations to support the charge that has been made against them; matters that have been explained years ago, and which I am certain even the Opposition themselves are thoroughly satisfied do not place the Government in such a position that they should not retain the confidence of this House and the country.

MR. HOLMES: If you refer to me, I proved that the answers given were false.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Having listened to all the speeches, I sit in judgment—

MR. VOSPER: You are not the Chief Justice.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I will do as every other hon. member in this House does.

MR. JAMES: You are one of the persons charged.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I sit and hear what members say and form my judgment upon it.

MR. VOSPER: You are one of the accused.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Never mind. It is my duty to hear what falls from the lips of members, and to judge whether the statements are supported by facts or not. As I say, we have any amount of allegations cast at the Government, but I can see no proof that the Government have no longer the confidence of the country, nor can I see that even these charges have been brought home to the Government. There are many matters of detail in connection with what has fallen from hon. members which I do not intend to go into; matters which it is impossible to thresh out on the floor of the House, and which I think it is not possible to thresh out unless before a select committee of this House, where witnesses could be called, and papers and everything necessary produced to prove charges such as those which have been brought forward. To my mind nothing has been proved. It has been said the Government have entered upon public works and have not properly estimated the cost of those works. I would like to ask how many members enter into any works in their own business in regard to which they can exactly estimate the cost before they start them? No one who ever enters upon any work of magnitude can possibly estimate what the cost of the work will be by the time it is completed. That is one of the charges brought against the Government, that they are incompetent, that they are unable to form a proper estimate of what the works they take in hand will cost. Members know very well there is nothing in that, and they know that no matter who may have the reins of government hereafter, they will be just as liable to make such mistakes as the present Government have been; and, indeed, they certainly will make mistakes in the future as mistakes have been made in the past.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They will soon be turned out, if they do.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** It has been said that one of the strongest reasons for putting this Government out of office is that the present Parliament is dying, that its life is illegal, and that therefore the Government have no right to enter upon any public works. To my mind, this Parliament has exactly the same powers as it had three years ago, and as far as I can see just as much life. It has precisely the same powers, and I consider that these powers ought to be exercised in the interests of the country and its various resources. It is said we are prolonging our life illegally. I cannot understand why members have not satisfied themselves with regard to that point before now. When the Constitution Act was before this House last session a paragraph was added to Clause 52 of the Act, which provided that the constitution of the Legislative Assembly then in existence should not be affected by the operation of the measure. Why did not members notice this at the time? Not a single word was then said about this. The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) never said a word about it.

**MR. GREGORY:** He pointed it out to you.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** The right honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill asked that these words should be added to Clause 52, and not a single word of disapprobation fell from either side of the House.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** That is not correct.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** It is perfectly correct, as you will find if you look at the pages of *Hansard*. Your memory is not sufficiently good, I find. Why was it done? Members were desirous of prolonging the life of the Legislative Assembly until the new rolls were brought out, so that the people of the colony who were not placed on the rolls at that time should have an opportunity of voting.

**MR. JAMES:** The rolls could have been made up by July this year easily.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** That is why those words were added; and I can tell members that the Government have satisfied themselves by the very best authority in Australia that the Constitution of this Assembly is not affected by the Act, and that we are perfectly legal in

the position we are now taking up in legislating for the country. I believe members are very satisfied about that themselves, and why should they use expressions such as I have mentioned in support of the arguments against the existence of the Government, that this Parliament is sitting illegally, and that therefore we have no right to go into the construction of any new public works, or to spend any more money in fostering the industries and resources of the country? The Opposition dealing with the question are prepared to say that the Government are unrepresentative of the feelings of the country; but what do they try to do by this amendment to the Address-in-reply? They try to place themselves in the position the Government occupy at the present time, and what right have they to assume that they possess the confidence of the country, and that the present Government do not? Why are they any more representative of the country than the present Government? They assert the Government are not representative of the country, and that this Parliament is not representative of the country, yet at the same time they say, "We ourselves are quite prepared to take up the reins of Government, although we admit that we are not representative of the country, and that Parliament is not representative of the country." They arrogate to themselves that position; but I maintain that the Government are representative of the country. When they came into power at the last election they were supported by a large majority of the people of this country; and until we have another election it is impossible to say what the verdict of the people of the colony will be with regard to the present Government.

**MR. KINGSMILL:** What about the fifteen unjustifiable members?

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** Many persons in this colony said some time ago that the people of the colony were against federation.

**MR. JAMES:** The Government said that.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** It was said the people of the goldfields were against federation. The hon. member who sits opposite (Mr. Vosper) told the people here that a large number on the goldfields were against federation.

**MR. VOSPER:** I never said a majority, did I?

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** No ; but you said there was a large number. Many people expressed the view that federation would not be carried ; but when we came to the poll we found there was a majority of 25,000 for it.

**MR. VOSPER:** Some of you were smart enough to go on the winning side.

**MR. GREGORY:** You (Minister of Mines) were the only straight-out supporter.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** Hon. members are unable to say at the present time what the position of the Government will be at the next elections ; and I may say hon. members on the opposite side are not such excellent gaugers of public opinion as they would lead us to believe they are. We are to stay our hands and do nothing because, as hon. members on the other side have been pleased to say, we are a dying Parliament. We are to remain "in fallow" for twelve months and do nothing. The business of the country is to be placed in a congested condition, a large number of people are to be thrown out of employment, and the money we have spent on works unfinished is to remain unproductive because the works are to remain idle.

**MR. MORAN:** No one said that.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** It has been said that many of those works which have been agreed to by hon. members previously are not to be proceeded with now. What does the Speech of the Administrator say in regard to public works ? It simply says : "My Ministers do not propose to recommend for your consideration the construction of many new works of magnitude, more especially as there are a considerable number of authorised works already in hand." But Ministers have not recommended the construction of many new works of magnitude—scarcely any. It has been said in the Speech that hon. members will be consulted in regard to certain matters. Is it not a fact that the Leonora railway has been agreed to previously ?

**MR. MORAN:** You have recommended over a million pounds' worth of public works, in the Speech.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** Is it not a fact that the construction of the Norseman railway has been agreed to by this House, on the voices ? Years ago

the construction of the Nannine railway was agreed to by this House ; and as we have had reason to believe that the members of this House and the country are in favour of this railway being carried out as soon as possible, the Government consider that the time has arrived when they will be justified in asking the House to assist in carrying out this work.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Why did you not do it ? You had the money.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** The Bill authorising the Leonora railway was passed ; yet some hon. members say now that we are not to engage in any further works ; that we are to leave this work and do nothing.

**MR. MORAN:** Why start it now, after four years ?

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** The hon. member knows it has been started and all the initial steps have been entered on by the Government. [THE PREMIER : Hear, hear.] Now, after £60,000 has been spent in the initial works, we are to do nothing more. The Government look forward to the time when these railways will be constructed and when the country will get interest on the money expended. Our railways have paid in the past, on the goldfields ; and we expect them to pay in the future.

**MR. MORAN:** They have not paid in the Murchison, have they ?

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** For the Goomalling railway £20,000 was voted, and a Bill for the construction and maintenance of the line has been passed ; yet we are told we are to do nothing for the next twelve months, because we are what hon. members are pleased to call a dying Parliament. I am sure hon. members do not require me to justify the construction of the Leonora railway. There was no work ever brought before this House so fully justified as that railway is. [THE PREMIER : Hear, hear.] When we come to a vote to authorise further funds for the construction of this railway, we will have an opportunity of showing to hon. members that this railway is justified. The construction of this railway is more justified probably than that of any railway ever entered upon in this colony.

**MR. MORAN:** Why have you not done it in the last twelve months ? You have had the power

**THE PREMIER:** We have ordered the rails and made a survey.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** Some hon. members have certainly told us the reason they were dissatisfied with the Government was that we proposed to go on with these works. It has been said we were not justified in going on with the Nannine railway because all the machinery required for the mines was on the ground and no more would be carried over the line.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Not Nannine—Dundas.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** No. I am very careful in any remarks I make of this sort, and it was distinctly said that a railway there was not required because the machinery for the mines was all there. It might have been said three years ago that all the machinery required for Kalgoorlie mines was there, and that there was no necessity for the railway to be built. But I say the time never arrives, in the history of mining, when machinery is not required. The life of a mine only begins when you put a battery on the ground.

**MR. MORAN:** That has been coincident with deacease, in most cases.

**A MEMBER:** It has proved too much.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** In this district one company alone is prepared to spend £50,000 in machinery if a railway is constructed there. In the case of the Leonora railway and the Nannine railway, mine owners and companies have been holding back till a railway should be constructed, in order to bring machinery for working their mines; and hon. members will know that the haulage of machinery is one of the most expensive items in the working of a mine, also the haulage of firewood and of timber; and it is desirable we should help on these industries, as we have done in other parts of the colony. At Nannine there is scarcely any timber available, not only for mining but for firewood. That is a most difficult place in which to get timber for mining; and in some places I believe that in the near future many mines will have to shut up for the want of timber. Are the Government to hold their hands at the present time, when it is necessary in such a large colony as this to do all we can to develop its resources and foster its industries?

All those things which have been said in regard to the Norseman railway can be said in regard to other railways, that there is nothing between Norseman and Coolgardie, and that the people are all going away from there. But if hon. members will go over that country, they will see that from Widgemooltha to Norseman we have one stretch of auriferous country; but that country has not been properly prospected or tested up to the present time, and it will not be so until a railway is constructed to open it up. It is impossible to tell what wealth we may not find in that country, and that cannot be known until we get the railway there. Also there is magnificent timber south of Coolgardie; and as timber in the neighbourhood of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie is fast running out, the construction of a railway, I maintain, would pay if it opened up timber country for 20 or 30 miles southward from Coolgardie, simply to convey wood to the large centres. Still, although hopes have been held out to the people of the Norseman district that this railway will be constructed, yet some hon. members say "No; the Government are to hold their hands and do nothing." It has been said that if the railway is built to Norseman from Coolgardie, it will be a permanent tax on the people of Norseman, as all their goods will have to come from Fremantle round to Norseman by way of Coolgardie. I say the people of Norseman are the best judges on that question, and if hon. members only ask them what they think about it, I am sure their answer will be that they do not consider the proposed railway will be a tax on them. Indeed, I think he would be a bold man who would go to Norseman and tell the people that they do not want this railway, and it will do no good for them. The people of Mount Margaret district and of Norseman district have been led to hope that a railway would be brought into those districts; and consequently the people interested in mines there have held back a great deal of their work: the carrying of machinery for their mines has been held back until they could do it cheaply by railway.

**MR. MORAN:** What do they require that they have not got?

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** I would like to point out to hon. members,

and I have suggested it already, that if those works are not carried out, a large number of people will be thrown out of employment; that men who are now employed on the construction of public works will be thrown out of work in consequence of the stoppage. I ask if that will be a benefit to the people of the country.

MR. MORAN: Then they are relieving works?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If a large number of men were thrown out of employment, it would be one of the worst blows this colony could suffer: it would shake the confidence of people outside, and stop the influx of population in the country for many years to come. It has been said the Premier boasts about wiping out his deficit, and that in the month of July he started with another deficit. I think that is one of the most absurd arguments to bring forward. Instead of congratulating the right hon. gentleman on the able manner in which he has managed the finances of the colony—

MR. KINGSMILL: He does that himself.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Of course he manages the finances of the country, and I have no doubt that if hon. members opposite come to this side of the House they will all try to manage the finances of the country. If that is the position they will take, I think the people of the country will try to prevent them as well as they can.

MR. MITCHELL: We shall have a queer conglomeration then.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It has been said the Premier has wiped out one deficit and started another. Hon. members know perfectly well there is nothing in that statement. They desire the people of this country to believe that the Government are not carrying on the finances of the country in a proper manner; but they do not tell the people that for the month of July the moneys are collected for 25 days only; and they do not tell the people that the amounts are made up to the 25th of every ordinary month, but that at the end of June, from long custom, the accounts are kept open till the 30th; that, consequently, the July month is only a three-weeks instead of four-weeks month.

MR. GREGORY: What about the expenditure?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How many weeks' expenditure?

THE PREMIER: All the salaries for the month.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I am certain, when the people of this colony see what the revenue and expenditure of this month are, they will find the members of the Opposition are wrong, and that the finances of this colony are not being managed in the indifferent way they would like people to believe.

MR. JAMES: That depends upon how many items of expenditure you carry forward.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: We are told that the Government are afraid to go out of office—

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They do not wish to do so.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Because the Opposition will be able to get into the departmental pigeon-holes and to see all the evil deeds of the Government now hidden away in seclusion, that they will be enabled to unearth them and to find out all the crimes the Government have committed. I think that is a most ungenerous interpretation to put on the action of the Government in respect to the motion the Opposition themselves have brought forward. The Opposition know perfectly well that any returns they require are laid on the table of the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Sometimes.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It is unkind of the hon. member, it is ungenerous, to make use of such an expression. It is not correct. When the hon. member calls for papers, he gets them, and there is no Minister here, from the Premier to myself, who is not prepared to lay any paper on the table of this House for the inspection of hon. members at their request. No. Why do the Government wish to retain office? Because they have the respect of the followers around them; because they consider they have the respect and confidence of the majority of the people of Western Australia; and they are not satisfied to abandon the feeling they have on that matter until the people have an opportunity of saying whether they believe or do not believe in this Government.

MR. MORAN: What about the "Corner party"?

MR. KINGSMILL : They have become disaffected since —

MR. MORAN : Some of them have become disinfected since.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : The Government will not be dictated to by hon. members opposite, and they will not go out of office simply because those members desire them to do so. They will go out of office with a good grace, and with flags flying—[MR. GREGORY : After the next election]—when the majority of the people of the colony consider they no longer have their confidence; but until then, the Government will carry on the work of the country in the same bold and progressive way in which it has been carried on for the last ten years. I much regret that any ill-feeling has been introduced into this House by the vote on federation; for I believe there has been ill-feeling engendered in the House on account of that campaign, and the Opposition no doubt have, to their credit, endeavoured to take advantage of that ill-feeling if they possibly could.

MR. MITCHELL : And yet they are all federalists!

THE MINISTER OF MINES : I regret this ill-feeling has been engendered, because no one knows better than I the pains, the herculean efforts, the Premier made to get better terms for this colony in the Commonwealth.

MR. MORAN : Poor man!

THE MINISTER OF MINES : The way he —

MR. MORAN : Did not do it.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : Did not do it? The hon. member who sits there, and who stands up as a dictator to this House, telling us he is going to hold the balance of power, that he and his party will sway this House to and fro —

MR. MORAN : "Sits there and stands up," he says.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : The hon. member says the Premier's efforts were fruitless. We know they were fruitless; but no man could have tried harder to get these terms for Western Australia; and why did the Premier try? He did it in order, if he could, to assist those who had sat beside him and supported him for so many years.

MR. MORAN : Throughout the debate, no one raised the question of federation.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : The hon. member himself was one who raised that question.

MR. MORAN : Not at all.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : He said there was no longer any necessity for this (Government) party.

MR. MORAN : Hear, hear; that is right.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : He said there was no longer any necessity for it because the vote on federation had been taken; and there was no necessity for the Government party to support the Government in the future as they had done in the past, because the Government would be unable to go on with any further works which that agricultural party had always supported.

MR. MORAN : No; you are mixing matters now. I spoke of protection.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : That is what the hon. member said, that the agricultural party had supported the works policy, and that now the Government would not be able to carry on that works policy; and he at the same time said the Government had assisted the protectionist policy of the agricultural party.

MR. MORAN : That is so.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : Well, now, I consider the agricultural party requires the strength of the Government more at the present time than it ever did in the past.

MR. MORAN : God help it, then!

THE MINISTER OF MINES : In support of that special section in the Federation Enabling Act which gives protection to the producers of this colony for a certain number of years.

MR. MORAN : Ha, ha! That is the cry now, is it?

THE PREMIER : And always has been the cry, too.

MR. MORAN : Then why did not you raise it?

THE PREMIER : It was raised continually.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : The agricultural party requires the assistance of the Government more at the present time than in the past. There are persons I know inside and outside the House who will be only too pleased to do away with the sliding-scale at the present time, to do away with all these duties which the

Federation Enabling Act allows to continue; and the agricultural party requires the assistance of the Government which has assisted the agriculturists and other producers in this colony for so many years, more at the present time than ever before.

MR. GREGORY: How is it no mention of this was made in the Governor's Speech? Are you sitting on a rail?

MR. MORAN: This is a second move.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I consider that is one of the most important questions which will come before this House—[MR. MORAN: When?]-and I trust hon. members will remain loyal to the conditions in that Act, conditions which were always held up to the agriculturist as advantageous to him and to other producers. The House will have the power to retain these duties under the sliding-scale for five years after the introduction of uniform customs duties in the other States of the Commonwealth. It has been said we must proceed with no more public works because Federation has been carried, and because the finances of this colony will be affected so seriously on account of free-trade being set up between Western Australia and the other colonies of the Commonwealth.

MR. MORAN: And also because you are so heavily in debt.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It is well known that uniform duties of customs are not likely to come into force before the 1st of next July. We have, at any rate, a whole financial year before us; and then Western Australia has power to retain her own duties undiminished for one year after that. We have two years of full duties; and I hope the Parliament of this country will not endeavour in any way to interfere with that sliding scale, but that both Parliament and people will protect it jealously.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But you have given notice that you will interfere with it.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Let hon. members do all they can jealously to guard the assistance given in that section of the Act to the producers of this colony; and if this be done, I maintain that the revenue of this colony is not likely to be any less in the next two or three years than it has been in the past.

