

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 24th July, 1895.

Aborigines Protection Board—Erection of New Supreme Court Buildings—Return Showing Expenditure re Agricultural Bureau—Medical Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Bill: first reading—Southern Cross—Coolgardie Railway Contract—Licensed Surveyors Bill: third reading—Proposed Public Works Committee—Loan Act, 1891. Re-appropriation Bill: second reading; in committee—Municipal Institutions Bill; in committee—Legislative Council's Message re Depositing of Stone, &c., in River at Rocky Bay; in committee—Policy of Government re Education Question—Message from His Excellency the Administrator—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD.

MR. LEAKE, for Mr. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, whether he had any further information with regard to the Aborigines Protection Board.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Bill passed last session had been forwarded for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure, but that no reply had yet been received in the matter.

ERECTION OF NEW SUPREME COURT BUILDINGS.

MR. LEAKE, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, whether the Government intended shortly to erect new buildings for the use of the Supreme Court.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government purposed to ask Parliament for a vote for the purpose upon the Estimates.

RETURN SHOWING EXPENDITURE re AGRICULTURAL BUREAU.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, in accordance with notice, moved for a return in detail to the 30th June, showing—

1. How the sum of £2,600, voted for the services of the Agricultural Bureau last Session or any portion of it, had been expended.

2. If the above sum has been exceeded, the amount of the excess and how expended.

Question put and passed.

MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by Mr. LEAKE (for Mr. James), and read a first time.

FERTILISERS AND FEEDING STUFFS BILL.

Introduced by the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. A. R. Richardson), and read a first time.

SOUTHERN CROSS-COOLGARDIE RAILWAY CONTRACT.

MR. MORAN in accordance with notice, moved "That a copy of the contract for the construction of the Southern Cross-Coolgardie Railway line be laid on the table of the House." He said it was generally recognised that the amount of the tender for the construction of the railway extension to Coolgardie was so low that probably it would not cover the actual cost of the work; and a consequent question causing some agitation was as to how the contractor was going to make up the loss which must ensue to him—whether there was some special arrangement by which the contractor was to be enabled to make a profit by the terms on which he obtained the loan of trucks from the Government, or by prices to be charged to the public for using the sections of line as they became progressively ready for carrying traffic. He (Mr. Moran) wished to be in a position to know, and to answer questions put by his constituents, as to what special arrangement existed, if any; because, if the contractor was depending on the traffic for his profits, or for making up loss on the contract, the difference must be obtained by charging higher rates to the public than would otherwise be necessary during the period allowed for the construction. He (Mr. Moran) wished to see that those for whose benefit this railway was being constructed were not to be charged unduly high rates, to enable the contractor to make up any loss on the work of construction through its having been contracted for at so low a price.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Agreed; agreed.

Question put and passed.

LICENSED SURVEYORS BILL.**THIRD READING.**

Bill read a third time and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council.

PROPOSED PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

MR. HARPER, in accordance with notice, moved "That it is desirable, in the best interests of the colony: 1. That all projected public works should be reported upon by a committee appointed for the purpose, before any such works are undertaken. 2. That such committee should be independent of Ministerial control." He said: This is not the first time this question has been before Parliament. I think in 1890 the question was introduced, in the debate on the Address-in-Reply, by the then hon. member for York (Hon. S. H. Parker), and it was also introduced in a motion subsequently made in another place. The only objection raised to it at that time was that it might delay the construction of public works. Everyone must recognise the enormous amount of work that has fallen on the shoulders of Ministers, in the rapidly extending development of the colony; and it is almost impossible that the Ministers can give that full consideration to the matters which should be considered before public works are undertaken. If such a committee were appointed here, as has been done in other colonies, and if proposed works were referred to the committee for careful consideration, from one end to the other, their enquiry might throw some light on matters which, under the present usual stress of business, Ministers are not able to consider thoroughly. We all know that Ministers are in a great degree bound to take the advice of their officers; and if those officers advise that a particular work cannot be done, Ministers have to give way, or generally do so. I think we had an instance of that a few evenings ago, when I understood the Premier to say that one officer of the Works Department had informed him that it would be impossible to make a road through the Park on Mount Eliza, if the contractor was to be allowed to cart over the road the material required for making it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The officers said it would be impossible to make a good road in that manner.

MR. HARPER: But in reference to nearly all the roads in the colony, all contracts let by Roads Boards do specify that the contractor in each case must cart the materials over the particular roads for the purpose of consolidating them. In practical life, it is quite possible to make roads to carry very heavy traffic, in a manner which this officer of the Works Department says cannot be done. There are

many ways in which such a committee would be of service to the Government of the day; and it would also be a buffer between them and the people who may be disputing about the rival routes for a railway. The Ministry of the day would be able to say they had independent reports on the particular work that was desired, and would thus be able, in a great degree, to throw the responsibility for the selection of a particular route on shoulders other than their own. The committee would also, at times, be of some service to the Works Department itself, as the department might thus get the views of practical persons which might not otherwise be obtained.

MR. GEORGE: The department won't pay any attention to them.

MR. HARPER: With regard to buildings also, I am sure that a good many people think that, in some of our public buildings, utility is sometimes sacrificed to appearance; and I have a case particularly in my mind, of a hospital building at Newcastle, which was designed in the Public Works Department, but which could not be used for a couple of years after it was built. Whether it was because the outside of the hospital was considered of more importance than the interior arrangements I do not know, but the building was considered unfit for habitation as a hospital until some considerable alterations were made. For these reasons, and for many others which will occur to hon. members, I hope this House will accept what has been tried, I believe satisfactorily, in other colonies.

THE PREMIER: In what colony?

MR. HARPER: In New South Wales particularly.

THE PREMIER: That is only for railways, I think.

MR. HARPER: I now move the motion standing in my name.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am sorry at all times to oppose any motion that the hon. member brings forward, because I recognise most fully that his object and desire is to encourage economy and good Government; but I really think this plan, if put into operation, would not be found to be efficient. I am aware that there is in New South Wales a Public Works Committee—composed I think of members of both Houses—which reports upon projected railways. That body has been in existence some years, and, as far as I am aware, it has worked fairly well. But it seems to me the principle strikes at the very foundation

of what we term Responsible Government. It is a sort of buffer under which the Ministry of the day can shield themselves from responsibility. And, after all, I ask hon. members whether they think the time has arrived—in this colony, at any rate—when we require such a buffer between the Government and the Legislature. We are fortunate in having, in this colony, as representatives of the people, gentlemen who are cognisant of the affairs and wants of the colony in its several parts—who have personal knowledge, in a great many instances, of all parts of the colony; and I think those representatives are as competent to give an opinion, and to judge as to the necessity of any public work that may be proposed, as would be any committee that this House and another House would be likely to appoint. After all, this kind of enquiry would be only an intermediary stage, for the report of this committee would have to be submitted to the Legislature for approval or decision upon it, and the result of such procedure would be delay. If you want to delay any particular public works, of course that can be effected by appointing a lot of committees and irresponsible bodies; because that is what they are—they are responsible to no one, and you can do nothing to them when once appointed, nor can you thrust them out of office, except by not re-appointing them in the next succeeding session of Parliament. This plan of a public committee reminds me of the old Finance Committee which was in existence some years ago; and, looking back on that time—[MR. W. F. SHOLL: A very useful body.]—I say no more obstructive institution was ever invented for hampering any Government. [MR. R. F. SHOLL: Whose toes did it tread on?] It trod on the toes of progress in this country. I have some knowledge of it, and, without wishing to speak disrespectfully of its members, who were all men of repute and position in the country, I say that for any Government to have to go cap-in-hand to any irresponsible body of men and ask them: "Will you be good enough to allow us to spend a hundred pounds in building a Court-house, or a road through the country, because our vote is exhausted?"—if that is Responsible Government, then I do not wish to see such Responsible Government. No more humiliating position could be invented than the position of a Government wishing to spend money for purposes which they considered necessary for the development and progress of the colony,

and yet having to go to a body of men and ask their permission before the money could be spent on necessary works. I am glad to say all that system has been swept away under the new Constitution, and that the Government of the day have the right to take on themselves the duty of doing what they consider necessary in the interests of the country, and that this House has the right of saying whether they approve or not of the actions of the Government. I had something to do with the old Finance Committee, and I remember they used to call me up before them and examine me as if I were some defaulter; and question me as to expenditure as if I had some personal interest in it, and as if I were going to take an improper advantage in some way. I had a great deal of trouble in getting that committee to consent to the building of a telegraph line. All I can say is that it was not Responsible Government, and I do not want to see any more of that system in this colony. I cannot understand what the hon. member is driving at, in this motion. Does he mean that every proposed public work is to be submitted to the committee before it is undertaken, or before the amount for the work is placed on the Annual Estimates? Does he mean that the Government must ask the committee whether they approve of the plan and the site of a proposed building, and whether they approve of the particular work being carried out or not? Is it to be before the Estimates are framed, or after the Estimates are framed, that the committee is to examine into the proposed work. If it is to be before the Estimates are framed, then the committee had better take over the framing of the Estimates. If it is to be after the Estimates are framed, then the committee had better take over the management of the work. In either case, I do not know where the responsibility of the Government is to come in. The committee might think that a particular class of building should be erected somewhere else, or that the class of building proposed by the Government would not suit the particular purpose. I do not think you will find any Government willing to carry on, in this colony, under these conditions. The theory of our constitutional system is that the Government are responsible to the country and to Parliament for everything they do; and the Government cannot shield themselves behind a committee. In regard to the Public Works

Committee in New South Wales, I cannot say whether it carries out its functions well or not; but we must remember that, when the committee system was introduced into that colony, their main lines of railway had been constructed, and the committee had to deal only with the proposals for branch lines. I say in regard to this motion, as I said in regard to the question when it was raised in the session of 1891 in the other House, that it is too early for us in this colony to embark on these novel ideas. I think this House will be wise if it holds the Government responsible, individually and collectively, for all expenditure, and then the House will know whom to look to, and whom to charge with any misdeeds, and will not have to go looking about for irresponsible committees or persons who, though they may be elected by this House, will certainly not be regarded as responsible for public works in the way that Ministers are regarded as responsible.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I think the object sought to be gained by the hon. member for Beverley is an excellent one. I just desire to express the conviction that so far as a similar committee such as he suggests which exists in Victoria is concerned, it had its origin through the manifold applications for all sorts of railways in all parts of the colony. These railways were estimated to cost £5,000,000, or £6,000,000, and as the Government of the day had only £1,000,000 at their disposal for railways, the committee was appointed to decide which of the railways applied for were worthy of the amount voted being expended upon them. That committee therefore was created under very different circumstances to those prevailing in this colony at present. I do not suppose Parliament will vote money for railways without having some idea of the work they propose to do, or vote moneys for any public work without having a clear idea of what they mean to do. Consequently the illustration of the other colonies is not on all fours. The committee in New South Wales had its origin in a similar way. I do not think it is desirable to take these responsibilities away from a small House like this. The idea may work very well in a large country like England, or even New South Wales in which colony they have 132 members, but in a Parliament of this size it would be advancing too fast to elect a Committee of this kind. If the proposal had come further on in our history, I would be disposed to support it, because, if our circumstances were the same as those of the other colonies, the committee

would be most effective and desirable. I think if the hon. member for Beverley consults the interests of his own view on the question he will defer it. The Government ought to be capable of directing all the public works we are likely to launch into for some years to come, and the House should be able to check the Government in spending money for them. The practice of referring these matters to Commissions is not a good one, for I never knew a Commission yet that did any good service, and their work is only of a whitewashing character. If this House is not capable of spending the money of the people properly the sooner another is substituted for it the better. To appoint a committee at our present stage would be to reflect upon the Colony itself, although, at a future time, when the conditions are different, I would be disposed to support a similar proposal, as it would be useful to us. At present it would not be. Therefore I shall vote against the motion.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I believe Public Works Committees have been appointed both in Victoria and New South Wales, and I think their duties are to collect, by evidence, information on proposed public works for the benefit of Parliament, before any work is undertaken. They obtain reliable information which places members in a better position to decide whether the work should be done or not. Had that been done before the Yilgarn railway was constructed, no doubt the committee would have recommended that the line should start from York, and the colony would have been saved thousands of pounds.

AN HON. MEMBER: How?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Because the line would have traversed better country and would not have cost so much.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Where would they have got the information from?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: They could have called evidence.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Government cannot get the information.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Again, such a committee could gather information regarding the proposed railways in the South for the benefit of Parliament, and I guarantee that when these works come before us for consideration we shall have as little information as we had on the last occasion when we discussed them. The old Finance Committee worked admirably. No Government could then spend money without the sanction of Parliament. I quite

understand the dislike of the Government—our present Government at any rate to such a body, when they would be prevented from giving sops to different districts, whether it was in the interests of the country to give them or not. I do not know whether the Premier had much to do with that committee. In those days he was in a very different position, and had nothing to do with the Yi'garn railway, except perhaps to survey the land.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I gave evidence.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I think, however, the Finance Committee is beside the question before us. The sooner we elect a Public Works Committee the better, and I think the members would have to be remunerated for their services. I shall support the motion.

MR. GEORGE: I shall not support the motion, because no particular good can be derived from such a committee. I would ask the hon. member for Beverley to ask himself how far the motion is to go. He says that all projected public works are to be reported upon by a committee. Does he mean works of a major or a minor character from the building of a railway to the making of a drain? I take it that if the motion were carried, the Government could do nothing but resign at once, as the committee would be free from Ministerial control. I take it also that the committee would consist of independent men.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Another want of confidence motion.

MR. GEORGE: I think it is, and I am surprised the Government have not taken it as such.

MR. MORAN: The Opposition are voting with the Government.

MR. GEORGE: We have confidence in the Government in some things, if not in all. I think we ought to have a Finance Committee as its operations would have saved for instance the weary debate on the Excess Bill. By appointing the committee proposed by the motion, I think a great many necessary public works would be delayed, a circumstance which would do incalculable harm to the colony. If such a committee were formed, it should consist of practical men and experts, and we cannot form such a body from the members of this House to deal with the complex questions that would arise. I am certain the Hon. the Director of Public Works would almost quake in his shoes if he had to go before them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He never quakes.

MR. GEORGE: I am afraid he would if he had to go before a committee of practical men, because he might be asked questions which he would not be able to evade. Then the Engineer-in-Chief, the Alpha and Omega of Public Works, is not likely to submit to be cross-questioned by the Committee, if it were composed of laymen. This question is not one upon which we can oust the Government. We can try to do so on the Education Question, but not on a trivial motion like this. I hope the hon. member, therefore, will withdraw it, as I am quite certain he does not wish to harass the Government. If it were carried, the Hon. the Director of Public Works should resign, and I am quite certain hon. members would not like to see him do that.

MR. PIESSE: The hon. member for Beverley is no doubt prompted by a good object in moving this resolution. The Hon. the Premier's question as to what the mover was driving at can be answered in this way: If a committee had been appointed to furnish information to the Government before public buildings, for instance, were erected, no doubt the people would have been provided with better buildings. I quite agree, at the same time, that we cannot take the matter out of the hands of the Government, and if we cannot trust them to carry on the public works of the colony properly, we must express our want of confidence in the usual way. I think the Government should well consider the effect of the motion if it were carried, and endeavor to remedy the defects pointed out by the hon. member for Beverley with regard to the designs for public buildings. The hospital at Newcastle, the designs for which were prepared by the Public Works Department, has been built piecemeal, as many other buildings have been. The hon. member for Beverley also referred to other instances where heavy expenditure has been incurred in erecting small buildings, and also to the proposed road through Perth Park; no doubt the designs for the latter work will provide a lasting thoroughfare, still, such expensive works are far beyond the requirements of this colony at present. We should study economy more than we have done, and reform the system of designing public buildings and reduce reckless expenditure. In some places small buildings have, I think, cost £600 or £700, where they could have been erected for £200. I do not agree with the motion altogether, but I certainly think something should be done to prevent a repetition of the mistakes

made in designing public buildings in different parts of the colony, for I think those who have seen some of the buildings must admit that there was some fault in the designs.