MR. MORAN: Then you are not going to take off the food duties?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If, in fact, the duties upon imported products from outside Australia are higher than they are at present, our revenue will be higher than it is now. There is every prospect, at any rate, of the revenue of this colony being higher in the next two years than it has been during the last few years just passed.

MR. MORAN: If?

MR. EWING: Oh! It is you who are going to take those duties off?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I give hon. members opposite every credit for the best intentions in regard to this matter; but at the same time I consider they are wrong, in the interests of the country, in taking up the position they at present assume. I maintain that to abandon the works already approved of by Parliament would have a most disastrous effect, would throttle the industries and throttle the trade of the colony, and would throw out of work a large number of our people.

MR. MORAN: A large number not yet employed on new works.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) I feel is not in earnest in this matter. He cannot desire to stop all the works of this colony.

MR. MORAN: No; I do not want to.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No country in the world requires more development than Western Australia. We have here an enormous colony with great possibilities and great resources; and if we do not continue to develop these resources, things will come to a standstill, and we shall not be able to draw to the country the people we desire to bring here. Had the hon. member stopped at "no new works"—

MR. MORAN: That is what I did. Did I go beyond that?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I could have understood the hon. member; but to abandon the works already authorised by Parliament, such as the Nannine railway—

MR. MORAN: It is a new work on an old authorisation.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: To do that would stultify the Government and stultify the people of the colony, and would be an announcement to the people in the colony and outside of the fact that we have no faith in our resources or in



the country we have been doing our best to develop in the last ten years, with success, as I maintain, in every instance. The Government, if only by the success of the public works, are justified in the action they took.

MR. MORAN: That is right.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: They have not come forward in the Address with any large new works, but they simply say they will ask the House to assist them in proceeding with those works that have already been authorised—works of which the majority of members in this House have already approved. Had not the Government come forward with a proposal to proceed with these works, the Opposition would have been just as ready to twit them with standing still, with remaining idle, with having no confidence in the country, and with having lost the courage which they had displayed for the last ten years.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. KINGSMILL: You have no ground for that belief.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Opposition might well have said: "This is a dying Parliament and a dying party, and Government supporters no longer trust their leader."

MR. MORAN: Nor do they.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: They might well have said so then. They might also have said they had not been trusted themselves. Members will see to-night, I hope, that those on this side of the House trust the gentleman who has led this party. That gentleman has been entrusted with the government of the country during the last ten years, and, as I said before, he has conducted it with credit to himself and satisfaction to those who supported him, and also, I think I may say, to the whole of Western Australia. He is a political giant at the present time, whom members are trying to hurl stones at and to slay in the time of his age, after these great difficulties have been surmounted and a new and young colony has been placed upon a firm foundation. There are no special reasons at the present time why the Government should go out of office.

MR. MORAN: I do not want them to go out of office.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: We shall have a general election very shortly.

We have a Constitution Bill which has extended the franchise to the women of the colony, and I believe it is the desire of the people of Western Australia, or of the members of this House at any rate, that the next Parliament shall be elected on the new rolls. It is said that the Government, or the Premier, would have no right to ask for a dissolution. I am not throwing this out as a threat, but I think it may be mentioned here. The right hon. gentleman has denied that he has ever held that out as a threat.

MR. MORAN: I re-affirm the assertion.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The right hon. gentleman said he had the power to ask for a dissolution.

MR. EWING: Why did he say it?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I say there is the very best reason why a dissolution should be granted, if the amendment of the leader of the Opposition be carried. In that event the majority of the country should be asked whether the Opposition is right, or the Government is right. The Government would be perfectly justified in asking the people who, by a large majority, returned members to support it, whether they consider the Government worthy of support now.

MR. JAMES: You could not get the voice of the country then.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I cannot understand the hon. gentleman's argument.

MR. JAMES: You say it is for the good of the country.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I say it is not for the good of the country that the Government should go out of office at the present time, and I fail to appreciate some of the arguments which have been brought forward. If the amendment be carried, it will be better for the country to say whether the policy of the Government is right or wrong. The Opposition distinctly say they want to take possession of these Treasury benches and the reins of office—

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Not a bit.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Because they are opposed to certain public works. They are opposed to the continuance of the construction of certain public works now in progress. That has been distinctly stated by the hon. member who leads the Opposition, and I consider that if he does not voice the views of the Opposition,

he ought to do so. At any rate, we who occupy the Treasury benches must take what he says as the voice of those who support him. Are the people of the country to believe that, if the party on the Opposition side of the House are at once to take possession of these seats and of the reins of government, they will not enter upon these works, when they say they will not do?

A MEMBER: That is what they would do.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There is not the slightest doubt about that. I maintain that a new country like this, with all its various resources and the necessity for development which we see around us, cannot advance without a cautious and wise policy of public works.

MR. JAMES: They are not cautious, and they are not wise.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Government are entirely alive to their responsibilities. They are equally alive to their responsibilities now, as they have been during the last three years, and equally alive to the fact that all questions have to be approached with wisdom and caution. Their desire is to approach them with wisdom and caution, and they are just as desirous of doing so now as in the past. I think that the works which have been organised by them and carried out in the past justify the action which they now propose.

MR. MORAN: It may be a difference of opinion.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I would like to encourage members who have supported the Government during these years, and to encourage them in the belief they have always held that the reins of Government will be held tightly, and that the team will be guided successfully, with wisdom and caution. The Government thank hon. members for the support and encouragement given them. Members on this side of the House are twitted with being merely puppets, and have been told they have no wills of their own. Is that the way to attract members from this side of the House to that? I trust that members on this side are made of different metal, as I know they are. Members who have supported the Government for years past have just as much wisdom as members of the Opposition, and just as much faith in the country; indeed, I

consider they show by their actions that they have more faith in the country.

THE PREMIER: And they have a good deal more knowledge, too.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: They have a good deal more responsibility. They know they have on their shoulders the responsibility of keeping the Government in office, and if any action of the Government does not meet with success, that want of success is reflected upon them. They know very well that if there is any action which may bring disgrace upon the country, that action is reflected upon them; and if anything had been done by the Government in the past which reflected upon the Government, members on this side would not have supported the Government, nor could the Government have expected them to do so. Whilst recognising the necessity for wisdom and caution, that wisdom and caution must be accompanied by boldness and confidence. The five years afforded to us in the Commonwealth Bill for our fiscal freedom—

MR. MORAN: Not fiscal freedom, surely?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Fiscal freedom. The hon. member interrupts me, but I am perfectly right. We have the power to enact our own tariff in Western Australia independently of the other colonies.

MR. MORAN: No; you have not.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: We have the power to do it. We must not increase the tariff. At any rate, we have the power to enact our own tariff.

MR. MORAN: No.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: To maintain our own tariff. We have the power to take our own tariff on the sliding scale. Members know perfectly well what it is. The hon. member is simply straining at a gnat, yet very often he will swallow a camel. I say that the five years afforded to us under the Commonwealth Bill must be five years of vigorous, and at the same time cautious work, and, as the Opposition hope to come into power shortly, I hope the Opposition will adopt that policy of vigour combined with caution which the Government of the day are prepared to adopt, because if they do not adopt a vigorous policy, if they show fear in the resources of the country, they will not long retain pos-

session of the Treasury benches. We want population in this colony more than anything else. What can be done by a country with a population of 180,000?

MR. MORAN: They can borrow £80 a head, evidently.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It has done wonders, and I think we may be proud of what we have done in this country with a small population, such as we have; but, I assert, that if we want to endeavour to win greater population to the country, it is necessary to show we have confidence in the country. If we show that we have no confidence in it, and that we are going to stop our works because we have entered into federation, we shall make a great mistake. Members of the Opposition who are strong and ardent federalists maintain that by this works policy we are going to ruin the country. I know they believe in their heart of hearts it is to the great and material advantage of Western Australia that we took the step we did only a few weeks ago. Let us not show fear in the country at the present time. Just as we are entering a new stage in our existence is not a time to show fear in Western Australia, and there is no reason for showing such fear. Population must be won and settled on the country, and the country must be opened up with railways, or else we can never foster the auriferous resources of the country, and increase the other resources in the way we desire. If we stand still, people will think we are afraid of our condition. Persons will be thrown out of work, and they will go away saying the people of Western Australia have no longer the faith in the country that they have had in the past. I say that this would be the most disastrous thing that could happen to Western Australia at the present time, and the Government and hon. members on this side of the House will not bring it about. Manufactories need to be encouraged in every direction; the producer needs to be encouraged as far as we have the power; indeed both need to be encouraged by the faith we, as representatives of the people, show in the country, and a wise and vigorous policy must be observed if we are to minimise the disorganisation which must follow the adoption of free trade. A certain amount of disorganisation must follow, but I have no fear that

this country will be affected in any detrimental way by the adoption of federation. I consider federation will be to the material advantage of the country, but we must be cautious, as trade will be disorganised, or there will be the fear of disorganisation which may not come about for some time. The five years allowed under the Commonwealth Bill must be jealously guarded by members of this House.

MR. DOHERTY: You are not guarding them now.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: We must do all we possibly can to maintain the basis of the agreement.

MR. DOHERTY: Why do you not protect us now?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It is the duty of members to maintain as far as they possibly can the advantages which we are allowed to retain under the Commonwealth Bill: it is the duty of members not to adopt any timid policy at present. We should have faith in the country—its resources justify that in every possible way; that I am certain of. Hon. members on the Government side of the House are not, I am sure, going to allow themselves to be led away. If they do, the people of the country will believe they have lost that confidence in the country which they have had in the past. I have not entered into details in dealing with this matter; it is not necessary to do so. If one entered into details on all questions which come before us we should be here for a very long time.

MR. KINGSMILL: It would be very awkward.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If members want to know any details of different matters—

MR. MORAN: "Ask a policeman."

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Let them call for particulars. If members want details in connection with the finances, the Treasurer will be able to satisfy them. The charges which have been made against the Premier are unjustifiable and unwarranted. I hope hon. members will adopt my view of this matter by supporting the Government on this momentous occasion, and thus show to the country that the Government have their support, and that the Government desire to have the opportunity of going before their fellows before

they give up the reins of government. And the people of the colony will say that the Government retain their confidence. Members on the Government side, by their action in the division to-night, will show that they have confidence in the Government; they will still have the boldness and keenness they have had in the past. If hon. members intend to assist the Government in the short life which Parliament has before it, they will help to carry on in a small degree the progressive policy which has been advocated by them in the past, and which always has been carried on with so much advantage to the country and credit to themselves.

MR. HARPER (Beverley): The burden of the song of the Minister of Mines has been that of caution, and that is the burden of my song; but we look at the subject with rather a different eye. I think it is a mistaken line that has been taken by the Premier and the Minister of Mines: they have carefully avoided touching on the indebtedness of the population, and the risk there is in front of us. To my mind you cannot take a better simile of the present condition of the country than a ship in full sail approaching shallow water. It is a bold man and a good seaman who keeps on his sail and gets on his voyage as well as he can in deep water, but it is a wise man who takes in his sail when approaching shallow water. This is not what the Government are doing, I maintain, at the present time. I have taken a little trouble, as far as I am able, to examine into the present finances in regard to loans, because that is really the question we have been discussing and considering mostly, and this is how I understand them. I find that last year the Commissioner of Railways informed us it would be necessary to obtain about £500,000 worth of rolling-stock. Of this I notice £65,000 is in hand, leaving a balance of £435,000 worth to be purchased. The Leonora railway will require in excess of authorisation about £100,000; the Norseman railway, if constructed, will require at the very lowest £280,000; the Midland Junction workshops are estimated to cost £80,000, and as £38,000 is in hand, the work will cost another £40,000. There is no estimate for the Fremantle Harbour Works, but I take it that,

including the dock and other things, it will not be completed for the very low estimate of £368,000. The Supreme Court, which we are told is absolutely necessary, I put down at £25,000.

THE PREMIER: That will come out of revenue.

MR. HARPER: If you have it. In addition to that we have reappropriated a considerable sum of money, but I only take those works which may be considered absolutely necessary: Water supply, £25,000; sewerage, £40,000; Coolgardie Water Supply, £461,000; Nanine railway, £15,000; which make a total of £1,789,000, an amount apparently required to construct the works the Government propose in their policy.

THE PREMIER: How long do you think it will take to do it?

MR. HARPER: The Government have authorisations amounting to £2,002,000, but they have in hand £979,000. From these figures, I think it is evident we require £2,811,000 to construct these promised works. Our indebtedness a short time back, as published in the public documents, was £11,427,000; add to that the proposed works of the Government, and that will make a total of £14,238,000. It is the policy of the Government to carry out these works which will bring the indebtedness of the people up to £75 per head, that is with a population of 180,000.

THE PREMIER: You have got to spread all these works over an increased population.

MR. MORAN: Our population went down once, and rapidly.

MR. HARPER: I shall have something to say about that presently. It is obvious this money cannot be raised by loan. I do not think the Treasurer is prepared to go to the London market at the present time for a loan to carry on public works; therefore it is obvious the Government will have to apply for more Treasury bills shortly. Having the power to raise a million, it will be necessary to go to the money market and acquire more Treasury bills to carry on the work.

MR. VOSPER: Are there any afloat now?

MR. HARPER: There are £1,800,000 worth. If you add to that the cost of the works proposed by the Gov-

ernment it makes £4,611,000 which will have to be refunded before our debts become inscribed stock. I do not know what hon. members think about that, but to my mind to exceed our present debt is getting into dangerous water, because I believe £70 per head is about the highest debt ever reached in an Australian colony, perhaps in the world, and to raise another five millions is a dangerous proceeding. I am confident the people of the country, if they were told in plain words by the Treasurer that the Government could not carry out the works proposed without increasing the indebtedness to £80 per head, would be very careful before they gave the Government the power to do this.

THE PREMIER: The railways pay their way.

MR. HARPER: I take, as absolutely necessary works to go on with at the present time, four items: rolling stock, Midland Junction workshops, the Fremantle Harbour Works, and the Coolgardie Water Supply. If we go on with these works which we are committed to, they cannot be carried out without adding £7 per head to the debt of the population: that is more than enough to my mind. We should not proceed beyond that. But besides all these works the Government suggest that they will be prepared to consider the expenditure of £300,000 on a water scheme, the construction of further railways, and the matter of improving the defences of the colony. If ever there was a wild scheme in regard to borrowing, I think it is contained in the Speech. It is not as if we were the sovereign State we were last year.

THE PREMIER: That is the point.

MR. HARPER: That is the point, and I will give some evidence to the hon. member in regard to it. That is the point: we have not the power we had, therefore we should be cautious. It is not the caution the member for the Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) talks about but does not preach. The Premier last year gave us a warning about this matter himself. He quoted from Mr. Reid, as being an authority worthy of quoting from. Mr. Reid said:

My great objection to this proposal is that it singles out one State from other States; but on the facts of the case, I see it is absolutely impossible to ask Western Australia to

come in with us, unless that colony is secured in some such way as we now suggest against a financial crisis.

Are we secured against that financial crisis?

MR. VOSPER: The Premier himself said the sliding scale was useless.

THE PREMIER: Did I?

MR. VOSPER: You did.

MR. HARPER: The Premier also quoted from Sir George Turner.

THE PREMIER: That was before the sliding scale was adopted, I must point out.

MR. VOSPER: You said the sliding scale was absolutely useless: it is reported in *Hansard*.

THE PREMIER: I do not think it is.

MR. HARPER: Sir George Turner, who was quoted by the Premier, said:

And when we look at the great distance which divides Western Australia from the rest of the colonies, and remember that there are hundreds and thousands of people there who are hoping to develop their own natural industries and their own manufacturing industries, and that through intercolonial free-trade they will be seriously injured in that respect, I can quite understand the difficulty that will arise, and that Sir John Forrest and his colleagues will have a very hard task indeed to induce their colony to join us. I believe Sir John Forrest and his brother representatives are very anxious to induce her to enter the federation.

These are the warnings given by the right hon. member himself. What did the Premier say on this question last year, at the Joint Select Committee? When speaking of Clause 95—"Customs duties of Western Australia,"—Sir John Forrest said:

I did not understand the effect of this clause when it was passed in Melbourne, nor did anyone at that time, strange to say. I was under the impression that the duties in force when uniform duties were imposed would continue in our case, so far as the other colonies were concerned, but that the Federal tariff would come into operation in regard to foreign goods. Now I find that our tariff would have to be re-imposed at once in the State Parliament. The very first thing we would have to do, when we got notice that uniform duties were to come into force, would be to call Parliament together, and ask them to renew the Tariff Act in *globe*, so far as the other Australian colonies were concerned. That was not understood at the Convention, and it is well-known that to re-impose a tariff is not so easy as to leave a tariff as it is. Then the thought never occurred to me that the 20 per cent. reduction year by year would work so badly as has since been proved to me. In fact,

these yearly reductions are, in my opinion, impracticable, because they would disarrange trade. How could you carry on the business of an importer, if you knew that every year the duties were to be changed or reduced one-fifth? Men would import as little as possible. An importer cannot afford to lie out of his money for any length of time, and he only imports goods as they are wanted; and the operation of this sliding scale would discourage trade very much. I suppose there is not a man who would not rather have the duties swept away than be bothered with those annual changes. That being so, the great advantage and concession given to us in the Convention on this point seems to be worth very little.

At that point Mr. Illingworth interjected, "It is of no value at all."

THE PREMIER: It is valuable to the farmer, at any rate.

MR. VOSPER: You said exactly the contrary, twelve months ago.

MR. HARPER: Sir John Forrest, sitting on the Joint Committee, also said:

If what I have said be true, then the argument that this clause is a great concession to Western Australia has to give way altogether.

Hon. F. T. Crowder: It is no concession.