MR. MARMION: Most of the speakers seem to be under a misapprehension in regard to the committee. One hon. member would lead the House to believe that it should consist of architects, engineers, and scientific men, who would look into the designs of every public building, no matter with what care they might be erected, and that, further, the committee would advise upon the character of any railways which might be constructed. If the committee were appointed, it seems to me, they would advise as to the necessity of public works rather than as to their character. That is the purpose for which these committees have been appointed in the other colonies. I quite agree with the Hon. the Premier and the hon. member for Nannine that the time has not arrived for a committee of this description. Parliament is quite capable of dealing with any public works that may be introduced by this or any other Government, in this or in future years. We are all well acquainted with the requirements of the colony; and I am perfectly certain that any Select Committee appointed by this House would be as fully capable of dealing with any question, either of building or of constructing—even the construction of a railway—as would be a committee which, it is proposed, shall be free from Ministerial control. In order to be free from Ministerial control the committee would have to consist of members of the existing opposition, but it could not be composed of any members in either House because, they are all more or less amenable to Ministerial authority. Therefore it will consist of gentlemen not in Parliament. As to the complaint concerning designs of buildings, if the Government architects fail, they can easily be replaced by bringing pressure to bear upon the Government of the day. I do not think the time is ripe for the appointment of this committee, and will therefore not support the resolution.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The Premier has touched on the principle underlying the resolution; and I would like to speak in regard to the accusations which the hon. member for the Williams (Mr. Piesse) made against the Public Works Department. I think his zeal ran away with his discretion, and I defy him to cite any public building, and I do not except any con-

structed by this Government, that could have been done cheaper than it really cost, because all work is let under contract and the lowest tender is accepted. The fault lies with hon. members themselves, in adopting a cheese-paring policy when the Estimates are under discussion, so as to have erected in their own particular districts, buildings for £500, which cost £1,000. The result is that the estimate is always exceeded. Even then they are only partially built, and have to be finished piecemeal, as the hon. member has stated. That is what occurred at Newcastle over the building of the Hospital; but the hon. member will have no fault whatever to find with it now. The money voted for the work originally, did not go far enough, and the professional gentlemen would not go in until an operating room, a dead house, and other out-buildings were erected. I think the hon. member for Williams had in his mind when he spoke, two Post Offices which were built on the Southern line.

AN HON. MEMBER: What did they cost?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): About £1,000.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): It was found that, with the money voted, it was impossible to provide the necessary accommodation. The Government could have erected wooden buildings of four rooms and a verandah, but it is their duty to put up substantial edifices, and there is no building erected by the Government which is not substantial and which does not provide the accommodation required.

MR. GEORGE: What about your own offices?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): You have not given us money enough to do that work properly, but the House will be asked to vote a large sum to extend them. It is unfair to attack the Government architect, as he is one of the best in the colonies. The hon. member for Albany laughs, but only a short time ago he complimented me upon the design of the post office at Albany. The appointment of the suggested committee could not improve the designs of public buildings; but if the official ever fails to give satisfaction, the Government can get another man. The Government have to be guided in the matter by their professional advisers, in whom they have every confidence. The buildings constructed so far have been, on the whole, satisfactory. I feel sure hon. members will see that the proposal

of the hon. member for Beverley is premature.

MR. LEAKE: I am very glad that the hon. member for Beverley has brought this matter forward, and if he is not successful in carrying his motion, the ventilation of the subject in consequence of the motion having been tabled will do a great deal of good. The object of the hon. member was not, I take it, to merely have a fling at the Public Works Department, but rather to bring before this House and the country generally the general administration with regard to the public works of the colony, and, if possible, to suggest that there could be some improvement in existing methods. I do not think the hon. member who has the control of the Public Works Department will say that no mistakes have been made. I believe it is a fact, although I do not speak from my own knowledge, but I am informed that at one place a post office was built, and there was actually no letter-box provided. I do not know if this is a fact, but I am informed that it is.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Where is the place?

MR. LEAKE: I am also informed that in another place there are all sorts of complaints as to the position of the letter boxes, the telegraph rooms, and so on. What I regard as being the most valuable point in the suggestion is, that it draws the attention of hon. members to the fact that the time is approaching when this House will have to seriously consider, not merely the question of constructing public works, but of the railways, and to decide whether or not the railways of the colony should be managed under the control of a Board of Railway Commissioners, such as exist in the other colonies. I do not notice whether the hon. member considers whether the wording of his resolution will embrace this, but as the hon. member did not refer to this branch of the subject, it is probable that he does not intend the resolution to embrace the question of railways. The idea of the hon. member appears to be that there should be some more proper control over the administration of the Public Works Department, and there is no doubt we have heard several complaints, not only during the recess, but also since Parliament met. It did not appear to me that the hon. member desired to unnecessarily tie the hands of any Minister, but that he had really brought this subject forward in a spirit of fair criticism, and with a desire to assist and promote the best interests

of the country. It cannot be said of the hon. member for Beverley, as it would most undoubtedly be said of me, that he is moved to this resolution out of a spirit of factious opposition. I do not think there is really very much matter for consideration in the resolution at the present time, and at the same time I regret that there does not appear to be much possibility of the hon. member being able to carry his motion in proper form. If it is not forced to a division I sincerely trust the hon. member will not allow the subject to drop, but that he will direct his further attention to the work of the Works' Department. It is stated that the Civil Service Commission was doing this at the present time, but, so far, that body appears to have made such little progress that it is not in a position to enlighten us at the present time. If it is found in the future that any board of advice will be necessary, it will, of course, be most advisable for it to be placed beyond Ministerial control, but then comes the question whether the members of this Board should, or should not be paid. If anything is done now it will only amount to a matter of affirming a principle, and after the discussion that has taken place I have no doubt the hon. member will not see fit to press it. At the same time I think the matter is one of such importance that I would press those hon. members who take an interest in this question, and who have a practical knowledge of what is necessary, to ventilate the subject now that it is before the House, and give other hon. members the benefit of their knowledge.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): In justice to the hon. member for Beverley, I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that in my opinion he has been totally misunderstood by some hon. members who have addressed the House. The intention of the hon. member is not, I believe, to censure the Public Works' Department, or to seek to control its administration, or to control the acts of the Government in any way whatever. His idea appears to me to be that we should have a committee of advice, with more extended scope than that given to an ordinary Select committee. A committee, formed on the lines suggested by the hon. member, could be made of great assistance to a Government. It could be composed of men who have not only a practical knowledge, but extensive local knowledge as well, and who would be able to see into

projected works, and bring to bear considerable information with a view of ascertaining whether works were actually required, whether, if it were the case of railways, they would pay, and what would be the proper route for the lines to take. There are really very few hon. members indeed who are in a position to give all the local knowledge that may be required to enable Parliament to form a proper opinion. It is clearly not the desire of the hon. member that this committee should in any way control the Government, but after the Government brings down a list of public works it would be for this Committee to say whether they were necessary. If the committee found that certain works in such a list were not necessary they would report so, and I do not think it would ever be regarded as a vote of want of confidence in the Government, if the committee made an adverse report concerning any of the works proposed. As to whether the time has arrived when we should have such a committee in this colony, I am entirely in accord with the other hon. members who believe that it would be a premature step to take in our history. The present Parliament, it must be recollected, is a small one, and it is composed of practical men with a very large knowledge of the country and of its requirements. Members of the present Parliament have possibly a greater individual knowledge of the requirements of the country than will be possessed by members in future years, when there is a greater number of members, and when the country itself is much greater than it is to-day. It will be under these circumstances that there will be some chance of political jobs being perpetrated. It is not possible now, when the House is in its present state, and when the members are in the position, through their practical and local knowledge, of being able to exercise intelligent criticism. This may not be the case in future years, when the country and its interests are both of a more diverse character. The time for a committee, such as has been suggested, has not yet come. The fact that such committees have been found necessary in other colonies is to be seen in their being called into existence at all, and the further fact that they must be doing good work, is proved by the circumstance that if it were not so these committees would soon have had an end put to their existence. The circumstances are very different here to what they are in the

other colonies, and, at present, Parliament is quite capable of preventing any public works being carried out to suit some political motive, or to serve some political party, or to please some particular constituents. I hope it will be a long time before there is an alteration in this state of affairs here, and that the day is far distant when party political considerations will have any effect in determining the public works policy of a Government. Still, when it does come, then will be the proper time to consider the question of appointing a committee similar to that suggested by the hon. member.