Sir John Forrest: It was considered a means by which Western Australia could enter federation; and, without the clause, there was no member in the Convention who would have said that this colony could join the Commonwealth. On the contrary, they all said that Western Australia could not, and they looked upon this clause as a means of enabling us to join the other colonies. This sliding scale for five years was supposed to give us time to look round, and foster our infant industries, and it was thought that by the end of five years we would be able to enter federation with uniform duties. As to the re-enactment of the tariff, I do not attach so much importance to it, although I think it will be a trouble. The concession that was made to Western Australia, which was thought so much of at the time, and which I have previously spoken about as a good proposal which would give us seven years, and perhaps longer, to look around, now proves to be of such a nature that no one could tolerate it.

Now the right hon. gentleman says it is very desirable.

MR. VOSPER: Yet no one could tolerate it!

MR. HARPER: Now I must say the result of the action of the Premier throughout on the question of federation has been disastrous to the colony. Throughout his whole career when dealing with this subject, he did that which he did not know he was doing, that which

was injurious to the colony, and that which he did nothing salient afterwards to correct. After that joint committee reported, he went to the Conference of Premiers. He did nothing there which was of any benefit, or which in any way assisted the colony: in fact, many people think he did rather the reverse. After he failed in getting this Parliament to pass the proposal for sending two Bills to the country, he went to the Eastern colonies and, according to the Minister of Mines, used herculean efforts to save his country. I grant that he did a great deal: he did everything but the one single thing he could have done, which was, to achieve success. When he was there, it was stated in the public Press of most of the colonies that his demands seemed so reasonable that it was not obvious why they should not be granted; but the Premiers of the other colonies refused those demands; and why? The newspapers even published the reason why. They said: "These Premiers are experts in political matters; and they know very well they have only to hold out and Sir John Forrest will give way."

MR. JAMES: They knew him like the public of this colony.

MR. GEORGE: A regular "climb-downer."

MR. HARPER: If the Premier had simply put his foot down at that time, and said: "If you do not give me the concessions you admit to be fair, I will not introduce the Bill," the other Premiers would at once have given way; because Mr. Deakin has since said that we had only to ask and they would have given. An interjection comes from behind which suggests much. It is: "How was he to get the support of the goldfields?" That is it. The object of the right honourable gentleman has been to think first, not of the interests of the country, but of political considerations. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] It comes to this: when a politician sacrifices the interests of his country to his political ambition—and that is what he clearly and distinctly appears to have done—I cannot say that it gives me confidence; and that is the position which I take up. I have no confidence in the public works policy of the Government at this time. Hitherto I have all along been prepared to support the Government in a bold and

progressive public works policy; but I say, when there is danger ahead it is time to pause. But the Government say they will persevere in the same course. That does not inspire confidence in me; and the Premier's action with regard to federation has destroyed my belief that the best interests of the country will be looked after when the pinch comes. The Minister of Mines made one or two rather remarkable statements, which appeared to me to be mutually contradictory. He said: "It is most important that we should keep this sliding scale going: that is one thing which we must uphold and loyally abide by"; but in the next breath he told us the result of this would be that we should collect a larger revenue for the next two years. That means we are going to tax the people more heavily than they are taxed now.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No.

MR. HARPER: That is a very promising prospect to put before the country. That exactly bears out the position those who opposed federation took up: "If you have the two tariffs together, you must tax the people higher than they are taxed now." That is the position.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: They will be taxed by the Federal Parliament.

MR. HARPER: I know the Federal Parliament will impose taxation; but you say we must reimpose the inter-colonial duties.

MR. VOSPER: We shall have general protection and local taxation too.

MR. HARPER: Additional taxation. I hope the sliding scale will be maintained, but I have very little belief that it will be, because I know that anyone who goes to the country pleading for power to impose heavier taxation will have a very poor chance against one who advocates the contrary policy.

MR. VOSPER: The next Parliament will settle that, will it not? We shall have no chance of getting the sliding-scale.

MR. HARPER: The Minister of Mines also said he hoped we should attract population. That is rather an interesting phase of the question. How are we going to attract population? We are going to give them higher taxation than is imposed in any other part of the colonies; and here is a paragraph containing some remarks of the Premier

touching a little on that point—an expression of opinion before the Joint Select Committee last year:

With free-trade from Eastern Australia, and a high tariff against the outside world, no doubt the trend of the trade would be from Eastern Australia, and that is all the importers could tell us. I believe that for many a year, with free-trade between the colonies, people will import rather than manufacture here. Coal is closer to the industries and cheaper, and labour is one-half the cost, or very much much less than in this colony, and will be for many a long day.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: And there is plenty of capital.

Sir John Forrest: We already have evidence of the truth of what I have stated. How is it that the firm of Thompson Brothers, of Castle-maine, and Martin & Son, of Gawler, have done all the great ironwork for this country for years and years past?

Hon. F. T. Crowder: They can land it here more cheaply than it can be landed from England.

Mr. George: The reason is that men in those other colonies work for 25 per cent. less wages than in this colony.

Sir John Forrest: What Mr. George says is quite true; indeed I believe men in the other colonies work for more than 25 per cent. less, and that is what we have to contend with. With the condition of affairs here, you may depend upon it, notwithstanding Mr. Illingworth to the contrary, that for many years the wages will be higher than in Eastern Australia.

Mr. Illingworth: I hope so.

Sir John Forrest: But Mr. Illingworth says wages will level down and become equal. I say nothing of the sort will occur; and that will be a barrier to the establishing of industries here for many a day.

That is the point I wish to make. The Premier continues:

How is it that during the last few years we have have had to go to the Eastern colonies for the public batteries which have been erected? Why have they not been erected in this colony? The reason is easy to understand. Industries are established in the other colonies, and besides that, labour is 45 per cent. less costly, and will continue so for many a long day, until our conditions are the same as theirs. When our revenue per head of population is the same as the revenue per head of population in Eastern Australia, then no doubt the conditions will be equal, but not until then.

That is the prospect we have of attracting population. Industries cannot be established here until the wages be reduced: it is obvious, therefore, that if new industries cannot be established, there will be a difficulty in carrying on those that are here already, when they come in

contact with the manufactures of the Eastern colonies, where wages so much lower are paid; so the prospect of attracting population, which is the desire of the Minister of Mines, appears to me to be hopeless, if those conditions exist which the Premier alleges do exist.

MR. VOSPER: Higher taxation and lower wages will not fetch population.

MR. HARPER: Exactly; that is the point I wish to make in reply to the Minister of Mines. He says: "We want population; we must increase the revenue"; and the Premier says: "To encourage industries we must lower the wages." I do not know where we are going to get population out of that. My opinion is that population is more likely to fall than to rise, and there lies the great danger to our borrowing. If our population falls, or even if it stays as it is and we go on spending borrowed money, there will be danger; and no doubt that was realised by the Premiers and leading men of the Eastern colonies when, at the Premiers' Conference, they inserted that section authorising the Commonwealth to come to the rescue of an insolvent State, and doubtless it was that which instigated Mr. Deakin when at Albany the other day to say they anticipated that Western Australia would suffer so much from joining federation that the Commonwealth would have to come to her rescue.

MR. VOSPER: That is what gave the Premier confidence.

MR. HARPER: It may have been. There, in my opinion, lies the danger, and the Government have ignored it and are still ignoring it. They are going on just as if nothing whatever had happened to alter the system of trade, and they have said nothing whatever about the enormous loss of revenue that obviously must occur. The Premier has made a great deal of that loss on previous occasions, and last year he urged the point before the Select Committee. He defended Mr. Owen in his estimate. We are in imminent danger of not having the sliding scale imposed, and of losing £300,000 a year of our revenue and an enormous amount of trade. I ask myself whether I can honestly support a Government which is reckless in its borrowing and has thrown over the interests of those who have supported it for many years—the agri-

cultural and manufacturing industries of this colony—and I say I feel that I must vote against the Government on this question, although I am extremely loth to do it and it causes me great pain.

MR. OATS (Yilgarn): On Tuesday the Premier gave goldfields members on this (Opposition) side of the House a castigation, but as far as the member for Yilgarn is concerned he does not care much about that castigation. He will do just as he thinks right, and does not look to the Premier, to the Government, or to the Opposition on this question. I look to my constituents. I endeavour, have endeavoured in the past, and shall endeavour in the future to vote according to the will of my constituents. If the time comes when I disagree with them, I will tell them so. Meanwhile I shall not apply to the Premier for advice, nor take any notice of the castigation. Now, with regard to railways, the Premier twitted me on my being a member of a deputation advocating railways through the country. I think members on this (Opposition) side of the House have always supported railways through the country, and I have yet to learn that they will not support railways in the future when means can be found to properly build them. I believe in railways through Western Australia, because we have a great country. I hope to be able to get into a train at Perth and go through the Eastern goldfields, come down from the other side through Geraldton, and back to Perth. That, I hope, will be the ultimate result of railway construction in this colony. I hope, also, to see railways through agricultural districts so that the producers in those districts will have a road to their market. That is a very important thing, but I contend that the Nannine railway should have been built years ago. I see no reason why it should not have been. It passed this House four years ago, and the money was there, yet the railway was not built.

MR. VOSPER: Kenny was here, that was the reason.

MR. OATS: I was going to ask whether it was because Mr. Kenny, the former member for North Murchison, was the member for that district. It is significant that the member at present representing that district sits on the Government side of the House, and now, of course, he gets all the money which is left.



MR. MOORHEAD: I hope so.

MR. OATS: I hope so, too. I will support you.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There would have been no money but for me.

MR. OATS: In my opinion that district is the greatest goldfield in the world. We have a stretch of 1,100 miles straight across this country, and I entertain hope for the future, if things are rightly handled. It depends upon the handling, and I consider the money has not been handled rightly in regard to railway construction. I think I ventured to say before, that I disagreed with the expensive manner in which railways have been laid down in many parts, especially in the back country. For instance, the contractor of the Kalgoolie-Menzies line said that if he had not to erect all these stations, sheds, etc., costing between £40,000 and £50,000, he would have taken the railway to Leonora. Why was that money spent so badly, and why is not the railway at Leonora to-day?

MR. MITCHELL: What is the use of crying over spilt milk?

MR. GEORGE: We want to stop the cow from being milked any more.

MR. OATS: I am a great believer in railways for the advancement of this country; but we must look after the finances. Can we afford the construction of further railways? I listened to my friend, the last speaker (Mr. Harper), with very great interest; and, in my opinion, he has made out a good case. Unless the Premier will give me evidence that the money is forthcoming, I shall support the amendment. When he can show that we can afford the money, I will advocate the policy of extending the railways through the country; but the right hon. gentleman has not shown that to me yet.

MR. GEORGE: No, nor to anybody else, either.

MR. OATS: Much has been made of the proposal to pass the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill. I believe in this principle, as do also all the members on this side of the House. Members on this side advocated the principle in this House years before I ever heard it mentioned from the Treasury Benches.

MR. JAMES: It was copied over there.

MR. OATS: I want to avoid the curse of strikes. I desire to see fairness to the workers—a fair day's pay for a fair day's

work—and I also want better mining laws. There are some good points in the mining laws, but I say advisedly that many parts are rotten.

THE PREMIER: Why not remove them?

MR. OATS: All right: that is for the new Minister of Mines.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: We are satisfied.

MR. OATS: A lot has been said about encouraging population. I want to see population here, but first I want to see work for them. What is the use of population to come here unless we have the work?

MR. MITCHELL: You are stopping the work.

MR. OATS: We do not want to bring people here to pauperise them, nor do we wish to pauperise the people who are here already.

THE PREMIER: There is plenty of room.

MR. OATS: There is plenty of room, and we will support the railways when you can show us where to get the money from.

THE PREMIER: You trust to me.

MR. OATS: I attended that deputation to the Premier, and I hope to attend lots of deputations to him in the future for railways in the colony.

MR. GEORGE: "A" Premier.

MR. OATS: "A" Premier. I do not say "the" Premier, although the present Premier is a man I admire in a great many ways. I question whether the Premier knows the voice of the people. He may think he does, but my opinion is that the people have lost confidence in the Government. Of course, I may be wrong. I think change is wanted. Sir John has been in office 10 years, and that is a good stretch. He ought to let some of the youngsters go in and have a show. What do we want with one man to rule? What shall we do when he dies? I hope it will be a long time ere he does. I would like to see him translated.

A MEMBER: Transferred.

MR. OATS: Transferred. I think Sir John Forrest is entitled to a billet, and I should like to see him Governor of the State of Western Australia.

MR. VOSPER: So he will be.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: So he will be. He knows that.

MR. OATS: And when in that position he can give advice. I say again let the youngsters try.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. OATS: You must not think that all the brains are in one skull. I do not think they are. I remember it was said that when W. E. Gladstone died, the country was not going to move. I need not enumerate the good men who have lived for a long time, of whom it was said, "When that man dies the country will be dead." I say "No." I dare say there are better men now in the British Government than ever before during the last half century.

A MEMBER: No.

MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.

MR. OATS: I say better men. I hope the Premier will take my "tip," and I will do my best to get him that position. I speak in all sincerity.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Are you going to Windsor?

MR. OATS: I hope so some day. I shall vote for the amendment.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. QUINLAN (Toodyay): I rise to oppose the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition, and in doing so I feel I would be studying the best interests of the country by preventing if possible, if my vote will do it, a change in the Government at the present time. I consider it is inopportune. While I have expressed the opinion to the Premier himself and on the public platform that a change of Government would be desirable, I do not feel justified in deserting the Government for my friends opposite. I think it is important that a general election should first take place, and then it would be decided by the general opinion of the country as to whether the Forrest Government should continue in office longer. For my own part I think it would be in the best interests of the country to have a change, but not at this stage, and I believe even in the interests of the Premier himself it is desirable we should have a change of Government.

MR. VOSPER: By all means give it to him: he wants it bad enough.

MR. QUINLAN: I think it would be disastrous at the present time to have a change. I intend to refer in the course of my remarks to some figures, and it may seem somewhat strange that I should support the Government on this amendment, although my figures bear a great resemblance to the figures given by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper). Before proceeding to deal with the figures I would just like to refer to the paragraph in the Governor's Speech which is of the greatest importance and has reference to federation. While I was opposed to federation on the terms offered, I cannot do other than accept the verdict pronounced so strongly by the referendum. I hope we shall unite together—those who were in favour of federation and those who thought as I thought—and that we shall work for the well-being of the country. I still adhere to my opinion that federation will be, for some years, a drag on the country and retard its prosperity in some measure, and I make bold to say that had we stood out we should have had any terms we wished to ask for. The question has been decided, and therefore we have to face what is known and understood as the sliding scale, for five years. I think it is desirable that the Government should be allowed to continue for some time longer in office to prepare for the new order of things. There will be a duty probably cast on the country shortly of electing suitable representatives to the Commonwealth Parliament, and amongst the number, I hope for the good of the country, the Premier will be a successful candidate. I believe he can do greater good for us in the Commonwealth Parliament than in the Parliament of this colony.

MR. MORAN: I agree with you there.

MR. QUINLAN: I hope the Premier will see fit to offer himself as a candidate for the position. The effect of the sliding scale will be to disarrange business affairs for some time to come, and I hope the House will see fit not to make too great a change in the duties, if the motion given notice of by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) be carried. While I agree with the items particularly referred to in his speech, there were one or two others which might likewise be dealt with; but I hope we shall not take too long a step in that direction, because

the figures I shall put before the House will show that we have a hard enough battle to fight to make ends meet, and to carry on satisfactorily the business of the country. As regards the reference in the Speech to the mail steamers, I give all due credit to the Engineer-in-Chief and to the Premier for the good work done in respect of the accommodation at Fremantle; but I venture to say that great credit is due to the German line of mail steamers—[SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear]—for coming here as pioneers, and thus inducing the other lines to come here so soon. And while on this subject, I think it is befitting that I should refer to one gentleman in this colony who particularly deserves some credit at least at our hands—I mean Mr. A. J. Diamond. I think it is to a great extent due to him that we have the mail steamers here so soon. For some considerable time we have been anticipating their arrival, and our wishes are now realised. In paragraph 11 of the Speech reference is made to the Railway Department as having had a successful financial year. With regard to this, I understand it is the custom to make a charge for the conveyance of Government material over the lines, and no doubt that practice adds considerably to the receipts for the conveyance of freight. [MR. VOSPER: Hear, hear.] However, that is, after all, simply a book entry, and we must not shut our eyes to the fact that some of the material now being conveyed and charged for against loan is for the construction of lines now in hand. Next I come to the question of further expenditure, and I may say at once I am opposed to any new works being undertaken; and while I shall vote with the Government on this motion, I reserve to myself the right to vote for or against anything that may be introduced in the shape of extra expenditure. Our present indebtedness amounts to £11,437,017. We have then to face other works sooner or latter which have already been authorised, and which will involve a total indebtedness of some £14,000,000. We have Treasury bills due to the Savings Bank £300,000, to the A.M.P. Society £500,000, and recently floated £1,000,000. There are reappropriations to date, £956,000, made up as follow:—Nannine railway, railway rolling-stock, harbour works, harbour dredges,

Fremantle and Perth water supply, Fremantle and Perth sewerage, Coolgardie Water Works, departmental, and immigration. From this amount of £956,000, deduct £85,000 for the "immigration" and "departmental" items, which, it is argued, can be done without. In addition to the reappropriations, there is a liability in the shape of "unexpended balances on account of works," £2,002,281, representing moneys required to complete works authorised which are in course of construction. Amongst these works are the Nannine, Leonora, and Goomalling railways, railway workshops, harbour works, the Coolgardie Water Scheme, *etcetera*. Moreover, according to the Governor's Speech, the country is about to be committed to expenditure on a new Supreme Court, and on drainage in the South-Western District. I understand that portion of the colony in which the last-mentioned expenditure is to take place is more or less under water at the present time. [MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.] Then there is also mentioned in the Speech the Norseman railway, £280,000, and it is estimated that the following additional sums will be required: for the Leonora railway, £100,000; for railway workshops, £40,000; for rolling-stock, £500,000, less balance of appropriation in hand unexpended, leaving £235,000; and for the Fremantle Harbour Works, £263,000: making a total of £953,000. A summary of liabilities which must be regarded as pressing is as follows: Treasury bills falling due, as set out in the foregoing estimate, £1,800,000; reappropriations, which after allowing £85,000 for possible earnings, and deducting the latter sum from £956,000, amount to £871,000; to carry on works in hand—unexpended balances—£2,002,281: making altogether, with the £953,000 for new works as per Governor's Speech, a total of £5,626,281. Allowing £979,635 for cash in hand, being proceeds of last loan, there remains a balance, representing pressing liabilities, of £4,646,646. In round figures, we shall be saddled with the burden of certainly not less than £14,000,000 of money. [MR. MORAN: Hear, hear.] Now the interest on that alone—[MR. MORAN: At three-and-a-half per cent.]—or, I should say, on our present indebtedness, amounts to £440,000 per annum; railways, £880,000—

MR. A. FORREST: The railways have paid their own expenses.