MR. SOLOMON: I do not think the time has arrived when it is advisable that we should place the control of the Government in the hands of a committee of the kind suggested by the hon. member who has moved this motion. If the Government is not capable of carrying out the public works themselves, then they should not be capable of appointing advisers to do it for them. What I fail to see is where the responsibility will rest if such a committee is appointed. Are we also to look merely to a Board to give this House necessary information instead of getting it from the Government? To my mind this Parliament is quite capable of judging, when any public works are brought before it as to whether they are required, or whether it is necessary that such works should be performed. With regard to the remarks made on this subject by the Hon. the Director of Public Works, I cannot say that all the buildings that have been erected have been of a most substantial nature. There is one building I particularly desire to refer to, and to which my attention has been drawn. There is a schoolroom at Rockingham. I am informed that it is only a small building, something like 14ft. by 20ft.; but it has been placed there without the slightest convenience for the schoolmaster. It is reported that the rain comes in through the roof like a sieve, and the chimney-pot is actually only on a level with the roof, and that it is absolutely impossible to carry on the school. This may only be a small matter, but still it requires some attention being called to it, and I trust the Director of Public Works will look into the complaint. References have been made to the work of the Civil Service Commission. Well, I have to inform the House that the Commission is at present conducting a most systematic and searching enquiry into both

the Railways and Works Departments, and I feel sure that when the Commission comes to present its report, the members of this House, as well as the members of the Commission, will feel perfectly satisfied that the time and trouble taken over the work have not, by any means, been wasted.

MR. HARPER: I would just like to say one or two words. The strength of the opposition to my motion appears to be in the contention that such a committee as I propose is not required at the present time. I must say that I was a little surprised at the line taken up by the hon. member for Nannine. He usually places his views before us with such clearness and precision that I cannot understand the opposite attitude he assumes now. He has told this House that the reason for such a committee being called into existence in Victoria was that it was required to deal with a number of projected works of a political character, but that was not so. The reason the committee was appointed in Victoria was that a great deal of work had been improperly done, and it was found necessary to have a committee to prevent this being continued. With an overflowing Treasury, there is likely to be a great rush for these works in this colony, and it was having this in view that led me to make the proposition for the appointment of a committee before, instead of after the works were carried out. I am afraid that hon. members will find a mistake has been made in not considering this matter now. However, I beg leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

LICENSED SURVEYORS BILL.

THIRD READING.

Bill read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council.

LOAN ACT, 1891, RE-APPROPRIATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I rise to move the second reading of this Bill, and I think it is best that I should fully explain to the House the reasons for its being brought forward. In the Loan Act of 1891, a sum of £25,000 was provided for harbor works at Geraldton, and for a new jetty. In the arrangements for the construction of the Mullewa railway, only £100,000 was voted, and no provision was made for the necessary

works on the shore end of the jetty, so that it could be connected with the railway. It was then arranged that the sum of £11,000 should be appropriated from the vote for the harbor works, and it was expended on the construction of the buildings, the station yard, and the necessary works about the jetty required for the railway. Upon that understanding the Government has worked from the time the Act of 1891 became law right up to the present time, and about £12,000 has been spent on the jetty itself. To show hon. members that it was the intention of the Government all through to carry out these works to their full extent, I make mention of the fact that in the Loan Act of 1894 there was provided a sum of £10,000 for extending the harbor and jetty, although at that time we had £11,000 or £12,000 in hand out of the vote of £250,000 provided in the Loan Act of 1891. When, however, the Mullewa Railway was completed, the Public Works Department desired to obtain the amount that had been appropriated from the vote for harbor works. In this they were blocked by the Auditor-General, who was unable to authorise the work on shore being paid for out of the other vote, and hence it is necessary for the Government to come to the House and ask for a re-appropriation of the money. I do not think anyone can object to the Bill, because the Government has no desire whatever excepting to replace the amount it was found necessary to appropriate out of the vote for the Geraldton jetty. The intention of the Government, and the belief under which we have acted, are perfectly clear all through. The only reason the House is asked to approve of this Bill is to remove any doubts in the mind of the Auditor-General that this sum of £11,000 can be legally charged to the works on the jetty. I hope hon. members will not object to this Bill, and I would especially ask the hon. member for Geraldton not to oppose it. The Government is acting in a perfectly *bona fide* way, and has always reserved the £11,000 for the purposes stated, in addition to the vote of £10,000 in the Loan Act of 1894. The Bill merely enables the amount already spent on works to be properly charged against the vote for the jetty works. At present it stands as an advance, and before it can be charged to the proper account it is necessary for the House to pass the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Bill passed through Committee without discussion, and was reported without amendment.

Report adopted.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration in Committee resumed upon the new Clause proposed by Mr. James, namely—"Where any occupier is "by the Council to, or does pay, "any rate or instalment of a rate "due or payable, or of which any portion is "due or payable in respect of the premises "occupied by him for any period prior to the "date when such occupier took possession of "the said premises, such occupier shall be "entitled to, and may forthwith require and "sue for payment of and from the landlord of "the said premises of the rate or portion of "rate so due or payable, together with all "expenses, payment of which has been required "from, made by, or is enforceable against such "occupier," put and negatived on the following division:—

Question put and division taken, with the following result:—

Noes 18

Ayes 8

Majority against 10

Aves.	NOES.
Mr. George	Mr. Burt
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Clarkson
Mr. James	Mr. Connor
Mr. Leake	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Morau	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Randall	Mr. Hassell
Mr. Wood	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Simpson (Teller.)	Mr. Loton
	Mr. Marmion
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Piessé
	Mr. Richardson
	Mr. H. W. Sholl
	Mr. Solomon
	Sir J. G. Lee Steere
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. R. F. Sholl (Teller.)

New Clause negatived.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

DEPOSITING STONE IN RIVER AT ROCKY BAY

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I

move that the message from the Legislative Council be taken into consideration, but I say at once, that I am not in accord with the opinions expressed by the Legislative Council. "That it is desirable that no more stones sand, or rubbish, be thrown into the river at Rocky Bay by the Government." If it were at all practicable, I am sure I should not desire, and I believe hon. members generally would not desire, to throw any stones or rubbish whatever into the river. But we have embarked upon great works at Fremantle, and part of the project for carrying out those works is to obtain the stone from Rocky Bay. No doubt when hon. members go down there, they will regret to see what was once a picturesque spot, made to wear so utilitarian an appearance. All the picturesqueness is a thing of the past, and the appearance at Rocky Bay, with which we were so pleased years ago, has all been destroyed. Nothing can now bring back the beauty that existed three years ago. The only question to be considered now is, whether throwing refuse into the river is really doing any great damage to the river? It seems to me it is all a matter of cost; because if we do not mind the cost it will be easy to carry the refuse somewhere else, rather than throw it into the river. I have had the matter under consideration, and have had reports from the Engineer-in-Chief, who informs me that to begin and carry out a new scheme, or to make new arrangements with regard to the removal of the refuse, will involve a very large expenditure of money. The proportion is four to one. Four tons of rubbish and sand have to be removed to one ton of stone. I am informed it would mean very great expense, and considerable delay. It would require, I believe, five or six times as many trucks as are now being used. I think the Engineer-in-Chief said it would require 250 extra trucks, and some more engines, to do what is now being done by throwing the stuff into the river. The increase of cost would be something like six-pence a yard.

MR. GEORGE: There must be some mistake in that.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not know anything about the mistake; the information I have is that it would cost sixpence a yard more, and would also cause considerable delay. It would be six months before the works would get into full swing again. We should have to import trucks, or else build them, and

in the meantime the Harbor Works would have to be at a standstill. I take some exception to the resolution of the other House on such an important matter. It seems to me that due consideration was not given to the work that has been going on at Fremantle for the last year or two. The matter was hurried through and sent on to this House. I think before this House sanctions a resolution of this kind it should have more information on the subject, and should appoint a Select Committee to go round and see how far the interests of the country would be interfered with by the adoption of a resolution like this. For my own part, I do not like the idea of throwing sand and rubbish into the river; but the Engineer-in-Chief says it could be easily removed again, if need be, at a cost of about a penny a yard, by the Premier dredge. If it were necessary the Premier dredge could excavate a straight channel on the south side of the river in a very short time. I do not go so far as some, and say there is no filling up of the river, but I do think that the practical men I see before me will not stop the works at Fremantle—to which we are all looking forward with so much interest—because of a small encroachment upon the north side of the river by this sand and rubbish being thrown there. We have all seen the work going on there for the last two or three years, and no one has thought of moving in the matter, as the members of the Legislative Council have done in this resolution. I am quite sure it has not received the consideration it deserves, seeing it is such an important matter, and if this House is at all inclined to favour it, I would urge upon hon. members the desirability of referring it to some committee, in order that evidence may be taken upon the subject. Hon. members can easily see if this resolution be adopted here it will upset the arrangements of the Government for carrying on the harbor works at Fremantle, and will delay the work for six months. I consider the game is not worth the candle; but if the House thinks otherwise, then I think the matter should be thoroughly investigated before the House assents to a resolution like this, which creates both trouble and expense.