MR. QUINLAN: Posts and telegraphs, £239,000; police, £109,000; and medical, £78,000. That is the expenditure we have to face; and I am quoting only five items, which cost the country, roughly, £1,800,000 per annum, assuming that our revenue will be the same or thereabouts, that is £2,500,000, basing it on the present population. I have quoted only five items of expenditure, and the whole revenue is £2,500,000. To some it may seem that I take a somewhat despondent view of the country's position; but I have learned to be cautious in my own business affairs, and I desire the Government to adopt that policy also, and I have a right to do so, being a member of this House and a taxpayer of the country.

MR. GEORGE: They will not do so.

MR. MORAN: So long as the hon. member (Mr. Quinlan) supports them, they will not.

MR. QUINLAN: I am perfectly justified in supporting them. When I see better men to take their places I will withdraw my support.

MR. MORAN: The men first and the country afterwards!

MR. GEORGE: We know the hon. member is honest, anyhow.

MR. QUINLAN: There is a number of other items: however, I am sure figures are not very pleasing at any time, more especially when, I am sorry to say, I have to speak in a tone I do not like to adopt with regard to the present state of the colony's finances.

M. ILLINGWORTH: It is very useful and very necessary to do so.

MR. QUINLAN: But the fact remains that we are indebted to-day, even on our present loan, to the extent of £78 per head, and I regard this as a serious state of affairs, and feel there is required, to prevent our going to ruin, the greatest possible caution at the hands of this Legislature.

MR. GEORGE: You must put the brake on the train.

MR. QUINLAN: I opposed the Norseman railway on the last occasion when it was before this House, and I have not seen any reason to alter my opinion. So far as I can judge, that expenditure is not warranted; and, how-

ever much we believe in the extension of railways for the opening up of the country, I think we are not justified in adding to our present burdens by undertaking that responsibility; and therefore I hope the Government will see fit not to urge the House to pass that line during the present session, but to leave it for a future time, when I trust our population will have increased and our standing will be more stable than at present. Reference is also made in the Speech to the new Bills it is proposed to introduce. I regard most if not all of these Bills as very necessary, especially the Municipal Bill, the Public Service Bill, the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill—in fact, I might mention them all; and therefore I hope the House will be good enough to get these measures through, because we are certainly in need of some of them, and especially are we in great need of an amendment of the Municipal Act of this colony. The deficit of £247,349, which we had last year, has been cleared off, and that is somewhat satisfactory; but if we remember that credit is taken for the conveyance of Government material over the railways, the small credit balance is not so good in practice as it is on paper.

MR. MORAN: It will not be so good on public works.

MR. QUINLAN: I hope, too, that after the charges made last evening by the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes), some better method will be adopted of auditing the railway accounts.

MR. MORGANS: But are those charges correct?

MR. QUINLAN: That is for him to prove. I have no doubt my friend the ex-Commissioner (Mr. Piesse) will reply to him; but I was not aware until I heard that speech that any auditors outside the Auditor General's Department were entrusted with the auditing of any Government accounts; and I do not believe in the system adopted of having separate auditors for the Railway Department.

MR. HOLMES: I should think not. Nobody but the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) would believe in it.

MR. QUINLAN: And I still hold that opinion, even if there be only a shadow of truth in the charges. No doubt the hon. member has been informed by some

disappointed or discharged Government official; nevertheless, he made the charges here, and until the ex-Commissioner disproves those charges, which I am sure he will be the man to do, I must take it that such deficiencies have taken place.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is not a private photograph, you know.

MR. QUINLAN: There is another thing, too, which strikes me forcibly, and has done so for a long time: it is the question of the country's balance-sheet in relation to the stock which is represented as cash. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] My opinion is this item should be treated as a limited company would treat stock in its balance-sheet: there should be some allowance made for depreciation.

MR. A. FORREST: The railway stock is set down at cost price.

MR. GEORGE: Cost price may be too much at the present time.

MR. A. FORREST: No; it is quite right.

MR. QUINLAN: I am well aware it is set down at cost price, but it is the practice in all companies to write off a certain percentage for depreciation.

MR. A. FORREST: But the depreciation in railway stock is very small.

MR. QUINLAN: That is my system of doing business, and I should like to see it adopted by the Government. With regard to one other item in the Speech, the Midland Railway Company, I regret that some steps cannot be taken to force the hand of that corporation. I know the existing circumstances, and I know, too, that I endeavoured last year to make them pay some penalty in the shape of a tax; but unfortunately the House did not look on it from my point of view, and my proposal was rejected; but I hope that at a time not far distant some stringent measures will be adopted to bring this company to their proper senses.

MR. GEORGE: Do you know who are the shareholders?

MR. QUINLAN: No; and I do not care either.

MR. A. FORREST: There are no shareholders.

MR. QUINLAN: Last evening the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) made bold to say that members on this (Government) side of the House followed the Government blindly. I do not know

whether he has gained his experience from a knowledge of his own party, but certainly there are members on the Government side quite as independent as any hon. members opposite; and while I have always been a staunch supporter of the Forrest Government, I have on many occasions voted against them, and I intend to maintain that position both inside this House and out of it.

MR. GEORGE: That is rank treason, is it not?

MR. QUINLAN: One other item I wish to mention is the matter of the Perth Ice Company. I am sure we have had an honest opinion from the Attorney General: I of course believe he sincerely gave to the Government the advice he thought best—to accept the payment of this money, and a sum of £100 as a penalty. He may have, and no doubt has, seen documentary evidence which has guided him to that decision; but, looking at it from an ordinary man's point of view, I hold the opinion as a layman that if the company were liable to pay £100, they were liable to pay the full penalty. I regard the shareholders as perfectly innocent of this fraud, because I do not believe they were aware of it, and from my knowledge of the directors I would not believe for a moment that any one of them would be a party to such a fraud.

MR. VOSPER: Why did they not clear their names by "sacking" the party responsible? As it is they are *particeps criminis*.

MR. QUINLAN: From the first time I saw this matter referred to in the newspapers, it struck me that if the company were entitled to pay a penalty, they were entitled to pay the full penalty, more especially a company posing as a rich financial concern, with such respectable shareholders. The whole transaction looks very bad, and £100 should not have been taken in lieu of what is due. I did not come here to-night prepared with a lengthy speech, because a lengthy speech is unnecessary, and the interests of the country would be better served by getting the motion disposed of and proceeding to some practical work.

MR. PIESSE (Williams): Before dealing generally with the question before the House, I would like to explain my position as a private member here, seeing that I have changed my seat from that

I previously occupied on the Treasury benches, and also to indicate my future action in respect to the Government and party to which I belong. It is my intention as far as possible, and I anticipate in a great measure that I shall be able, to give my support to the Government, and join with my party in the work of the session. As to the points of difference between us, I shall deal with those as I think best, and shall take an early opportunity—in fact I hope that opportunity will be afforded next week—of dealing fully with the matters which have caused my severance from the Ministry. When the motion tabled by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) to-night is brought forward, I hope to submit an amendment which will give me an opportunity of fully explaining my case. Indeed, it is my intention, when the motion is brought on, to move such an amendment as will, I hope, with the concurrence and assistance of the House, defer the bringing into operation of the decision which the Government have arrived at as to the recognition of railway associations; that is, of deferring that recognition until the question has been discussed here. As to the remarks of the Premier a few evenings ago, in reference to myself, I desire to thank him for his allusions to my past work, and also for the expressions of respect in which he said I was held by my colleagues during the time I was a Minister of the Crown. I feel, in taking up the position I have, that I have faithfully—at least I hope I have—done my duty to the country, and I shall endeavour, as far as I can, to justify my action. As to the general question, I would like to say, as to the public works which have been alluded to principally, that there are matters in connection with them which I, as late Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works, can deal with perhaps better than anyone else. Although I have vacated my position in the Ministry and changed my seat, still in justice to the country and to the House, on occasions when opportunities occur, where I can assist by giving information, it is right I should do so. Most of the matters alluded to in connection with the working of the railways and the Public Works Department occurred during my administration, and therefore, if there be any necessity for

defending the departments or explaining matters which may probably be in my mind and not in those of others, I take it it is my duty to undertake that defence and explanation. In regard to the amendment submitted to the effect that the Government no longer possess the confidence of the House and the country, I am not going to deal with that very extensively, but would say that the reference made in His Excellency's Speech to the various works proposed seems to be the rock on which we split. Most members who have spoken have taken exception to the policy of the Government, and contended that this is not the time to commence new works, or to carry out so many works as are mentioned in the Speech; but those who know anything about the development of the country and its requirements must agree that to stay our hand at this stage in regard to many of the works would be most injudicious and detrimental to the interests of the community. The Leonora railway is one of the works mentioned, and it has been contended that this is not the time to carry it out: but I would point out that already the rails have been ordered, and eighty miles of these are on the water and expected in the colony very shortly. It is intended to make use of these rails for this work, and as the rails are responsible for the greater proportion of the cost of the railway, and the sleepers necessary for the line can be procured here at a low cost, there seems little cause for delay in the construction of the line. The necessities of the district through which this railway will pass are evident, and as development of the mines would mean so much for the country, an effort should be made to proceed with this work at least. Then there is the work of duplication in connection with various railways, including the duplication of the line between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, the earthworks of which are now being put in hand. There is also the duplication of the Boulder railway, and the extension of a loop-line to Kamballie station, round by the Brown Hill Mill, and thence to Hannan street. That, it may be said, is a new work, but, at any rate, it is a necessary work, and should be carried out immediately. It is not a work involving a large expenditure, because probably £30,000 will suffice to carry it out, and

consequently the construction should be taken in hand. Those who have watched the course of events will recognise that the large traffic on the Boulder line justifies a further extension, which is required by the necessities of the gold mines. Recently several applications have been made for extending sidings in different parts of this line, but it has been found impossible, or rather impracticable, to carry out the work, except at great cost, and the traffic cannot be satisfactorily conducted unless this Boulder loop-line is constructed. The work would mean a great saving to the mining people, and further revenue to the Railway Department, and, therefore, it is an undertaking which I commend to hon. members. There is also the work of relaying the Yilgarn line, which is now in progress, and has been completed to within 30 miles of Southern Cross. Rails now in the colony and to arrive will be made use of in this work, and the old rails, which have not had a long life there, having been in use only four years, will be utilised for the purpose of extending the line from Menzies to Leonora.

MR. MORAN : How do you know that ?

MR. PIESSÉ : That is what I proposed.

MR. MORAN : The new Commissioner might alter that.

MR. PIESSÉ : If so, let the alteration be on his head ; but I say now the work ought to be carried out, and if I were Commissioner I would do it. This necessary work of relaying ought to be proceeded with, because heavy rails mean an increased traffic at a less cost of working, and consequently larger profit. I have mentioned these works because they are in progress, and because I am of opinion they should be carried out ; but in regard to other works I do not intend to say anything—I mean the Norseman railway and the Nannine extension—except that for the latter we know money was voted, and there are sufficient funds available to carry the line part of the way, so that if it be thought fit by the House to further extend the line into a district, which, after all, is a coming district, it is a matter well worth considering at the present time. Allusion was made to-night to the question of the earnings of the Northern railways, and I should like to say that these railways

have paid very well. Last year the returns from the railway between Geraldton and Cue were very satisfactory, so that the Northern railways are now improving, and if further extension of traffic can be brought about, it will be of benefit to the country. As to other works in progress, the Coolgardie Water Supply scheme we know must be proceeded with, because it is in hand, and is progressing rapidly, and a good deal of material has been placed on the site. Then there are the Fremantle Harbour Works, of the progress of which we have already heard, and these are works which should, no doubt, be proceeded with ; while a dock at Fremantle is also necessary, and provision must be made for it. So that, after all, it seems to me there is no very great difference between us. The Norseman railway and the Nannine railway extension are the only works of a character which the House might probably not see fit to carry out ; but when the proposals for these works are brought before the House we shall, no doubt, hear a great deal more about them, and hon. members can then judge as to whether it is desirable to proceed with them. A few nights ago the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) made an allusion to the earnings of the railways, and I would like to make a correction, because the matter has been mentioned by several hon. members to-night. The member for Central Murchison on that occasion said :

I venture to say that upwards of £150,000 or £200,000 have been earned by the railways for the carriage of materials for the Government.

The hon. member was then speaking of the pipes for the Coolgardie Water Scheme. But it is evident that the hon. member has not gone into this matter very closely, because if he considers for a moment he will see the figure he mentioned is an enormous amount : in fact the whole cost of the carriage of materials will not come to that figure when the works are completed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : What about the coal ?

MR. PIESSÉ : Coal, of course, is carried on the railways for the railway traffic, and that has always been done, and we have never taken credit for that

traffic in any instance; and if the hon. member is as far out in his ordinary calculations as in this, I am afraid we cannot place much reliance on his deductions. The actual amount for the carriage of the water-scheme pipes to the 30th June last is £13,842, and I do not see how that affects the large revenue we have received from the railways during the past year. That amount includes plates and everything, and the hon. member was alluding only to the pipes, the price of which is fixed for delivery at a place

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And to railway material.

MR. PIESSE: No railway material at all was carried last year, and consequently no credit was taken. No new works have been carried out, or none of any magnitude, and therefore credit could not be taken.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am very glad to hear it.

MR. PIESSE: And I am glad the hon. member is satisfied, because his statement was very misleading. I would like to deal with the remarks of the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) last night, when he brought his charges against the Railway Department. I am not going into them in detail, because I thought I would leave that to some other occasion. I think it probable that this subject may be raised again, but at the same time I am of opinion that, having had so much to do with the matter, it would be just as well if I were to place a few facts before the House to-night. With regard to this question of the Ice Company which has been referred to, it is a matter which no doubt has caused a very great deal of comment, and naturally and properly so. Unfortunately a mistake occurred which has resulted in the Railway Department being seriously affected—affected in fact to the extent of over £2,000. This has been going on for some time admittedly, but it was brought under the notice of an officer of the department—not the principal officer—and a promise was made that it would be adjusted, and that there would be no more difficulty in regard to the subject, and no further attempt to interfere with the ordinary course of business in relation to way-bills. Unfortunately, however, it seems to have

occurred again, and a reference was subsequently made by someone to an officer in the department, and the matter was dealt with at the time. Again the matter was not properly looked into, the consequence being that this fraud—for I may term it nothing else—went on for some time. The whole matter has now been carefully gone into. The Government have nothing to hide in regard to it. The papers which you have called for no doubt will be produced, and hon. members can see for themselves what has transpired in connection with the matter. Immediately the matter came under the notice of the department on the second occasion, steps were taken to have it fully adjusted, and, as I pointed out in speaking to this House last year, every assistance was given by the directors to have it adjusted, with the result that when the adjustment took place and it was found that this large sum of money was owing, the directors at once agreed to pay it. As to the fine to be inflicted, the hon. member last night alluded to the small people who had been prosecuted for sending consignments falsely. I am sorry to say that occasionally false consignments have been made, but very often the Government have not succeeded in obtaining a conviction. In fact a case was brought before the country a few days ago. There was a consignment of a case of groceries which contained whisky. That was an instance of an attempt to evade railway conditions by sending as a case of groceries a case containing whisky, with the result that there was a saving to the consignee. In that instance, although the case was clearly proved, the justices were not prepared to convict. So you see the difficulty there is in even sheeting home the charge when there is right on the side of the Railway Department.

A MEMBER: You cautioned these men twice.

MR. PIESSE: Yes; the matter has been dealt with. I do not wish to defend the men. Immediately the matter came to light it was dealt with in such a way that it should leave no ground for suspicion. It is all very well to say the Government want to hide the matter. I am sure every effort was made to bring it to light, with the result that there is nothing whatever to hide at all; and I



take it that if the Government think fit to bring the matter forward, it will be open to the people to see what has transpired.

MR. GREGORY: Is not the case settled?

MR. PLESSE: Yes; certainly settled.

MR. GREGORY: On the day Parliament met.

MR. HOLMES: Why do you not attempt a prosecution?

MR. PLESSE: You will see the opinion of the Attorney-General with regard to the matter. The matter was referred to that gentleman, therefore I will refer you to him. Now, with regard to the charges which have been made against these officers; and, as I mentioned just now, I am not going to deal with these matters in detail, but I certainly think that in defence of the officers with whom I have worked for the past four and a half years I may say it seems to me that the wholesale condemnation showered upon them by the hon. member last night was quite unjustifiable. In my opinion if we are to believe the hon. member, the country does not know when it has good officers to carry out the work. The country is to be congratulated on having men who take such an interest as those men have taken to do their work, to carry it out satisfactorily, and to show the results indicated by the return recently laid before hon. members of this House.

MR. HOLMES: Do you deny my charges?

MR. PLESSE: If the hon. member wishes to proceed any further with this matter, let him move for a committee to be appointed to inquire into it. I am not going to deny the charges nor to say that they are true. I am not here to-night as the Minister. If I were, I would go into the matter more fully. But I speak as a private member, as one who has had a good deal to do with these men, one of whom I have known for 11 years, first of all in connection with the Great Southern Railway. Others, of course, I have only known officially during the time I have been Minister. I have known many officials of the department, and all I can say is that, notwithstanding the remarks made by the hon. member to-night and by others who seem to glory in trying to belittle those men, we have in them men who have done their duty, and of whom the colony

should be proud. They are not "9 to 4" men, who work in the small hours, in the middle of the day, but men who are there at any time you require them. They are always ready to do their work, and I am quite confident they have tried to do it honestly, fearlessly, and with justice to the country. The trouble seems to me to be that these men are doing their work too well. Whatever may result, they do it fearlessly. If they were to agree to every proposal made to them by the public in regard to concessions relating to matters brought under their notice, it would be simple, no doubt, to recommend to the Minister that those things should be done. And if the Minister himself felt also that he could carry out those works and gain popularity by them, I take it that it would be easy for him to do it. But if that were the case, there must soon be an end to that sort of thing. The time must come when they could not continue that practice, the result of which practice would be loss to the country. When we find everything is going on smoothly, when we see all friction removed and all discomfort banished, your railways will not pay. These men have tried to do their duty to the country, and such criticisms as have been passed on them place them in an invidious position. How are the officers to enforce discipline when a member, sent to represent the interests of the country, rises in his place in this House and defames them in the eyes of the country? It is difficult to control such a body of men when we find superior officers defamed in the manner in which the hon. member tried to defame them. Remember that, after all, the statement is an *ex parte* one, but it goes forth, and is believed by many to be true. I shall take an early opportunity, or if I do not take such an opportunity myself I hope someone else in the House will do so, of unearthing these charges which the hon. member has made, and if these men are guilty of the charges and do not give a reasonable account of what has occurred, then, I say, let the House judge them.

MR. HOLMES: That is all I want.

MR. PLESSE: The hon. member has made himself notorious from the very day he entered the House.

MR. JAMES: He has done very good work.

MR. PIESSE: He has made himself notorious by obtaining information in a surreptitious way from men in the department. To show how far the hon. member has gone in collusion with some of these men to try and work up some of these cases which he brings before this House, I may say that last night one of these men, who was a discharged railway servant, said to a man outside, "Come in to-night, I have a spare ticket: you will hear Holmes give the Railway Department a good rating." I, myself, saw the man in the House. Then we will take the information the hon. member obtained with regard to the Fremantle Harbour Works: all the information in relation to that matter was between the officers and the department, and should be secret as far as the officers are concerned, and be kept secret. But what happened? Someone obtained information and gave it to the hon. member, evidently.

MR. VOSPER: Is that why I was deliberately deceived in the House regarding the question I asked?

MR. PIESSE: I do not know about the hon. member's question. I say that this is the way in which the information was obtained, and we should not stoop so low as to get this information in such a manner. I have heard that many of these matters have been discussed by hon. members themselves in groups. These men who are connected with the railway have been charged by them in regard to various matters which the hon. member has mentioned. I take it that if hon. members some months ago knew of these things, in the interests of the country it would have been far better, and it would also have been far more honourable, to have approached the Minister and informed him of what was going on. That would have been a right course to take, and not to come to this House and defame the character of men before the country. I give the hon. member credit for doing his duty to the country, but all he has to go on is an *ex parte* statement by an individual who no doubt has been dismissed from the service; therefore these statements are damaging to the individuals concerned, to those men who have to control this, the biggest State institution in the country, and the one that contributes to the country the greatest portion of the revenue we receive.

MR. HOLMES: Why do you not deny the charge? You cannot deny it.

MR. A. FORREST: You have not proved the charge.

MR. PIESSE: You (Mr. Holmes) will see what I am going to do. Let the hon. member go a little farther.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why should there be anything to hide?

MR. PIESSE: There is nothing to hide. I am not here to-night as the Minister of the department, but, as I said just now, I am here as a private member. I am here to defend those men. I take it that as a member of this House it is my duty to try to defend them if I possibly can, knowing as I do the good qualities of those officers. We have an institution of this character with 5,000 men employed, and I take it that what we ought to do is to try and help those who are in authority to control the institution in a way which will make it of benefit to the country, and not cause the lives of the men concerned to be burdensome. I go along the street and from time to time I have heard complaints from people, perhaps about the General Manager, or the Chief Traffic Manager. I have asked the individual to make some definite charge, but, as a rule, no definite charge has been made, the allegation being simply something the person has heard from someone else. I think that is most damaging to any man, and I would not wonder at these men losing all interest in their work, if this sort of thing is to go on. I have endeavoured to control the department in the way in which I think it should be controlled, that is as far as possible free from political influence. And what do we find? We find that members have from time to time taken up the case of men who after all have proper methods of bringing their cases before the Minister. They have taken up these cases, perhaps believing them to be true, but I say let these men exhaust all other means before members bring these matters under the notice of the House. If you are to carry on the business of the country you must try to assist the Minister, and not harass him in the way in which he has been harassed, and you must make full inquiry into matters before deciding on the course you will take in regard to them. Many of the men concerned are admittedly good men,

but there are others who are working for their own objects, doubtless with the desire of creating dissension, and they have caused much of the trouble which has come upon the country.

MR. VOSPER: Why not answer questions, and then you would not have all this trouble?

MR. PIESSE: When I have finished making my speech to-night, so far as I am concerned I shall have done with the department, but I have not finished with the questions which I intend to deal with and which I will put fully before the House. But I think a great deal of assistance will be given to the Minister and the officers of the department if members will take the trouble to inquire into matters before bringing forward many things which are proved to be quite untrue. If members thought there was anything in these matters, why not come and say so at once that such and such a thing is occurring: then no doubt some remedy would be brought about if necessary. That is the proper course to take, instead of condemning a man unheard. Many of the statements would not then be made. Of course some of the men would not be able to obtain all they required, and the Railway Department would be blamed. The department which comes in contact with the people will for ever be blamed, but we wish to see these complaints lessened if possible. I will conclude my remarks by referring to the Fremantle Harbour Works, which were alluded to last night by the hon. member (Mr. Holmes), who stated that £900,000 had been spent on the Harbour Works. According to the returns this is correct.

MR. HOLMES: I was £100,000 out, I think.

MR. PIESSE: If the hon. member had looked into the matter closely he would have seen that many of the statements which he placed before the House were not correct. I refer to matters which it was not intended to carry out, in the first instance. The hon. member will find that certain works were intended to be carried out. There are the north and south breakwaters which have, to the extent shown on the report and maps, been finished for some time past; an entrance channel through rock bar, which has also to the extent shown on the report and maps been finished for a long time;

the excavation of an inner basin, of which work to the value of £50,000 remained to be done at the eastern end on the 30th June last. So that many of the works mentioned at the time are nearly completed and the money has been expended on them. Then we have to take credit for the wharf on the south side of the river, on which £30,000 remained to be spent on the 30th June; and a retaining wall, stone-faced slope, estimated to cost £9,000, on the north side of the river, which all remained to be done on 30th June last.

MR. HOLMES: There was a wharf on the north side to cost £50,000.

MR. PIESSE: So that a great deal of the work has already been carried out. In connection with the works which have been carried out, we find there should have been credit taken for something like £200,000 for work not properly chargeable to the Fremantle Harbour Works in accordance with the plans as first placed before the House. There are the Swan River Improvements, £3,000; Unclassified Items, £3,000; Extension of Ocean Jetty, £21,000; Good Sheds in Railway Station yard, £11,000; Duplication of Railway from North Fremantle to Fremantle, including bridge over Swan River and reclamation in vicinity of main station at Fremantle, which was urgently required for traffic purposes, and the cost of all, which it was understood would be recouped out of votes for additions and improvements to opened railways or transferred thereto by book entry, but which has not been so recouped, £28,000; Railway, North Fremantle to Rouse Head, £3,000; Wharf along North Mole, £12,000; Mail-boat Jetty, £17,000; Extensions of North Mole, £43,000; Dredging Entrance Channel, £36,000; Dredging in Inner Basin, £23,000; and other items, the total amounting to £200,000. These works of course are of a necessary character, and they form a portion of the Fremantle Harbour Works, at any rate the approaches to these works: they were not in the first instance included in the estimate. That reduces the amount to date to something like £685,000—

MR. HOLMES: Wonderful finance!

MR. PIESSE: Left available from the original estimate to complete a portion of the works.

MR. GEORGE: Were these works contemplated in the first plan?

MR. PIESSE: No.

MR. GEORGE: Then it was short-sightedness.

MR. PIESSE: The hon. member (Mr. Holmes) lost sight of these matters when he made the statement that £900,000 had been expended. The explanation given is that the works were of a character which were necessary to harbour works, and they were portion of the vote, but they were not provided on the original estimate. The works, however, have not exceeded the amount first stated.

MR. HOLMES: How much do you estimate it will take to complete the work?

MR. PIESSE: I cannot answer that question. These are the principal points which the hon. member touched on and which I care to touch upon to-night. As to the remarks in reference to the different replies which have been given by the Government, I do not intend to deal with those. No doubt if hon. members want further replies they can ask the Government for them. I have not the time, and I do not suppose the House wants to hear the information from me, nor has the House the inclination to hear it. At the same time I have helped by giving the information which I have been asked to give, and in this instance I have given all that I know concerning these matters. I hope I have satisfied the House that the work will not cost so much as the hon. member would lead us to expect. There is one matter which I had almost overlooked, the question of the railway line, or rather tramway line, which has been extended to the 42-Mile Dam, for the purpose of conveying firewood and water to the railway line. This was a work carried out by a company which has a contract for the supply of wood to the mines. To show how necessary this work has been, and how necessary it has been to the mines to have a good supply of wood, we have had a petition presented to-day by the mine owners on this matter, and had it not been for the foresight and business acumen of these people we should have seen less progress made on the mines than has been made to-day. This company bought from the Government about £13,000 worth of old rails which had seen 15 years' service and were condemned. They were not thought good

enough even for the Goomalling railway, and on the advice of the engineers they were recommended to be sold, and were sold to this company who have paid for them. This company have provided their own sleepers, although it has been said that the Government supplied them. We did lend them a few thousand sleepers, old ones, for which there was no use on our own lines; but the company used something like 40,000 sleepers of their own. This was alluded to as a job which the Government were concerned in. It is, however, fortunate that the company had the enterprise to carry out the work, and I will give one reason why. Had it not been for the opportunity of taking water from the 42-Mile Dam to the main line for maintaining the traffic at that time, there would have been a total cessation of traffic on the line for eight or ten days; it was impossible to obtain water from any other source, and the result would have been very disastrous to us. This water was obtained from these people at a much lower cost than we could have hauled it from our own place.

MR. GREGORY: How much water is there there?

MR. PIESSE: Three million gallons. These people wanted to supply the water to the town as well, and they took the opportunity of extending the line to this place. If it had not been for the assistance obtained in that instance we should have suffered considerably, and after all it has been an advantage rather than otherwise. We sold material which was of very little use to us, and obtained a price which we are giving for new material, £4 10s. a ton; and the price for the water was less than we should have had to pay.

MR. HOLMES: What was the price?

MR. PIESSE: I cannot remember. I think it was about 6s. per 100 gallons. That was the price.

MR. GREGORY: What does it cost to condense water?

MR. PIESSE: We had a little foresight, probably more than some hon. members would have had, and we constructed a condenser at Coolgardie capable of condensing 100,000 gallons daily. Perhaps some hon. members would have come to the House and have asked for authority to construct this condenser and have allowed the railways to

stand still; but I took the other course and built the condenser. The officers of the department had the foresight to suggest this, and the work has been done; it has proved of great advantage to the country.

MR. JAMES: Did the Government call for tenders for the condensing plant, or was it put up by the man who designed it?

MR. PIESSE: It was put up by the man who designed it.

MR. JAMES: Was it Mr. Quirk, of Fremantle?

MR. PIESSE: Yes.

MR. JAMES: The famous Midland Junction man?

MR. PIESSE: Yes. I know I was supposed as Commissioner of Railways to know of every bag of cabbages sent along the line, or every tinpot parcel costing threepence to be delivered in Perth, or every pig sent along the railway, and everything else concerning our railways from the smallest parcel, as I said before, to the largest piece of machinery—I have always been expected to know all about these things, and probably, as far as I have been able, I have tried to do all I could to answer the questions.

MR. HOLMES: If you bought 3,000,000 gallons of water at 6s. a hundred gallons, you paid £10,000 for it.

MR. PIESSE: That was cheap. The cost has been 4s. 6d. a hundred gallons since the new condenser has been put up, therefore the cost is less to condense this water than what we were paying for it, but since the condenser has been constructed we have obtained a further contract from these people to supply water at 2s. 6d. per 100 gallons; therefore the price is lower, and it has been an advantage to the railways and a saving. The rails which were sold had been in use for 15 years. No man knows better than the hon. member the character of these rails. They could not be placed on a road on which the public had to travel. I only rose to give hon. members some little information with regard to these matters, and I have tried to do what I could. I want to set these matters at rest, and if the information I have given is of such character as to ease hon. members' minds in regard to this question then I have attained the object I desired.

In regard to the rails, I would like to say that they have been paid for. The information which the hon. member obtained is incorrect. They have been paid for, as I previously told the House. For a time, until the adjustment of the accounts, they were not paid for, but subsequently the account was settled. There were several matters which remained in abeyance between the contractor and the Government, but the rails have now been paid for, although they were not paid for immediately; but the transaction was over in a reasonable time. That is all I have to say in regard to the various matters. I have shown to the House there was an advantage in constructing the tramway line, and I would like to say that before any hon. member attempts to interfere with matters of this kind they should look well into the questions. I will say again that the line has been of great service to the mines. To-day I believe 500 tons of wood are sent into the mines, and for some time wood must be used in place of coal. There is a difficulty in regard to coal being used on the mines; we have not the waggons or the engines to haul it, therefore for some time to come wood will have to be used on the goldfields in preference to sending to Collie for coal. But in time, no doubt, coal must be used, as the wood will become scarce: then the coal must come more into use than it is to-day, and until that time does come, every encouragement should be given to those who are prepared to supply wood at a rate which suits the mine-owners, thus taking advantage of the enterprise of people who have themselves been enterprising enough to try to meet the demand of the mines in regard to firewood. I have nothing more to add to what I have said. I have said sufficient to show that I have taken an interest in the matters which have been referred to. In regard to those works in hand, which have been authorised, and which must be proceeded with, it is my intention as far as possible to support the Government in carrying them out, and it is also my intention to assist the Government as far as I can to get through the business of this session, preferring that it should go on as it is going on now, with the present party in power, rather than that there should be a change of Ministry at the present time.

There will soon be ample opportunity for a change to take place, and when that time comes, we shall probably hold different opinions; but I hope we shall, as representatives of the country, assist in carrying on its business as we have assisted in the past. It is my intention to help the party with which I am associated, although it may have been thought that after such a difference between my colleagues and myself, I should desire to fly into the arms of the Opposition. It is true there has been a difference of opinion, a difference which has resulted in my giving up my portfolio and coming here as a private member; but nevertheless, I shall continue to help forward the interest of the party, and shall also continue to do my best to further the interests of the country.

MR. DOHERTY (North Fremantle) : At this critical period in our history it behoves me, and every member of this House, earnestly to consider the situation, and to think whether it is better for us to retain the services of the gentlemen who have already held office for ten years, or to hand over political power to the Opposition. I may say at the outset that some on this (Government) side of the House held the opinion, and probably a certain section of us are still of opinion, that it would be better for good Government if a change came about; and this fact came more certainly to our knowledge when we understood that large sums of money were to be expended on public works, knowing, as we did, that we have already borrowed largely, and that we are already indebted to the extent of £11,000,000.

MR. MORAN : £12,000,000.

MR. DOHERTY : Nearly £12,000,000, with an authorisation up to £14,000,000. Therefore we said : "No; this cannot go on, considering the change which the colony has experienced. Considering that it has dropped the name of colony and has become a State under the Federal Government, we consider that care and consideration must be exercised, and that the finances of the country must be zealously watched over." It is better that I should say plainly, too, that another section of the House felt, and felt deeply, the Premier's ingratitude in his action over the federal question; and for this reason: we supported him, and were

guided in all our actions on federation, in the first instance, by the advice he gave us. We followed his lead faithfully and well, and when we got into the midst of the turmoil, when we were fighting for the cause we thought best for this country, he left us to go on our course, and embraced, or fell into the arms of, our friends in the Opposition.

MR. GREGORY : He did not fall into our arms.