MR. RANDELL: I made a trip, last Saturday, to the scene of operations and Rocky Bay; and the opinion that I formed was, that though there was some encroachment upon the river, it was not serious. There is a considerable depth of water there, and as the hon. the

Premier pointed out, it will be absolutely necessary to dredge a channel through the spit at Preston Point, as no vessel of any size could get round the point at Rocky Bay. That will be necessary for the river traffic, but I think it would be a very long time before the channel would become so narrow as to hinder boats plying up and down. There may be increased difficulty for yachts, and other boats, that need to sail, because they will have a little less room to move in, to get round the Bay. I was certainly impressed with the difficulty there would be, if the stuff could not be thrown into the river. I was assured by the Engineer-in-Chief that the cost of removing it again, if need be, would be very trifling. I think he said less than a penny a yard. He certainly said it could be removed again at very little cost, by the dredge, if it were found necessary so to do, or if the material could be profitably used elsewhere. I do not know how far any freshet in the river might affect the sand and stone being thrown there, for it is not all sand. So far as I could see, the water was not acting very much upon the debris, through stone being intermixed with the sand. I do not think a freshet would make much impression upon it. I scarcely think there is any necessity to interfere with the operations of the Engineer-in-Chief at the quarries at Fremantle. I was very much struck with the large amount of stone in the sand; it seemed in some places to be in layers all along. I enquired if it were so in other parts of the world, and they said no, that was the first instance of the kind they had ever come across. There was one advantage in it in that it was much easier to blast than if it were all rock, though if it had been all rock they would have got more stone for use, which would have compensated for the extra cost.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I rise to move an amendment to the motion before the House. My object is to refer this matter to a Select Committee. I think it is a matter of sufficient importance. First of all, it is serious enough, as far as the river itself is concerned. I think, however, it is more desirable to have a Committee for another reason. Upon the site I have in my mind for the railway workshops there is a valley, and I think the material now being thrown into the river might be used for levelling that valley; and for that reason I think it is worth the consideration of this House as to whether the wishes of hon. members

in another place might not be met, and useful work be done at the same time. As to any other departure, I would rather distinctly support the Ministry than stop the works at Fremantle. But if the debris can be used for the purpose I have suggested, we shall do two good things at the same time.

THE PREMIER: You have not the trucks to do it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The same trucks that throw it into the river will throw it where I want to have it thrown.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: They will not hold sand.

MR. GEORGE: How do they hold it to throw it into the river?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Men use barrows to throw it into the river.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I move as an amendment that the question be referred to a Select Committee, consisting of the Hon. the Commissioner of Railways (Hon. H. W. Venn), Mr. Marmion, Mr. Wood, Mr. Simpson, and the mover.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The amendment proposed by the hon. member is nonsense. I feel sure that the hon. members of this House, as a whole, will be able to decide this question themselves. I regret, at the present moment, that this question has come on at so early a stage this evening. Had I known it would have come on, I should have been prepared with some diagrams, which would have been an object lesson, so that hon. members could see at once the exact position. Rather than accept the amendment, I suggest that we report progress until to-morrow, when I shall be able to have drawings and diagrams here, showing the exact position of the river frontage; and I will give the exact figures. The hon. member for Nannine stated a few minutes ago, that the same trucks would move the sand.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I never said anything of the kind.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I understood him to say, that the same trucks removing the sand would remove it elsewhere. But we have no trucks to remove it. The proportion as, has been pointed out, is four tons of sand and rubbish, to one ton of stone. If hon. members would go down and see for themselves, as the hon. member for Perth did, they would see at once the real position. I feel sure the diagrams I can bring to-morrow will enable hon.

members to deal with this question better than they can at the present moment. I move we now report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Motion to report progress put, and division taken, with the following result:—

Ayes	15
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Noes	7
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Majority for	8
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AYES.

NOES.

Mr. Burt
Mr. Clarkson
Sir John Forrest
Mr. Harper
Mr. Hassell
Mr. Leake
Mr. Loton
Mr. Moran
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Randell
Mr. Richardson
Mr. Simpson
Sir J. G. Lee Steere
Mr. Venn
Mr. Lefroy (*Teller*.)

Mr. Connor
Mr. George
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Marmion
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Wood
Mr. Moss (*Teller*.)

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

THE SPEAKER left the chair at 6.27 o'clock P.M.

At 7.30 o'clock the House resumed.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE MOTION.

THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

MR. LEAKE: Sir, I move "That the policy of the Government, as announced upon the Education Question, is not satisfactory to this House, nor in accordance with the opinion of the people of this Colony." This resolution Sir, might perhaps have been expected to come from some other hon. member than myself; but in the exercise of his discretion the hon. member, to whom the privilege of moving this resolution would in ordinary circumstances have fallen, has not thought fit to propose it; and I say now that I do not bring this motion forward as a mere private motion, but as an expression of opinion of those members who sit on the Opposition side of the House. I have been deputed to move this resolution and I do so readily. It was suggested by an answer which was given a few evenings ago by the Hon. the Premier, to a question which was asked by the hon. member for Nannine, as to whether it was the intention of the Government to bring in a bill to amend the Education Act by abolishing the present system, and establishing a national system of free, secular and compulsory Education. The Premier's answer to that question was:—"The Government does not propose to deal with this

question at present." Further, the hon. gentleman announced that if it should be necessary to make any alteration in the law, which would affect certain interests, the subject would require to be approached only after the fullest and most careful consideration, with the view to dealing honourably and equitably with the interests which have been created. In that answer, I submit, there was a distinct avowal of the intention of the Government not to interfere with the Education Question. If hon. members will carry their recollections back to May of last year, when the hon. the Premier addressed his constituents at Bunbury, and also to the debates of last session, they will be reminded that on both occasions the hon. gentleman expressed himself definitely on the Education question, and there and then expressed his determination not to alter it. Circumstances demand that this question, which has been before the country, should be settled with no uncertain voice, and I think it is in the interests of the House and the country that it should be finally determined without any delay whatever. In the debates of last session, it will be remembered, that divisions were taken upon two distinct proposals. The first was proposed by the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson) to the effect that it was undesirable to further extend the system of State aid to Assisted Schools. That resolution was negatived by three votes only. Upon that occasion I did not vote. I will explain my reason in a moment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You said that before.

MR. LEAKE: I shall do so no doubt to the satisfaction of the Hon. the Premier. Subsequently, the Government brought in a Bill to alter the system of Education. Upon that occasion I did vote. My reasons are these. During my candidature at Albany, I expressed an opinion that I had not at the time made up my mind on this question of Education, and said then I was in favor of leaving the question alone. Acting up to that principle and to that statement, I did not vote on the motion of the hon. member for Geraldton. The result of the division was certainly to leave the question alone: but was that the desire of the Government? I say it was not, for within a few weeks, almost within a few days after the narrow division upon the motion of the hon. member for Geraldton, we find a determined effort made by the Government to make a material alteration in the law

relating to Education. They then sought to increase the grant in aid of the Assisted Schools. The Government then, did not leave the question alone, and although on the previous occasion I had voted in accordance with my publicly expressed determination to leave the question alone, when I found that the Government—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You did not vote at all. You say you voted.

MR. LEAKE: Thank you for the correction. I did not vote because I desired to leave the question alone, but the Government forced the hands of every hon. member. They brought forward a Bill, and it is not the duty of any hon. member to sit and discuss the terms of a Bill, but refrain from giving an expression of opinion. Inasmuch as that Bill sought to materially alter the Education Act, I determined, still with the idea of leaving the question alone, to vote against the measure. I did so, and I am happy to say that the Bill was thrown out by the casting vote of the Chairman. Thus the opinions of hon. members were forced, and it became necessary for myself and everybody else, to determine what line should be taken on the question. I cannot consistently and repeatedly tell my constituents, the public, or hon. members, that I have not made up my mind upon any question. I have made up my mind and I have not changed it; and it is because I have made up my mind that I am willing and anxious to move this resolution. By reason of the action of the Government, this question of Education, although previously an important one, became a burning question. It led to a certain amount of agitation during the recess. It induced, or fostered, a more or less unsettled state in the country and in the electorates. Strong feelings were expressed, and if we seek for evidence of an exhibition of feeling, we need only consider the recent elections, when the hon. member for the Murray and the hon. member for North Fremantle were returned, both of which elections were fought out on the Education question.