MR. DOHERTY : We know nothing about how he was received; but he left us; he took up his bed and went over to the people whom before he had held in very small respect—I mean politically, because there are honourable men in the Opposition, for whom, personally, I have the utmost possible respect. But on this great subject of federation, into which I entered with all the ardour I possessed, the Premier told us that he, above all others, would give us his support; and then, at the last moment, he deserted us. We honestly thought, though perhaps wrongly, that federation meant no improvement for our colony; we thought it was not the best course the colony could take; and some members on this (Government) side of the House have said it would be well to put back the clock for ten years; and certainly I should have preferred to do so. But no. The country decided against us; the Premier deserted us, and by his desertion took over with him large numbers of people who had formerly believed in our cause, and who then joined the federal party. But remember, though I felt aggrieved with this conduct of the Premier, I still have other considerations to entertain, and they are these: why should I, as a member of this House, join, to-day or to-morrow, a party which will throw out the Government, and which to-morrow or next week will still have the same power of throwing out the new Government which we may place in office? We are the party—we Government supporters—who would be shifting governments into and out of office, from one side of the House to the other; and in what circumstances? Why, we practically do not represent the people who returned us in 1896; and still we should be turning governments in and out, making a government to-day and unmaking it to-

morrow. This is not the position we should occupy. Let us simply go through the brief business for which we were summoned to meet this session, and then retire into—[MR. MORAN: Oblivion.]—oblivion if you like, obscurity if you will; but we only want the people to have an opportunity of saying: "This man represents us." And what right have we to do any injury to the State? Why not proceed with the ordinary business that has called us here—to pass Estimates, to vote sufficient money to carry on the various new works that are absolutely necessary, and probably to pass one Bill, which I believe the labour party are very anxious to get through the House?

MR. JAMES: The Speech involves more than that.

MR. DOHERTY: I have the right to criticise that Speech.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is what we advocate.

MR. JAMES: Surely you would not criticise the Government proposals?

MR. DOHERTY: Shall we say to the Government: "No; you must stay your hand; you must throw up all the public works and throw people out of work, adding to the numbers of unemployed, sending people who to-day are on the coast, to swell the ranks of the unemployed on the goldfields?" To do that would mean that the labour troubles already brewing on the fields would be increased; and within another month after we embarked on that policy we should have upon us the greatest labour trouble that ever existed in this colony. And can I, as one scarcely representing the people who returned me in 1896—dare I turn loose upon the country such numbers of working men without employment? Dare I be one to say that I shall so upset labour conditions in this country? Is that the business I was sent here to do?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No. No one wants to do that, either.

MR. DOHERTY: I say we have no right, at this critical moment, when we are joining the Commonwealth, to throw unemployed labour on the market, and to try to upset the great commercial system of Western Australia. If once we say there shall be no more public works, what will be the result? We know well, and no one knows it better than the gentle-

man on the opposite side of the House, that once the purse strings are tightened, the effect will be felt throughout the country. Not only will Government money cease to flow, but private expenditure will be curtailed. If in these circumstances a man had intended to build a house, he would abandon the project. If there is any incentive to increased building, either public or private, it is the expenditure of public money. I do not say we were always right; I admit we were sometimes wrong in authorising large public works, and we can block them in future when we come to the items on the Estimates.

MR. MORAN: Provided they are not your own.

MR. A. FORREST: What about the Fremantle Harbour Works?

MR. VOSPER: Being drunk, you must keep drunk.

MR. DOHERTY: I am not drunk: that is the natural state for you to be in; but I do not follow your example. I am prepared to vote against the Norseman railway. I do not think the Government meant it for the Norseman-Coolgardie railway: they meant it for a timber railway, if the truth were only known, to oblige certain members who represent a big ring of mining people in Coolgardie. If the Government had said to the House "We want this timber line," then I think this House would have been justified in giving it; but they ask for the line under an assumed name. It is not the Coolgardie-Norseman railway; it is only a timber railway to oblige a few people on the fields.

MR. MORAN: You have struck it.

MR. GEORGE: How have the mighty fallen!

MR. DOHERTY: I believe there was a gentleman who did fall: he fell into Hades. He "fell in," did he not?

MR. GEORGE: Yes.

MR. DOHERTY: When that item comes along, I shall object. I shall give my vote against the Coolgardie-Norseman line. If it be brought in as a cheap tramway, such as our friend Jobson got, we will grant it. The motive power, the power that moves the engine, is the very power that moves the man. There must be some motive power, and there will not be a motive power without some return of gold; and for the development of the

goldfields we will give this timber line; but we cannot possibly give the Norseman-Coolgardie railway. When I thought I should cease to be a supporter of the Government; and should help to turn them out, I was influenced by other considerations also; and I think hon. members will feel with me that I was perfectly right. There are Ministers here who are and have been my loyal friends—the Commissioner of Crown Lands, the Attorney General, and the late Commissioner of Railways (Mr. Piesse). These gentlemen have adhered to our party loyally and faithfully; and should I turn against them because one man in this Ministry was not faithful to me? Should I, for that reason, sweep away the whole of the Ministry, because one man had done me a wrong? Should three men suffer for his faults? I say, no. I could not see that I could do these men an injury who had done me none: they had been faithful and loyal to my party, and I should be faithful and loyal to them.

MR. CONNOR: Even if their policy were wrong?

MR. DOHERTY: My friend, the member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor), need not talk to me about policy.

MR. JAMES: He knows you so well that he is aware you have no policy.

MR. DOHERTY: In the items before us there are many works which affect the people I represent, and can I fairly say in justice to the people of Fremantle "No, you must stop all works; all quarry works, and the harbour works"? It must be remembered that one thing the people of the suburbs of Perth and Fremantle require is an absolutely pure water supply; because if these people suffer from anything it is bad water, and really I believe that at Claremont the people are developing scales, and that the second generation of Fremantle people will be found equally at home on the sea or the sandhills.

MR. KINGSMILL: They will be lizards.

MR. DOHERTY: The Opposition showed the cloven foot too quickly, and the leader of this great party might have shown a little more tact, and not abused and threatened the men who represent the "corner." I do not know who the "corner" are, but the leader of the Opposition told them to beware and remember that the general election was

coming. Members, however, are prepared to face the electors, if the leader of the Opposition is not; but it must be remembered that if hon. members go to the electors to-morrow, they go on a limited roll on which it is not right we should appeal to the people. This leader of the Opposition, who says he is a democrat and represents labour, contends that we should go to the country on this limited roll; but we object to that, and say we must not do a politically immoral act, and be returned to represent a few people when there are thousands who ought to have the power to turn us out.

MR. W. JAMES: It has taken you four years to discover that.

MR. MORAN: Do you (Mr. Doherty) mind that?

MR. DOHERTY: One thing the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) never minded was his constituents. The Opposition never seriously objected to the spending of money by the Government, but their submerged leader, the member for Canning (Mr. Wilson), turned round and let the cat out of the bag when he said, "Give us the power and we will spend the money, yea, even more than you, Sir John Forrest." That member, who supports this great party of the Opposition, says, "We want the money because we want to use it for political influence at the next general election." Surely that is not the class of man we want to represent us in the Government, and the Opposition must be lost to a sense of all common honesty and common decency when they say they will take the credit of building all these works and create what political jobs they like.

MR. WILSON: Who said that?

MR. DOHERTY: You said it, as you have said many other foolish things. In regard to the items of expenditure now under discussion, I, at least, will take the opportunity of voting on them as I wish.

MR. MORAN: You will vote as you are told.

MR. DOHERTY: The member for East Coolgardie has turned a somersault like other people, for the turning of somersaults seems to be in the air; and he, once a strong advocate of the Government, now appears to be of opinion that they can do nothing right.



MR. MORAN : I have the courage of my opinions, at any rate.

MR. DOHERTY : Then it is the first time the hon. member has had any opinions in this House, and it is with pleasure we hear he has. In regard to these various items of expenditure, I will not be bound to support any particular one, but I cannot give my vote for throwing the whole commercial community into a state of unsettledness. We have passed through a very critical time, and we cannot possibly now take any step which would stop business and throw men out of work. We ought to wait before appealing to the country and then let the country decide; and if the country decide they have no longer any confidence in the Government, then let people in whom the country have confidence take charge.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : So say all of us.

MR. DOHERTY : Amen! I will not deal with figures, because I think that quite unnecessary.

MR. JAMES : You keep to romance.

MR. DOHERTY : The hon. member who is styled "jibbing James" ought to keep silence.

MR. JAMES : Not "jibbing;" "jigging James" this time.

MR. DOHERTY : There is one thing that people who have not studied the finances of the country do not know. It is said we are responsible for fourteen millions; but it must be remembered that we have one great asset alone of seven millions, which returns the great percentage of the money to the revenue, and would pay the entire debt of the colony less £68,000.

MR. MORAN : Pay the debt of the colony?

MR. DOHERTY : Pay the interest on the debt.

MR. MORAN : Then say what you mean.

MR. DOHERTY : I am trying to say what I mean. We have another great asset which will be turned into money in twelve months. That is the post and telegraph department, which will return one million, seeing that it will be taken over by the Federal Government. That amounts to eight millions, and another million for the harbour works makes nine millions, leaving five millions to be accounted for; and taking the interest at 3 per cent. on five millions, we have

only £150,000 a year to pay—an amount which this great colony can surely afford, as the railways contribute almost half of the amount of interest, if we can rely on the statements laid on the table of the House by the Government.

MR. VOSPER : Call in the brokers and realise.

MR. DOHERTY : It is no realisation at all. If the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) has any knowledge of business at all—though we know he has not—he would know that if he has a good asset returning interest, that asset is worth at least the money the interest is returned on.

MR. VOSPER : What interest will you get from those works you have enumerated?

MR. DOHERTY : We get  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. from the railways and provide for a sinking fund besides, and the Fremantle Harbour Works will pay over  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

MR. JAMES : How can they?

MR. DOHERTY : There are sufficient other hon. members to speak for the Government, because I know nothing of their particular inward secrets.

MR. JAMES : You should have taken my advice and kept to romance.

MR. DOHERTY : Though I am against the great spending ideas of the Government, I cannot see that, at the present juncture, we could do any good by turning the present Ministry out of office and allowing members of the Opposition to take their place. The people of the country have no great confidence in the Opposition, though they may not have great confidence in the Government; and if we allow the people to decide, the result will be much better.

MR. WILSON (Canning) : The member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty), who has just sat down, is certainly very amusing, if not instructive, and if he has enabled members to pass a pleasant half-hour, perhaps he has done some good. I waited, with some anxiety, to hear the explanation of the member for the Williams (Mr. Piesse), in regard to the charges made by the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes), last night, because I recognised that these charges were most serious, and there appeared to be something that we, as representing the interests of the people, should inquire fully into. I am sorry to think, and I

express my opinion now, that the member for the Williams, who got up, evidently, to explain those charges away, has not, at any rate in my opinion, given any explanation.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I said I was not going to attempt to explain: I know the charges are quite untrue. I say appoint a Royal Commission,

MR. WILSON: I should be very pleased, indeed, if the charges could be proved untrue, but at the same time I say these charges are of a most serious nature. When you consider that employees have been charged by the member for East Fremantle with being supplied with ice free at Government expense, and that the ice has not only been supplied free, but has been carted to their houses, that charge alone is of such a serious nature, no matter what value the ice may be, as to necessitate an inquiry so far as the House is concerned. There are many other items that I do not mean to enumerate; but I do not think it wise or just on the part of hon. members to abuse any member who brings such matters to light. If there be such things as alleged, they are festering and corrupting the whole service of the country, and the sooner they are brought to light the better, I do not care by what means.

MR. PIESSE: The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) could not have used any other means, I suppose?

MR. WILSON: What other means could have been used?

MR. PIESSE: There was the Minister.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And the Minister says these charges are not true.

MR. WILSON: We know this House is the custodian of the public credit, and the public honour, and the honour of all the different departments, and I do not think there is any place preferable to the House itself in which to ventilate matters of the sort. We are in charge of the affairs of the country, each member being responsible for the district he represents; and if a member finds anything wrong in the public departments, it is his duty to ventilate the subject at the earliest possible moment in the Assembly. With regard to the motion before the House, it appears to me very difficult to say anything fresh about it. I look on it in the light that, so far as the Ministry is

concerned, it is out of the mouths of their own supporters that they have been convicted. I listened to the eloquent speech of the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) with care and attention, and I listened with equal care and attention to the speech delivered by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), who is always practical and always concise. The latter member put the position so clearly, that I wonder how those who had arranged and decided to follow him in ousting the Ministry from the Government benches can possibly do otherwise than vote with the Opposition when the division bell rings. I tried to discover, in listening to the speech of the Minister of Mines, where the logic in his observations lay. He said he could find no logic in our charges, and that we were taking up a wrong position in attacking the Government at the present time. But there appears to be no reason for that statement. He adduced no arguments, or no defence, and it is natural that men who are charged should find no logic in the charges levelled at them. With regard to the opposition we have always had towards the Forrest Government, during the last two or three years whilst I have had the honour of a seat in the House, I say at once that the first day I appeared on the hustings in the country, I was opposed to the Premier's policy. I opposed his borrowing and spending policy as it was at that time, and as it has been laid before the House this evening. I opposed the go-as-you-please, haphazard policy of carrying out works in advance of requirements, and pledging the country up to the hilt in the public debt. That is the position members of the Opposition have taken up ever since, at any rate, I have had a seat on this side of the House. Why should there be anything strange in the leader of the Opposition levelling this direct motion of no-confidence against the Premier and his party at the present juncture? The Premier seems to have grave anxiety in regard to public works. He has said that if the Government are ousted from their position, no public works will be carried on in the country; and, indeed, he went so far as to say that public works could not be completed because the Forrest Ministry would have to go out if an adverse vote were given against them.

He mentioned some lighthouse: is it to be supposed by reasonable men that a lighthouse cannot be built by another Ministry equally well as by the Forrest Ministry, if it is necessary in the interests of the country? Is it reasonable to suppose that if water has to be supplied to a given district, and if it is the wish of Parliament that it shall be supplied, a Ministry formed from the present Opposition benches cannot carry that out as well as can the Forrest Ministry? I scorn the imputation, and assert that the interests of the country will be just as safe, indeed much safer, in my opinion, in the hands of a new Ministry formed from this side of the House than they are in the hands of the present Ministry. The Premier has put forth many erroneous and peculiar ideas with regard to the position of members. He asserted that if members opposed expenditure in their districts, they must not come on deputations. I consider that a very wrong idea to put forward. I take it that the first duty of the members of this House is to represent the whole of the country. We are not here only to look after the interests of our districts, and if a member is going to prostitute his honour and the interests of the country by supporting a Government because of the advantage he can gain for his own district, he is not fit to be in the House. The attitude adopted towards the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) has been shameful. A member is perfectly justified in being on any deputation, and I for my part consider it my duty to introduce to the Minister any deputation of electors, no matter whether I am in favour of the request or not. If any member accompanies a deputation asking for certain work to be performed in his district, he is perfectly justified in doing so, but it does not necessarily follow that he ought to support a vote for that work. If the Minister considers the work urgent, and he is in a position to find the money, it is for him to take the responsibility of granting the request, and no responsibility lies on the member who introduced the deputation. What the Opposition have been fighting for for years, and what we will continue to fight for, is that we shall have good, sound, social legislation, and legislation which we hope will benefit the condition of the masses of the people. More-

over, we want careful consideration of the finances of this country in order that we may, if possible, reduce taxation. That is what we have been fighting for for years. We are determined that, if we can possibly stop it, there shall be no increase of public debt in this country without a corresponding increase in population. We must pause to consider the position, seeing that when the whole of the works projected (some of which are in course of construction) have been carried out, and when the loan authorisations which have been passed by this Parliament have been duly expended, our public debt will reach something like 14 or 15 million pounds, and even though we have an increase of population bringing up the total to 200,000, there will be a public debt of from £75 to £80 per head. People must realise that those members who have had the temerity to face the leader of the present Government for eight or nine years have some justification for the action taken. We are here to criticise the action of the Government and to control the finances of the country. That is our duty; and it goes farther than that. It goes to this extent, that if we think we can manage the affairs of the country better than they are managed by the Government at present in power, it is our duty to eject from office the present Government, if we can do so, and that is what we are endeavouring to do to-night. We say that the Forrest Ministry no longer possesses the confidence of this House. We further state that it has not the confidence of the country, and I think I need not labour this argument, because members on the other (Government) side have pretty well proved it in speech after speech which I have listened to. The members for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty), Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan), and Beverley (Mr. Harper) have, I think, admitted and proved that the House no longer has any confidence in the Forrest Ministry, but they say that on account of old friendships, for the sake of their old school days and personal respect and affection for the Premier, they will retain him in office here, so that he may have the proud boast of saying that he has been for ten years Premier of Western Australia, being, indeed, the only Premier during responsible government until the establishment of Federation. I am not going to dispute the personal attributes of the

right hon. gentleman. I respect the Premier in many ways, but I do not respect his political attitude. I like him very much as a man, and have always expressed my friendship for him in that respect; but I say that if members are going to sacrifice their opinions regarding the politics of the country for the sake of an individual, they are not doing their duty to the electors, which they were sent here to perform. If we consider the position and history of the Forrest Ministry for the past three or four years, we shall find that right through, as the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) said, they have never initiated any social legislation. We find that their policy has, time after time, been abandoned, and we find, further, that there has been an utter disregard of the votes of the House. Works which have been authorised by Parliament and brought down by the Government as urgent works have not been carried out. I need only instance a few of these. Take the case of the Midland Junction Workshops: I proved by means of the figures of the Engineer-in-Chief that the failure to carry out the proposal in regard to that matter was causing a loss to this country of something like £15,000 or £16,000 per annum. Take the case of the dock at Fremantle: The vote was passed two or three years ago, but the work has not been carried out. Take even the small item of the sheds on the wharf at Fremantle. We find that time after time works which have been authorised by Parliament, including the Nannine railway, which was passed in 1896, I believe, have been allowed to lie on one side because it did not suit the convenience of the Forrest Ministry to proceed with them. Are we not justified in inquiring why the orders of the House have not been carried into effect by the Government? The Premier last night said he could not see how this House could help stultifying itself if it reversed a decision it came to last session. It seems to me the Government may reverse the judgments and decisions of Parliament with impunity. It matters not whether in finance or in regard to works, for we have the same thing taking place in our financial matters. I have always maintained ever since I have been here that Parliament ought to have the command of the purse-strings of the

country, but it has not that control of matters which it is entitled to under the constitution. Why have we not control of the purse-strings? Because we know that the Premier and his colleagues have always had the idea that they could do no wrong, that they could spend as they liked and all they had to do was to bring down excess bills, reappropriation bills, and supplementary estimates *ad lib*. It is laid down in the constitution, and it is laid down by authorities that these excess bills and supplementary estimates are things we should be very careful about. Yet we find it is a common trick in this Parliament to juggle with finance. We never know where we are. We do not know what works have been put in hand, nor do we know what works have been authorised by the Government. We cannot tell how the finances stand. Take the case of the duplication of the Coolgardie-Kalgoorlie railway. The Premier admitted that this was put in hand, yet members knew nothing about it officially. Is that as it ought to be?

MR. PRESSE: That is a work which comes under the head of improvements to open railways.

MR. WILSON: I do not care what it is. If you turn to the accounts, you will find that something like £800,000 has been spent during the last three years on improvements to existing lines. Surely a vote in this House should be taken for improvements to existing lines.

MR. PRESSE: That has been done every year.

MR. WILSON: I think the Premier said he was taking the risk of putting that work in hand without consulting Parliament. There is too much of that sort of thing going on. We have protested again and again, and now we are determined that the Premier shall not go on administering the affairs of the country in the way he has done for the past eight or nine years, if we can prevent it. It appears to me that any action taken by the Opposition against the Forrest Government is looked upon in the light of a crime. We are supposed to be grabbing for office, and the right hon. gentleman twitted us of wanting possession of the Treasury Benches and the emoluments of office. As far as I am concerned, he is welcome to the emoluments of office as long as he lives. If we

were not prepared to try to force the Government out of office and to take their places, we should not be fit for our present position. I want to show that not only has the Premier not got the confidence of this House now, but that during the past two or three years there have been several occasions when he had not the confidence of members. Measures which the Government have introduced have been either withdrawn or defeated in some respects, clauses proposed by the Minister himself being rejected by the House. I think, that under any other constitution and in any other Parliament in the British Empire the defeat of the Government, on any main plank in its policy, is regarded as a vote of no-confidence; but it appears that nothing will remove the Premier of Western Australia except a direct vote of want of confidence. Over and over again he has said that in the House, yet when we find that a vote of no-confidence is moved, he gets into a terrible fright, especially at the action of his friends on the cross benches. There were eight members who had declared their opposition and said they were going to oust him from office.

MR. WOOD: Where do you get the eight from?

MR. WILSON: From the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran). He has given us the number.

MR. MORAN: There were nine at the meeting, of whom eight were pledged to oppose the Premier's policy.

MR. WILSON: I merely wanted to point out that the right hon. the Premier has been for some time asking for a direct vote of no-confidence to be moved when we objected to his policy. When a direct motion of no-confidence came, and there was a chance of its being carried against him, he began to squeal, and to get into a fright, running round and having a caucus meeting.

MR. WOOD: You had one, too.

MR. WILSON: There was a full report in the *Morning Herald*. With all the eloquence of which he was capable, the Premier appealed to members to stand by him as an old friend and old chum. He threatened them, cajoled them, grovelled to them, and he not only did that, but he broke down and wept over them, and my friend the member for West Perth (Mr.

Wood) shed a tear in sympathy with his honoured leader.

MR. GEORGE: I have that tear in a bottle.

MR. WILSON: The Premier practically said to his supporters: "Support me in my position as Premier and do what you like with my policy. You can do as you like; vote against my policy, only keep me in office till the end of the Parliament." If these are not reprehensible and disgraceful tactics for the Premier of the country, I do not know what are. Nothing that the Opposition can do would be half so disgraceful as the threat which is held over members, that the Premier will dissolve Parliament, or that he will ask for a dissolution if members dare vote against him. Further, another most disgraceful action on the part of the Premier is that, not only did he threaten his party with a dissolution which he knew he had very little chance of obtaining, but when the leaders of the labour party and the labour unions in Perth went to him in regard to the Arbitration and Conciliation Bill, the Premier urged them to coerce the Opposition so that they should not put him out of office; and we find these gentlemen going straight away from the Premier's office and coming within the precincts of the House, interviewing the leader of the Opposition and threatening him with political death if he attempted to oust the Government until the Arbitration and Conciliation Bill was passed. Is that the kind of thing which ought to take place? Cannot we fight our battles out here fairly? Have we not told the Premier that if he will fight fairly we will meet him with the same weapons; but if he descends to tactics which are condemned by all authorities on constitutional practice he must expect very little consideration at our hands. Much mention has been made of the Ice Works swindle, and I do not wish to weary the House by referring to it at any length, but what struck me when the member for the Williams (Mr. Piesse) was speaking about it is that a similar action has not been taken with regard to this company as was taken in another case, when some bottles of whisky had been consigned in a box of groceries. In one case a nominal fine was collected, but in another case the person is brought

before the court. And although it was proved at the trial that the person had approached one of the officers of the Department as to the whisky going amongst the groceries and received some advice in regard to the matter, although this is known to the Department, the man was hauled up before a magistrate, but the company was let off with a nominal fine. There should not be one law for the rich and another for the poor. The same action which was taken in the one case should be taken in regard to the company, who should be made to suffer the penalty which the law provides for such actions. With regard to the profits of the railways that the Premier boasts so enormously about — £272,000 — it would be interesting to know how much of that profit is due to the items of expenditure incurred during June having been paid in July. We find that there was a deficit in July of twenty odd thousand pounds, although there was a surplus in June of £12,000. No doubt this surplus was effected in June by expenses being paid in July; and it would be interesting to know how much of the profit is due to the expenditure of loan moneys on existing lines. We find that £860,000 has been expended out of loan moneys during the last three years on existing lines, and if the Government are expending hundreds of thousands of pounds in increasing the railways, you will be sure to find that the maintenance is kept up out of the same account; that is a thing that cannot be helped. If you are duplicating a line the maintenance of the road is carried out at the expense of the new work. Therefore the loan funds are carrying and bearing a great amount of the expense of maintaining the existing lines. These charges should be made to capital account, and if the new Commissioner of Railways desires to have a proper account of the railways kept, he will certainly take away from the charge of the Railway Department the expenditure of loan moneys in connection with existing lines.

MR. PIESSE: They do it in Queensland; they construct all the railways there; and they do it in New South Wales.

MR. WILSON: I notice some remarks which were made by the Engineer-in-Chief the other day and reported in

the newspapers. The Engineer-in-Chief stated that in his opinion it was not a right system to carry out, but that the expenditure of loan money should be kept separate from that on existing lines.

MR. PIESSE: That suited him all right.

MR. WILSON: He is quite right. But there seemed to be a deeper meaning in his remarks. It appears to me that the argument cannot be refuted, that it is not a proper system. If you are going to keep a proper record of your running machinery, you must keep the expenditure of loan moneys separate or the accounts will get mixed up to the disadvantage of the loan fund. The member for the Williams referred to the carriage of the Coolgardie pipes, but he did not refer to the carriage of the plates from the port of discharge (Fremantle) to the works. And if hon. members will look at the contract they will find that the contractor has to pay 10s. or 10s. 6d. a ton. for the carriage of the plates to the works, and as everyone knows the plates are carried at 1s. 8d. per ton; therefore there is the enormous profit of 8s. per ton going directly to swell the returns of the railways and to make a good proportion of the profit of £272,000.

MR. PIESSE: The whole would only amount to £30,000.

MR. WILSON: There is £18,000 profit already out of this haulage of the pipes from Fremantle to the workshops. That is one instance, but there are many more which can be given. Take for instance the haulage of stone to construct the Bunbury Harbour Works; the same thing occurs there, and the same thing occurs in regard to the carriage of railway material and sleepers.

MR. PIESSE: Those are carried free. For all additions to opened lines the material is carried free.

MR. WILSON: But not in regard to new works. When we consider all these things they amount to thousands and thousands of pounds, and we must come to the conclusion that a wrong system is adopted. This is a matter of book-keeping, and in every private establishment, in a large industrial undertaking, where machinery is constructed in one department for use in another, only the bare cost of the machinery is charged, and only the bare cost of conveying the

material on the railways should be charged to the department.

MR. PIESSE: It is only the actual cost in this case.

MR. WILSON: I have shown that there is something like 8s. per ton profit on the haulage of the plates from Fremantle.

MR. PIESSE: That includes wharfage and shunting.

MR. WILSON: The 10s. per ton provides for the whole thing. The same argument applies to fares. We find that railway fares to the different departments are booked up on the same principle. This should always be done at cost price. If we are to learn by the experience of the other colonies we have only to look to Victoria, and we find there that so long as loan moneys were being expended on the Victorian railways, the railways showed a great profit, but when it stopped we find that there was a deficit of something like £300,000 or £400,000, and the same thing will occur here as in Victoria. These matters require very carefully inquiring into, and I want to impress on the Forrest Government the necessity of carrying out this railway book-keeping on a proper commercial and sound basis. I will hurry on and just refer briefly to the Norseman railway which the Premier made so much of. The member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty) has put it down and condemned it properly, justly no doubt, as being a pioneer line. The Premier could not see why a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman is not the same thing as the line being constructed from Esperance to Norseman. This matter has been thrashed out in the House, and I have always said that the railway was being constructed at the wrong end of the district, the Government following out the avowed policy of centralisation which they have always been guilty of; all the traffic being centralised at Fremantle. Such a policy is detrimental to the best interests of the country. It is hardly any use debating the matter here fully because the damage has been done. We know how Esperance rose and was prosperous for a time; we know how it suddenly fell after Government money had been spent there, and went down until now it is dead and practically done for altogether. If we are

to advance the interests of the country as a whole and bring about prosperity we must never advance the interests of one portion of the country at the direct disadvantage of another. We must let every district stand on its own bottom, and open the whole of the ports. Nothing that Parliament does ought to prevent a district prospering and developing its own interests, and if the Government cannot construct a railway, they ought to allow the people to do it themselves. I say the railway from Esperance to Norseman ought to have been constructed years ago. I do not intimate that the Government should have constructed it; but people were prepared to provide the capital on equitable terms and they should have been permitted to carry out the work. If that had been done we should have had no discussion here to-night with regard to the Norseman Railway. It would have been settled, and the Premier would not have had to sit shivering in his chair for fear of losing office on account of the public works which so many members are opposed to. The same argument applies to the Collie-Goldfields railway. There is a railway which was projected, and the right hon. gentleman received a deputation in that neighbourhood. He told these people he could not see how the Government could find the funds to construct that line, but that if any private individual were prepared, on equitable terms, to find the capital, the Government would grant a concession for the construction of the railway. But with his usual change of policy, he alters his mind, and says: "Oh, no; we will not give these people permission." The men who offered to find the money in London, and who now say the money is ready, are sent back with a refusal, and the Collie coalfields are still waiting for the railway which he promised. With regard to the financial position of the colony, my opinion can be expressed in a very few words. I do not wish to repeat figures, but I think it has been proved and admitted that the Premier has a balance of authorisations of some £800,000 yet to raise by loans, and he has in hand £650,000 of loan moneys, making, roughly, one and-a-half millions. He has a million-and-a-half of money, and what has he to do with it? It is a simple balance-sheet, a debit and

credit account. We find he has new railways authorised by Parliament, if the House does not block them now; we find he has the water works to complete—

[MR. MORAN: At a cost of £2,000,000]—£2,000,000 for the waterworks; he has the Fremantle harbour works to complete; he must complete the graving dock at Fremantle, which ought to be half finished by this time; there are the workshops at Midland Junction; there are the sheds on the wharves at Fremantle, for which shipping people are crying out; he has the huge scheme which was voted in the House years ago for the water supply of Perth and Fremantle; he has the rolling stock for existing lines, which must entail an expenditure of half-a-million of money. Why, it stands to reason that, taking into consideration all these matters, he cannot help coming down to this House with a loan proposal of at least two million of money within the next twelve months; and if that be the position, what becomes of his pledges? What becomes of the pledges he made at Bunbury three or four years ago, at the general election!—the pledges he has repeated in this House over and over again, that he would not be found advocating fresh authorisations until the existing loan authorisations had been fully expended and accounted for? Why, he makes a policy one day and changes it the next. He talks of having no difficulty in raising money, and of never having had any difficulty. He says the finances of the country are sound in every respect. No one doubts the country; but everyone, I think, doubts the policy of the Premier. And let me quote here, in regard to his boast that the Government had no difficulty in raising money in London, the Agent General's report. Referring to the Treasury Bills put upon the London market for one million of money, with a currency of two years—short dated bills bearing interest at 4 per cent., and at a price of £98, making it 5 per cent.—what does Mr. Wittenoom say? He says:

The transaction, which I own is far from what I hoped for, proved to have been most opportune. Had I waited even a few days after the contract was made, the sale could not have been effected, except on terms which would have been absolutely prohibitive. The greatest difficulty was experienced, as it was, in getting them off, and though they may, in a few cases, have changed hands at a higher

figure after the sale was effected, it may be interesting to relate that, when first negotiating their sale, several financial houses actually refused, then, to have anything to do with them at any price.

That is the position of our finances, according to our official report; and yet the Premier wishes to cajole and blind this House by saying that he can raise in London as much money as he wants whenever he pleases. I suppose he would term me a "croaker;" he would say that I was running down the credit of the country. I protest against that; I say the true champion of a country, or of an individual, is the man who will realise the position and who will sum it up, who will see where he stands, what he has to construct and carry out, and how much he has to do it with; and who will shut down in time, so that financial disaster may not overtake him. I am certainly with members on the Government cross-benches who oppose any further loan expenditure at the present time. I think there are nine of those members—(MR. MORAN: Eight). I hope this House will support us. If those eight members are only true to themselves, if they are true to their country and to their constituents, they will certainly vote with the Opposition on this motion, and will show the right hon. gentleman that, when the country and the people and the members here have ceased to have confidence in him, the country no longer requires his services.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): I do not intend addressing the House at any length, but I desire to say a few words with reference to a subject that has been continually brought up during the currency of this debate. I am particularly desirous to refer to the subject, which has now become historically known by the name of the Perth Ice Company. The opinion I gave the Government on that question has been characterised by certain members as being incorrect. I may say I did hope that hon. members who have passed their criticisms on that opinion would have done me the justice to refrain from expressing their views until the papers had been laid upon the table of the House. When those papers are laid upon the table, as they will be, I am perfectly certain hon. members will



see that the advice given to the Government on that question was the best that could be given in the circumstances. In the first place, one hon. member opposite used language which I was really astonished to hear, considering its vehemence, and the intensity of feeling which it exhibited; that is the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), who used the words "thieves," "rogues," and "robbers." The fact is that these expressions are wholly unwarranted by the evidence that was submitted to me upon which to advise the Government. Throughout that correspondence and that inquiry there was not a tittle of evidence to incriminate any person but one—the man who perpetrated this swindle. How, then, in the face of that, could I honestly advise the Government to prosecute other people, and least of all the directors, who were completely innocent of the charge?

MR. WILSON: Could you not have got the man?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member will bear with me for a little while; I will allude to that directly. How could I advise the Government to prosecute the directors, in respect of whom it was shown in this inquiry that they were utterly innocent of this system of systematic swindling that had been carried on by an officer of this company? Regarding the law on this case, of course it was laid down with, I might say, a judicial air, and certainly with a dogmatic expression, by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), that there could clearly be but one opinion, and that his must be the right version of the law on the facts of this case. But when I draw the attention of the hon. member to the law as it generally applies, it will be seen that the expression of opinion ventured on by him is completely erroneous. In the first place, it is a well-known principle of law that if a servant in the employment of his master commit any fraud without the master's knowledge or privity, but yet for the benefit of the master, the master is held in law civilly liable to compensate the person injured, but not criminally liable. That is the position; and it would be a monstrous doctrine if it were to be held that the master of a man who committed such an act without the know-

ledge of his master should be punished for the offence of the servant, which the master never committed. The effect of that doctrine would be that nobody could, with safety, employ servants. Now comes the question, assuming that this was an offence. We will say nothing about the Railways Act at present; but in ordinary transactions, between ordinary persons, in such a case as that, there is apparently no indictment which can be levelled against the servant who commits the fraud. We cannot lay a criminal charge against him. All we can do is to make his employer compensate the person injured for the wrong done. No criminal charge can be laid against the servant himself. But the Legislature, by this Railways Act, has provided that, in order to protect the revenues of the Railway Department, a penalty shall be imposed on any person who is guilty of an attempt to evade the payment of the proper charges. There is the difference. The Legislature, in their wisdom, said: "We are going to make an innovation on the common law;" and very properly so, too. The Legislature said: "In addition to the compensation for which the employer is responsible, and which he must pay, whether he knows about the fraud or not—in addition to that, any person who knowingly commits that fraud shall be liable to a penalty. That penalty is provided in Section 8 of the Railways Act of 1881, which states that where it is proved that a person has committed a fraud of this character, with the intent to swindle the Railway Department—and the intent is the essence of the whole thing—that person is bound to pay a penalty amounting to £10 for every ton in respect of which the fraud is committed. That is all. It is not provided that he shall be put in gaol; and that is where many of my friends outside the profession have gone wrong; the penalty is a sum not exceeding £10 per ton, to be paid by the person who knowingly perpetrates the fraud. Hon. members will now see what is the law upon the case; but when the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) ventures to use the wild language he did use when he said these people ought to have been prosecuted and put in gaol, ought to have received long terms of imprisonment, he is completely wrong in his knowledge of the law. It is like

many other things. People venture upon subjects with which they are not professionally acquainted, and, of course, they invariably show, by their conduct and their language, that they have a much greater knowledge of the subject than those who make their living by practising that profession. That is the position in this case. And when the directors of this company were shown the extent of the fraud committed by their servant, what did they do? They said: "We are legally bound, we are in duty bound, to compensate the Government to the extent of the fraud committed; and we will do so." Then the adjustment was arrived at, and the sum was fixed at something over £2,000, which was paid, and in addition the company voluntarily paid, although they were under no legal compulsion to do so, an extra sum of £100 by way of penalty.