MR. CONNOR: No.

MR. LEAKE: I am sorry I did not make myself heard to the hon. member.

MR. CONNOR: State facts.

MR. LEAKE: If anyone ought to be in a position to know, it should be the hon. member who has challenged my assertion, because if he did not contest the North Fremantle election himself, I am not far wrong in say-

ing he did so as the deputy or agent of another. Not only have certain electorates expressed a definite opinion on this question, but with the exception of one, or certainly not more than two isolated instances, the Press of the country are in favor of an alteration in the Education Act in the direction of abolishing the dual system. Is there an hon. member who can deny with a clear conscience, that the country is not in favor of abolishing the dual system? So far as I am personally concerned, I do not care what hon. members on the Ministerial side of the House think of my action in this matter. I have no doubt that many of them will refer to *Hansard*. I shall be quoted, and perhaps misquoted, and if not misquoted, misinterpreted. Whatever happens, I am content to let this question remain as one between myself and my constituents, not hon. members of this House. If my constituents disapprove of my action in this regard, is it open to them, when the question crops up, to reject me at the next election. If hon. members can take any pleasure in quoting my observations in *Hansard*, I shall gladly listen to them, and I am certain that if they will not only study what I have said on this question, but on all others, they will reap a certain amount of advantage. I am prepared at this moment to face an election on this question; indeed, one of my particular objects in forcing it before the House and the country, is with the idea of a dissolution, in order that I may announce my views upon the subject, and to see whether or not they coincide with those of my constituents.

MR. MARMION: Have you made up your mind?

MR. LEAKE: I cannot hear the hon. gentleman. The principle of this resolution is not so much to obtain an alteration in the law, as to get an expression of opinion upon the question. If it were carried it will not alter the law, although of course it would be proper that the law should be altered in accordance with the resolution, and if the Hon. the Premier in his wisdom, thinks fit to pray for a dissolution on this question, it will be greatly to the advantage of everybody.

AN HON. MEMBER: Especially the hon. member.

MR. LEAKE: I say the Government in this matter are inconsistent. The Hon. the Premier, whom we must regard as the mouth-piece of the Government—although we know

there is a split in his Cabinet on this important question—has, from the first, announced his intention of maintaining the present system of Education. Were they not inconsistent after that avowal, when last session they introduced a Bill to increase the grant to the Assisted Schools? If the principle was necessary last session, it is necessary now. Why did not the Government come forward with a resolution or a Bill such as that of last year and ask the House to pass it? Because they are frightened of the consequences. Is it right that this question should remain unsettled? Is it right that this condition of unrest, and disquiet and religious controversy should be allowed to arise and to continue? Can any one say feeling has not been expressed in the country? Do we not know that, from certain quarters, many bitter things have been said, that certain Associations, political and otherwise, have been formed, in order to do what?—to maintain the present system, that system which the Government last year, after having first of all said they would maintain, endeavoured to alter, but were defeated in the attempt. Let the question be settled at once. The more we delay, the greater danger there is of its not being amicably settled, and in the interests of all parties concerned. This session we hear the cry of vested interests. That was not the cry last year. We heard nothing about vested interests then. They are a secondary consideration, a bolstered argument, adduced in order to divert attention and in order to avoid if possible, the necessity of touching the question, as the Government attempted to do last session. Last session they told us they had the statutory right to increase the grant. Now, certain sections of the community demand that increase. But notwithstanding the statutory right which was argued for, notwithstanding the demand which has come from a certain quarter, we find that the Government dare not tackle the Education question. And if it is not settled now, if this motion is not carried—and here I ask hon. members to mark what I say—if it is not settled now, it cannot be for three years, without a dissolution. That is of course assuming the Government are true to their public utterances. Whether the Hon. the Premier will think fit to alter his views—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Like you.

MR. LEAKE: Whether the Hon. the Premier

will think fit to alter his views, a contingency which is by no means remote, we shall not have this question settled for three years; and is there any hon. member who will dare to say that it is advisable that this question should be held over our heads for so long a period? Surely it is in the interests of those who support the Assisted Schools and everybody else, to see it settled once and for all. There is no doubt—and I am certain I have the support of the majority of hon. members in this—that the dual system of Education is doomed, and the sooner we know under what circumstances that doom is to overtake the system, the better it will be for everybody concerned. It is objected, and I have no doubt that during the debate it will be objected, that the motion is one of want of confidence in the Government. It is a vote of that sort, and if such a vote were ever justified, the present occasion justifies this, for when we find an important political question not only before the House but before the country, attempted to be evaded by those who have the control of affairs, it is time that some pressure is brought to bear to force those gentlemen not only to a proper conclusion, but to a determination to settle, once and for all, a much vexed question. If this is a want of confidence motion, can anyone tell me how a motion dealing with the Education Question can be framed so as not to amount to a want of confidence motion? I cannot imagine that the Government can regard any interference with this question in any other light than as a want of confidence. Suppose hon. members on this side of the House had brought in a Bill to amend the Education Act, would not the debate on the second reading have been treated as a test question? Would not that Bill, if it passed, be practically an expression of want of confidence in the Government, particularly, not only after the avowal of the Government, but after their action in regard to it? Perhaps there are several hon. members on the Opposition side of the House who will not vote for this motion, because it is a vote of want of confidence—and I regret to have to say, but I do say so, and deliberately too—that there are hon. members on the Opposition side of the House whose sympathies unfortunately are not with the Opposition. They rather strengthen the hands of the Government, and will possibly do so on this occasion, as well as upon other occasions, when an adverse vote against the

Government is proposed and divided upon. Why is there nothing suggested on this question? I said just now that it was because there was a split in the Ministry upon it. There is no doubt about that. Hon. members know that only two members of the Ministry really approve of this question, and they are the Hon. the Premier and the Hon. the Commissioner of Railways. We know that the Attorney General, if he dared to express an opinion, would vote for the abolition on the dual system. We know that the Minister of Education has expressed his views emphatically upon the subject, and we had the vote of the Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands with the Opposition last year. The hon. gentleman is now a member of the Ministry, and it will be interesting to members of this House, and to the country, to notice what the hon. gentleman has to say with regard to the question. It is matter as to whether or not he will swallow his principles, or stick to his seat. Sir, I heard a hiss just now in the House. I do not know where it came from, but I think it came from the gallery. I hope it will not occur again.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I did not hear it.

MR. LEAKE: I was remarking that there was a split in the Ministry, and that that split results in a majority in favor of the Opposition. We know that one gentleman, the Colonial Secretary, who resigned from the Ministry since last session, is a pronounced opponent of the present system.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He brought in the Bill anyway.

MR. LEAKE: Yes, he did. I think the opponents of the present system have to thank him heartily for having forced the hands of his colleagues, and the wonder is that his colleagues did not see through it. The House and the country did. If the Premier says he will maintain these schools, to be consistent he must go on and increase the grant; but he cannot do that, as the House has told him that they will have none of it. He dare not, therefore, tackle the question. If he says on the one hand he will maintain these schools, the country says on the other hand he shall not, and when it comes to a question, evenly balanced though it may be, for the electors to decide the matter once, and for all, let those who attack me and say I have changed my views, give me an opportunity of going back to my electors to announce my views upon it, and let the

Government send a supporter down there to defeat me if he can. I am prepared to meet my constituents on this question and I desire to do so. What will be the result, some hon. members will ask, of an adverse vote being carried against the Government? Really it surprises me to hear some hon. members talk about the terrible and dire results which may follow upon the termination of office of the present Ministry. If there were a dissolution, or if the Government were to resign, there seems to be an impression that the business of this country must be suspended, that the whole economy of the Service will be upset, and that no business could go on for months. If the Government were to resign to-morrow, the business of this country would go on as well. It would be necessary, it is true, to vote supplies. Whoever heard of a Government being turned out of office except during a session of Parliament? The boast of the present Ministry always has been that they will resign when the popular voice is against them. We have heard that so often, that hon. members will regard it, by this time, as an empty platitude. Resign! indeed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Never.