MR. JAMES: You should have prosecuted the manager.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The manager could have been proceeded against for a penalty, and that is all, but we know that men of that class are not worth one hundred shillings.

MR. GEORGE: This manager is worth one hundred shillings.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Even supposing he is, this is the case of a limited liability company. If we had enforced the penalty against them they might have put themselves in liquidation, and lumped the creditors together.

MR. JAMES: A Crown debt takes priority.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: But the company did an honourable thing, and paid in full, through their servant, the sum the department had been defrauded of. If it could have been shown that this servant—and this is where opinion is at variance—if it could have been shown that there were facts disclosed in the inquiry incriminating other persons with the manager, a charge of conspiracy would lie, and they could be indicted on the criminal side. But there is no evidence to support such a charge. The matter may be spoken about as much as hon. members please, but when you set the criminal law in motion you must have something above suspicion: you must have a reasonable statement of facts to

justify you in setting this dangerous machine in motion. As legal adviser of the Crown, in order to curry favour with the public, as I could easily have done, and to show what a fearless administrator I was, I might have set the criminal law in motion against one man who was no doubt guilty, and against another man whom I honestly believe to be not guilty. I know that I have been abused by the Press on the goldfields in connection with this matter, because I have seen an article imputing, I may almost say, corrupt motives to me for the advice I gave to the Government; but I am certain there is not a member present who can have any such idea of my conduct. I would like to say just a few words in regard to the subject introduced last night by the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes), and more particularly to the charges made by that hon. member against the administration of the Railway Department. His information was gathered—and I do not think there was any attempt to hide the source—from persons inside the department; but whether these persons are inside the department now or not we do not know. As my late colleague, the Commissioner of Railways, pointed out to-night, the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) ought to remember that any statement which he gets from these men is an *ex parte* statement. It may be said that such a statement is none the less to be accepted if it be true. Quite so; but to statements made like that in this House great danger attaches. If on an *ex parte* statement an hon. member accuses a person, not within the House, of conduct which is either discreditable or disreputable in the position he fills, a great wrong is done that man, because he is not here to defend himself. I admit a member has a right when he gets information to make use of it, but I submit the proper way of making use of such information is to represent to the Ministerial head of the department the statement received, and to demand redress, if it be a grievance or wrong done to the administration. If the Minister fail to satisfy that very proper demand, then the proper course is to go into the House and publicly state the cause of disagreement. We know that it is most unfair for this House on an *ex parte*

statement—I do not care by whom the statement is made—to attempt to sit in judgment on a person until the other side has been heard. I invite the member for East Fremantle—and when I say this I speak on behalf of the Government—if he believe there be truth in any of his allegations, to ask for a Select Committee to inquire into the matter during the present session. By that means the matter will be sifted properly, and the man who is attacked, and who is said to be in the department and doing these wrongful acts, will have an opportunity of defending himself and stating his side of the case. Until that is done I do not think it right for the House to condemn, unheard, any person, because such a course violates the first principle of law. As illustrating the danger of such a course, I would point out a little error the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) fell into last session when he asked to be informed of the price per cubic yard of the concrete laid down in the Mundaring weir.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I got wrong information.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : The member for Central Murchison was told that the cost per cubic yard of concrete was 35s. 3d. After getting that answer, the hon. member, evidently acting on the information he had previously received, questioned its correctness, and stated the price was really something like £5, and asked that the reports of the Resident Engineer, for the months of April and May, I believe, should be laid on the table of the House. These reports, I believe, were laid on the table; but in the meantime, before the papers were laid on the table, and after the motion had been moved, the hon. member evidently was informed of the mistake into which he had fallen, because, when he stated the amount per cubic yard was £5, instead of the amount stated by the department, he naturally began to think there was something wrong, and that either the department were wilfully deceiving him or his own source of information was incorrect. And what occurred? It turned out that the hon. member learned that the price per cubic yard given by the department was perfectly correct, and that when he said £5 was the price, he had no doubt in his mind a cubic yard of cement only. The price of a cubic yard of cement may

be £5, but the price of a cubic yard of concrete is only 35s. 3d., and the reason appears to be that only about one-sixth of cement is used in making a cubic yard of concrete, the rest being made up of, I suppose, stone and rubble.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : You are wrong.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : I am not wrong, and the hon. member dropped the subject like a “red hot potato” when he found he was wrong.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : You are not correct.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : I only adduce this as an illustration of the danger to which I have referred.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I rise to make an explanation. [HON. MEMBERS : No, no.] Hon. members may cry “No, no,” but I have a right to make an explanation, and I will make it. I asked for returns to be laid on the table, but the returns were not placed on the table, and never have been, because they were not ready when the House went into recess.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : Therefore to make assurance doubly sure, before I venture to give utterance to what I said about this, I looked up *Hansard*, and there is the question put by the hon. member asking distinctly to be informed the cost per cubic yard of the concrete, and the answer was given 35s. 3d. Then the hon. member said, “That is incorrect; it is more like £5 per cubic yard.” So it turns out the hon. member was evidently misinformed by the authority that gave him the information.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : No; he was not.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : That is where the danger is of a member coming to this House and attacking persons on *ex parte* statements. They get information from a discharged employee of a department, and it is very unfair that it should be used against the superiors of this man. There has been one more incident in this debate, and it developed rather towards the close of the debate than at the beginning. I refer to the peculiar attitude which has been taken up towards the Government by the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) and the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper). During the time the whole of the colony was devoting attention to the subject of Federation, those two members, like several other members of this Chamber,

were engaged in pointing out to the country that if we entered Federation at the present time, it would mean disaster to Western Australia. We all did our best to educate the public mind. The verdict went against those who were opposed to entering Federation at the present time, but, instead of taking the voice of the whole country, as we are all bound to do, in good spirit, these two hon. members are something like Achilles in the "Iliad": they are sulking in their tent—dissatisfied because they lost the battle.

MR. MORAN: We are going to leave the tent.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I dare say you may, but I am sure such is not the feeling which actuates the patriotic leader of the Opposition and most of the gentlemen sitting on that side of the House.

MR. MORAN: Federation had nothing to do with my action.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If I remember rightly, I listened to some of the most glowing periods I have heard for many a day, illumined by flashes of wit, by the hon. members opposite, pointing out the wonderful good that federation was going to do this country—that the millenium as regard the prosperity of the country was to be brought about. Now, on a sudden they draw long faces and speak in sepulchral tones, saying that the colony is "going to the dogs," and that we must not venture on any public works whatever, at least except those which are almost finished or in process of completion. Strange to say, that cry is joined in by those hon. members to whom I have alluded. They observed, "We said to the people before the federation referendum was taken, that the colony was going to the dogs, and we say it now."

MR. MORAN: So did you say it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member says so did I, but he is very much mistaken. I did not care to commit myself to extravagant language of that character, because I had a little common sense left to me and I did not like the idea of being laughed at. But when the member for East Coolgardie is on his legs and his tongue is, well—[A MEMBER: Greased]—I will use a better word than "greased" and say "lubricated" by that native eloquence which he

possesses, he does not confine himself to the positive or the comparative degree of adjectives, but invariably uses the superlative; and I must say that very often his eloquence is couched in such language that it carries away ordinary mortals. He is an excellent orator, because he possesses a loud voice, a strong voice, a clear voice, and an excellent facility of expression. It would be difficult for me to pay him a greater compliment than that. But now comes the peculiarity of all this, that those who preached federation and those who opposed it have united in one common action. The cry of all is now the same, although before the referendum their views were as wide asunder as the poles. What is the meaning of this? Is there any influence besides the one we understand, and of which we are told, namely the safety of the finances of the colony?

MR. MORAN: That is only an opinion.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: We all have our opinions.

MR. JAMES: Some of us have salary as well as opinions.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Every member is entitled to express his opinion, but when those opposed to us failed in the attempt to carry out that little arrangement they thought so happily consummated, by which a large number of the solid band on the Government side of the House was to be taken away and led under the triumphant banner of the member for East Coolgardie, of course one could expect to hear nothing but discord in the camp opposite.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There is no discord here.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There are many things that those gentlemen opposite will have to remember. No doubt, some day, when occupying these seats, they will bear in mind some of the difficulties which surround Ministers, and I am sure that if, after a little experience on this side of the House, they have the misfortune to go back to the Opposition seats, they will have more sympathy for the Ministry than they possess at present.

MR. GREGORY: A little more knowledge too.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: One can always deal with an attack in the House in which he sits, but an attack outside the House is another matter;

and when you are attacked unfairly outside the House and have not an opportunity to defend yourself, that is the worst of all. A Minister's lot is not a happy one. I remember most distinctly about five or six months ago I was pressed very much to give an order to a budding author who was going to bring out a book. He wished me to take £250 worth of books to distribute them throughout the Government departments. I pointed out, however, to this gentleman that the subject on which he was bringing out this book would engage the attention of the House very shortly, and that I could not conscientiously incur the expense, knowing as I did that if a codification of these laws took place, the book would be waste paper.

A MEMBER: Was he a lawyer?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I cannot say; but the result was that I was subjected to the pressure of what is commonly called squeezing. However, the pressure was resisted, and I declined to do what I was asked. What was the result? A threat was immediately made by that unhappy author that he would make it hot for me, and he has never since ceased trying to make it hot for me. That is one of the difficulties surrounding the position of a Minister in this colony, and I would say to the hon. gentlemen opposite that when their turn comes I hope they will not have many men like that to squeeze them. It is of course very funny to hear of it in this Chamber, but it is very unfair towards the man who is the subject of it, because he has no chance of defending himself. However, I am very glad to say that from no member of this House have I ever received treatment of that kind. Members have treated me, and I am speaking for the whole Government, in a straightforward manner in that respect. Indeed when we have had to refuse many requests which have been made to us, the refusal has never been attempted to be used afterwards in a revengeful way. I trust now that the hour is late we shall come to some decision.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Divide now if you like.

MR. CONNOR (East Kimberley): I shall not take many minutes in what I have to say, but I think it would be unfair, holding the position I do, and sitting where I do, and having been

referred to this evening, that I should allow the debate to close without saying a few words. I ask what is the object of the debate? With what object has the amendment to the Address-in-reply been put on the Notice Paper? I hold it has been put there with the express object of turning out the Government and allowing the members who sit on the Opposition side to take their place.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They have had a good innings, you know.

MR. CONNOR: The question which crops up in my mind is, whether it is better that the members who occupy the Treasury benches should remain there, or is it better that we should make a change? If it could be shown to me that there were members on the Opposition side as capable, in my opinion, as the gentlemen who sit in this House and conduct the affairs of the country, then I say let them have their way. I will not ask the members on the Opposition side to be more capable, but if they were as capable I would ask them to go along and conduct the affairs of the country. A number of arguments have been used in support of the amendment. The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) has introduced matter into the debate and taken up the time of the House with subjects which in my opinion should not have been introduced. If the member thinks there exist grievances, and it has been said that they do exist; if the hon. member (Mr. Holmes) thinks they do exist, what he should have done was to approach the Minister, and then if he did not get satisfaction and found that the grievance still existed, he should have come before the House and asked for a Select Committee to inquire into the matter; then he would have acted in a constitutional way. I am going to deal very shortly with every matter that I touch upon. I listened the other night to the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing), and indeed I was not edified with what he had to say, especially when he talked of the Premier: a man, however bad he may be, has occupied his position for ten years. And yet the hon. member said he had laid himself out for every member in the House to kick him. I think the hon. member exceeded all good taste in making such a reference. I am not here to champion the Premier: he is well able to take his

own part, but I cannot help referring to that matter because I think the hon. member for the Swan is now sorry that he made the remark. There has been a party referred to in this House as the "Corner Party." That party was supposed to be antagonistic some time ago to the Government. I admit I was at the meetings of that party, and I am not antagonistic to the *personnel* of the Parliament or the Ministry, but I am to a certain extent antagonistic to one portion of the policy of the Government, and I have a right to express that opinion here, and I have the right to vote as I think when the time comes. It is not right that anyone should say that the "Corner Party" intend to turn the Government out. I do not think the "Corner Party" ever intended to turn the Government out. I went to a meeting of the party to say that I was dissatisfied with the borrowing policy of the Government, and I now tell members of the Opposition that when the time comes and the items are before us if they will vote for certain items to be struck out and I think the works should not be carried out, then I will vote with them. I only wish to explain my position with what is called the "Corner Party"; but if it was called by its proper name I think it should be called the "Moderate Party," a party that wants to have some control not only over the Government side but over the Opposition side.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Call it the "Moderate party" if you like.

[MR. WOOD interjected a remark.]

MR. CONNOR: The hon. member who interjected was the first member of that party—

MR. WOOD: I was not there two minutes.

MR. CONNOR: He was the first to "rat" in that party, and when the hon. member went away, other members said they were glad it was not a wooden party. The question of federation has been brought up here, but I think that federation, so far as the House is concerned, is dead. I spoke against federation, but the people said they wanted federation: the people have a right to speak, and they have spoken. They said they wanted federation, and so I am in favour of federation now. We must bow to the popular will, whether it be right or

wrong. I advised the people to the best of my ability, but they have not taken my advice. As a division will probably take place to-night, I will not detain the House longer, because we wish to get on with the work of the session. When we do get to work and the proposals are brought forward, then I shall make many suggestions; but it will be better to get on with the work of the session than to be beating the air over a no-confidence motion which we know cannot be carried.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): Several members on the Opposition side desire to address themselves to this subject, but as an arrangement has been come to that a division shall be taken at once, members are willing to make their remarks on the Address-in-reply, and are agreeable to the division taking place now.

Question—that the words proposed to be struck out (with a view of inserting Mr. Illingworth's amendment of no-confidence) do stand part of the question—put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	22
Noes	...	...	16

Majority for ... 6

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Connor	Mr. George
Mr. Darlôt	Mr. Harper
Sir John Forrest	Mr. A. Y. Hassell
Mr. A. Forrest	Mr. J. F. T. Hassell
Mr. D. Forrest	Mr. Holmes
Mr. Higham	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Hubble	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. James
Mr. Locke	Mr. Kingsmill
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Moran
Mr. Monger	Mr. Oats
Mr. Moorhead	Mr. Solomon
Mr. Morgans	Mr. Vosper
Mr. Pennefather	Mr. Wallace
Mr. Phillips	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Piessie	Mr. Gregory (Teller).
Mr. Quinlan	
Mr. Eason	
Mr. Sholl	
Mr. Throssell	
Mr. Wood	
Mr. Doherty (Teller).	

Amendment thus negatived, and the main question remained.

MR. JAMES: What is the Government policy now? Here are several members on your own side who say they will not support it.

THE PREMIER: Find out as best you can.

MR. A. FORREST: Let the hon. member (Mr. James) move another vote of censure.

THE PREMIER: I think we had better adjourn, unless we are willing to pass the Address-in-reply on the voices.

MR. GEORGE: That is not likely.

MR. GREGORY: I move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned till the next sitting.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:35 p.m. until the next Tuesday afternoon.

### Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 4th September, 1900.

Papers presented—Question: Cost of Cyanide Works, Norseman—Question: Payment of Members, Referendum—Address-in-reply; debate, sixth day. Premier's speech on the general question—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Regulations and additional regulations under Beer Duty Act.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### QUESTION—COST OF CYANIDE WORKS, NORSEMAN.

MR. WALLACE asked the Minister of Mines: 1, Whether the cyanide works at Norseman public battery are completed? 2, If so, what is their total cost? 3, What is the working capacity of said cyanide works? 4, Under what terms and conditions are the works carried on?

THE MINISTER OF MINES replied: —1, Yes. 2, £1,232 19s. 1d. 3, Designed for 400 tons monthly, but subject to variation according to nature of tailings. 4, To take over tailings at 27 cubic feet

to the ton, and allow 80 per cent. of assay value, less a charge of 10s. per ton for treatment.

#### QUESTION—PAYMENT OF MEMBERS, REFERENDUM.

MR. VOSPER asked the Premier: 1, Whether he recollects having promised that a referendum should be taken on the question of payment of members. 2, Whether he also remembers having stated, in reply to a question, that no special legislation is contemplated for this purpose. 3, If so, how he proposes to provide for the expenditure entailed by such referendum.

THE PREMIER replied:—1, In the Legislative Assembly on the 19th July, 1899, the Premier moved "That the question of payment of members should be referred to the electors of the colony for an expression of their opinion at the next general election," and the motion was carried unanimously. 2, Yes. 3, The Government intend carrying out this undertaking, and the expenditure to be incurred will be nominal.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### DEBATE, SIXTH DAY.

Debate resumed from the previous Thursday, on the motion for adoption of Address-in-reply; the Amendment of no-confidence having been negatived at the last sitting, and the debate now dealing with the general question.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): I have noticed in the Press during the last few days a number of assertions attributed to the Premier, in which it is stated the Opposition have done their best to delay the business of the country this session. To that statement, which I do not think the right hon. gentleman will repudiate, I give a flat denial; for every member on the Opposition side of the House, not only this session but last session, has tried to promote the public business and to get through the work as quickly as possible. Owing to the fact that members sitting on this side of the House have their homes in other places than Perth, they might make many objections to the number of delays in regard to attendance in this House, and also to the delay shown in placing Bills on the table. But in this session alone the Premier