MR. LEAKE: I do not think they are ever likely to do so, unless a distinct and emphatic vote of want of confidence is carried against them. I ask hon. members to discuss the merits of this question irrespective of the results, irrespective of the consequences which it may bring upon those gentlemen who are afraid to fearlessly and honestly tackle it. What is it to say, when we are fighting for a principle, that it hits harshly one or two hon. members? Must we always be told we can go a certain distance and no further? Must we be told that we must submit to this particular rule for ever? Must we be constantly barking and never biting? Are hon. members to be frightened because the Premier says—"If you pass this resolution, we will resign?" Hon. members who are guided by such feelings as those are blind to their sense of duty, and when they consider such an emphatic question as this one is, they must have regard to their public utterances and pledges. There are hon. members who have pledged themselves to vote against the continuance of the present system of Education, and how can those hon. members—and I notice the hon. member for West Perth (Mr. Wood) is looking at me—how can hon. members and that hon. member, in

particular, say they will not vote with me on this motion, and at the same time tell their constituents they have been consistent? I say this for the benefit of the hon. member for West Perth. I know him well enough to feel assured that he will not go back upon what he has said in public, and that he will support the resolution.

MR. MARMION: He won't go back to the public.

MR. SIMPSON: You'll go back to them before long.

MR. LEAKE: We have heard it said more than once both in and out of the House, that no one can form a Ministry, outside the present Ministry, and that, I suppose, is going to be an argument against this resolution. Let principles go to the wind! Abandon everything you have said! Forget yourselves because you may turn the Government out. Was there ever such an insult to the constituencies as to say they were returning men who were not capable of holding office? So far as I understand politics, from the little experience I have had of them.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (HON. S. BURT): Hear, hear.

MR. LEAKE: It seems that every man who goes before a constituency is doing that constituency and himself an injustice, in seeking election, unless he thinks he is capable of taking office at some time. The man who says he will not take office, practically tells the country he is incapable. If he is incapable he should not be returned to this House. I am happy to say that on the Opposition side of the House there is material for more than one Ministry, and one which would have the confidence of the country, more than I firmly believe the present Government has. An adverse vote! a vote of want of confidence! destruction of the Ministry! the idol of the House shattered! hon. members appalled at the downfall! Let me remind hon. members that if they are not careful, their idol may shatter them, and why? because hon. members have got, not only the voting power in this House to consider, but the voting power of their constituencies. The constituencies, I am happy to say, are alive. They notice the actions of their members, they are aware of their shortcomings as well as their good actions, and this motion, bringing as it does an important political principle prominently before the public, must be supported or opposed by hon.

members according to their consciences. I will, say, that of all the hon. members on the Ministerial side of the House, there are none more consistent on this question than the hon. member for Fremantle, the hon. member for East Kimberley, and the hon. member for Yilgarn. I admire them for their consistency. No one expects they will support this resolution, and I do not desire to say anything which would hurt the feelings of those hon. members, and if they regard this resolution as only asking for the establishment of an important principle, then they will hold me blameless of an attempt to create ill-feeling or disquiet. If this resolution does not pass, an instance of the overwhelming danger of excessive power will be furnished, because here we find the Government marshalling their forces and securing votes, not against the principle we are fighting for, but in order to keep themselves in office. The majority of the Opposition members are not actuated by any feelings which are likely to influence them in keeping the present Ministry in power, and they are free then to vote according to their consciences, and according to the opinions which they have expressed on the principle which the motion involves. That power of the Ministry to command votes will not work on this occasion, if hon. members are mindful not to perpetuate and continue a false principle. It will be perpetuated at any rate for three years, and is a principle which this House has expressed its disapproval of, in which action the House is supported by the country. If, unfortunately for Ministerial members, and fortunately for the Opposition members, this motion should be carried, the Government might think fit to resign. In that case members on the Opposition side of the House might occupy the Ministerial seats. If such a thing were to happen, we would at any rate have a speedy settlement of this question, and if the new Ministry, having done that and thus done the country a good service, were turned out, the present Ministry could be reinstated. I have refrained from making any attack upon the system of Education. I have made up my mind that the dual system is doomed. I have decided to vote against its continuance, and I can see that, unless the Government is forced by some such motion as this, they will never move. We must bring forward a motion of this kind in order to let hon. members know that we will not recognise personal feelings in

dealing with so important a question; and I do ask hon. members to be guided by the merits of the question and not consider the effect it may have upon the Ministry, for if this resolution is defeated, it will be because hon. members are fearful of its immediate effect upon their friends, and not because of its importance to the country.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Sir, I have listened with attention to the hon. member's speech, and I must say his language was not so fiery as I expected it would be. It was a very tame effort, and after so much notice of the motion had been given, and so much preparation for this terrible onslaught on the Government had been made, I am disappointed, for I expected a more severe speech, and much more stronger arguments. I noticed that the hon. member used the word "principle" very often, and before I sit down I shall endeavor to show how far he has stuck to those principles, which he is so eager that we should all respect. The impression conveyed to my mind in listening to the speech, was that it was an *ad misericordiam* appeal to the supporters of the Government and all those who are not his followers, to oust the Government, and place him and his few friends on the Ministerial benches. He was careful too, to address hon. members on the Ministerial side of the House by name, pointing out their duty to them in regard to this matter, and also their duty to their constituents. I would like to say to hon. members of this and the other side of the House, that I do not regard this resolution as having very much to do with the Education Question. My opinion is, I may be wrong, that the hon. member's desire is simply to hamper the actions of the Government as much as he can on this question, and to get, if possible, more sympathy both inside and outside the House in order to place himself in that position of prominence which he so much desires—the leadership of the Opposition.

MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I would like to ask what right he has to expect to be leader of the Opposition.

MR. LEAKE: May I reply to that, Mr. Speaker?

THE SPEAKER: Certainly not.

MR. LEAKE: I thought the Premier was asking me a question.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not know what the hon. member has done to warrant his being placed in that position, and he should bide for a while and not try to hoist

himself into a position which neither hon. members or the people of the country are prepared to entrust him with. I really cannot agree with the hon. member that there was never a time when a vote of want of confidence was more justified than it is at present. I am quite certain, and I only wish to make the statement and say no more about it, that the question of Assisted Schools, which is a part of the Education system of the colony, has not been placed before the country as a definite question. I do not want to say what would be the result, if it were; but the hon. member for Albany only gives his opinion upon it and not the opinion of the country. It has not been tested by the verdict of the country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Test it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member says "test it." No doubt he is anxious to get into a Ministerial seat himself.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think the hon. member is. In regard to my own opinion on the question, and I think it is shared by some of my colleagues, I may say, as I have said in and out of the House, that I have never been a great supporter of the present Education System. I have said over and over again that I preferred all children should attend the one school. I could not have my way, and I was not going to force people if I could avoid it. Now, Sir, the hon. member for Albany spoke of the pledges given by the Government on the question. He is very fond of trying to tie the Government down to a pledge; but the Government pledges are never broken as he breaks his. He is more pledged to his constituents on this matter than I am to mine. The hon. member is a renegade. He has broken his pledges and—

MR. LEAKE: Sir, I rise to order. Are those words Parliamentary?

THE SPEAKER: They are not proper words to use.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I withdraw them, Sir. It is well-known to the country and to this House, that the Government did not introduce the present Education Act. It has been the law of the land for the last quarter of a century, and has been in existence a longer period than any member in the House has been in Parliament, with the exception of the Hon. the Speaker and the hon. member for Fremantle. It certainly has age

on its side, and its grey hairs should be respected.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: This kind of age is rottenness.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Hon. members now desire to sweep this law away, but I do not think they care two straws about the matter. The hon. member for Albany only wishes to hamper the Government and to place himself in one of the Ministerial seats.

MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member did not tell the House that the present law had been in existence for 25 years, nor did he mention the interests which were created by it. He also omitted to say anything about the money it would cost to alter the present law, or whether he would sweep it away at once without any consideration. I may say that no one dislikes religious, or quasi religious controversies more than I do, and I do not like to have religion mixed up with public questions, or imported into political discussions; but so long as people are eager to get into Parliament, so long will they continue to take advantage of any differences that may arise, whether of a religious or social character, in order to assist them in attaining the object they have in view. I am not throwing out any charge against anyone. It is the same all the world over that men should take different sides on the questions of the day. In politics particularly it is the case, and if I, at election time, declared any views on the Education Question or any other question, my opponent no doubt would oppose my ideas. It is the same in Parliament. I know some hon. members who will vote for the hon. member for Albany's resolution, who, at one time in their lives, would have pledged themselves to the opposite. The hon. member who moved the motion knows very well he got into Parliament on what is called the Roman Catholic vote. He only got in by one vote, and I heard that a man, a Roman Catholic, was taken out of his bed, wrapped up in blankets, and carried to the poll to vote for the hon. member.

MR. LEAKE: True.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): And that is the man to whom the hon. member is going to redeem his pledge to-night. My own opinion is, that if it is desired by the people of this country that there should be a change in the existing law, there is not the

slightest reason why the people of the colony should not have their way; but I feel quite sure that if a change is desired in the law that has been in existence for 25 years, and under which interests have grown up, those who wish to alter the law will do it only after grave consideration. As I said in my reply to the question put by the hon. member for Nannine, the Government are bound to recognise that those interested in the Assisted Schools have vested interests which have been built up under the law of the land during the past 25 years; and therefore, should it be considered necessary to make any alteration in the law which would affect those interests, the subject would require to be approached only after the fullest and most careful consideration, with a view of dealing honorably and equitably with the interests which have been created. That is the opinion of the Government. I hope this question, when taken in hand, may be settled on an equitable and honorable basis that may be satisfactory to all parties; and no one will rejoice more than I shall if it can be so settled. My advice to the House is to leave the matter to the Government, and we will see if some arrangement can be made satisfactorily to all parties concerned, on an equitable and honorable basis.

MR. SIMPSON: It is all over. You climb down.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think the hon. member for Geraldton wants me to climb down. His occupation will be gone when this question is moved out of the way. This trouble has placed the hon. member in his seat here on two occasions, and if it continues it may place him in again. The Education Question has placed him in this House, and I am sure he does not want me to climb down by removing this cause of trouble in the country. He wants it to continue a troublesome question, because he sees a chance, not only of getting returned again to this House, but also perhaps of obtaining some other position. I have said on other occasions, and I say again here to-night, that I do not believe there is any wisdom or true statesmanship in trying to force people, simply because you have the power to do so. I believe true statesmanship consists in giving due consideration to all classes of the community—certainly to any large or important section—and that any large section is entitled not only to have its rights and privileges

respected, but even its prejudices should be considered. We know, after all, that those who principally take advantage of these Assisted Schools are the Roman Catholics; and it is all very well for some hon. members to think that because they represent three-fourths of the community, and the Catholics are only one-fourth, therefore these hon. members can afford to be high-handed and independent; but if these proportions of the community were half and half, how would it be then? I do not suppose we would then be able to settle the matter at all. I hope that under present circumstances wise counsels will prevail, and that there will be sufficient good sense and good feeling amongst all of us to agree upon some plan by which we may do away with strife, and be able to arrange a settlement of the Education Question on a fair and equitable basis that will be satisfactory to all parties concerned. In dealing with this matter, I would like to refer to a point which is quite in accord with the arguments I have adduced. Take, for instance, the Ecclesiastical grant. We know the churches have no legal right whatever, based on the law of the land, to a continuance of that grant; that they have merely had an annual vote of the Legislature, passed year by year; and in any year this House might wipe out the annual grant to the churches, and there would be an end of it. The grant not being made under any law, the churches would have no cause to say the grant had been illegally dealt with. The churches have enjoyed the grant a good many years—long before I came into this House—yet in the present session we have agreed to bring the Ecclesiastical grant to a close, and how are we going to do it? The general feeling of this House is that we are going to do it by a generous recognition of the interest which the churches have acquired during the continuance of the annual vote—not an interest created under any law, not founded on Statute, but merely by a vote passed year by year by the Legislature. If under these circumstances, we are going to act generously, and fairly, and liberally to the churches in this country, by recognising that an interest in the annual grant has grown up during its long continuance, then, I ask, are we going to act less fairly, less liberally, less generously in the case of an institution founded upon Statute, which has been in existence as a law during the last 25 years, and under which large obligations have been incurred? Are we

going to deal less liberally, less fairly, or less generously in the case of an institution founded upon Statute law, than we are going to do in the case of an interest which is not founded upon statute, but whose emolument has been received merely through an annual grant of the Legislature? [MR. LEAKE: Certainly not.] I am glad to hear that. I will make a note of it. I have now dealt with the question as far as I intend to deal with it on this occasion, in regard to the position of Assisted Schools under the law, and I am now going to turn my attention to the hon. member for Albany—the man who believes in high principles—the man who wishes us to keep our pledges. [MR. LEAKE: Now, don't be too hard.] No; I will tell you the absolute facts. The hon. member has been in this House about a year—that is about the extent of his experience in this House—and I think his career has been a most extraordinary one. Most people like to be considered consistent. I have often said—and I am sure everyone will agree with me—that those who are inconsistent, and those who are dishonest, and those who do not tell the truth, would rather do the right thing than the wrong one, as a matter of choice. I am sure the untruthful man would rather speak the truth, because his untruthful statements get him into so much trouble, and he has to twist and turn in all directions when trying to evade detection. Therefore I give the hon. member for Albany credit for having the ordinary feelings of human nature, by assuming that he would rather be consistent than inconsistent. I think it was Lord Byron who said—

“We love the virtues which we cannot claim;” and I am sure the hon. member loves those virtues if he cannot claim them. [MR. LEAKE: Try Dr. Watts.] The first speech the hon. member made in this House was delivered on the 30th July, 1894—just about a year ago—and what sort of speech was it? First of all he opposed the Coolgardie railway; then he opposed loans generally, contending that we should not go borrowing money at all, and he described the Coolgardie railway as a line to Bayley's Find and to the Hampden Plains Syndicate land. He also said he was in favor of privately-owned railways, and opposed to State ownership; indeed I rather thought he must have been retained on behalf of some railway syndicates, and when he was pressed on the point he gave us to understand that it was Mr. Lush's company he was interested in

speaking upon. The hon. member then referred to the Bridgetown railway, and it is curious that when addressing his constituents at Albany he had stated that he would vote for that railway, though after he got elected to this House he wriggled out of that election promise and broke his pledge—the usual thing with the hon. member. He also spoke in opposition to the Fremantle harbor works. In fact, it seemed to me he was opposed to everything which the Government proposed. That was his first start. Then in regard to his attitude on the Education Question, I would like to read, for the information of this House, what the hon. member said at Albany when speaking as a candidate seeking the votes of electors. This extract may not be so strong as something I shall read further on, but it shows pretty clearly what he thought when asking for the votes of electors. He said:—“You must remember that only last session of Parliament they passed an Act which seemed to meet with approval. Now, I say, before you attempt to do anything more with the Education Question, give that system which you have now introduced a fair trial. I, for one, am in favor of leaving the system as it exists alone.” Is the hon. member leaving it alone to-night?

MR. LEAKE: No; because you won't leave it alone.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): On the 13th November, 1894, this is what the hon. member said in this House, after I had twitted him on his inconsistency:—“When I declared myself upon the hustings I said I was in favor of leaving the Education Question alone. I say so now. That is my opinion still. Am I then, inconsistent, when I rise in my place this evening and tell members that I intend to support this amendment, because I consider the Bill before us proposes a material alteration in the present law? It is because it makes an alteration in the present law that I shall vote against it.” He went on to say in the same speech: “I have listened with interest to the remarks made this evening, and nothing that I have so far heard has compelled me to alter the opinions which I expressed on the hustings, in favor of leaving the present system alone.” Is the hon. member leaving it alone to-night? He went on further to say: “I always understood that all the Assisted Schools asked for was to be left alone in the enjoyment of what they are now receiving

"I never, until I came into this House as a member, understood that the Assisted Schools were crying out for an increased grant. . . . Leave the Assisted Schools alone." He went on again to say: "I desire to be true on this occasion to my electioneering utterances." Is the hon. member true to his electioneering utterances to-night? He also said: "The Premier may laugh, but he cannot show that I am not true to them. I declare again that what I said in Albany was that I am against any alteration of the present educational system. . . . My desire is to see the system continue, and for that reason I intend to support this amendment, which leaves the Assisted Schools exactly in the same position as they are in now." Is the hon. member wishing to have this system continued to-night? The hon. member is silent on that. He further went on to say: "If every member is as true to his pledges as I am—if members opposite were as true to their pledges as I am—they would rather leave this question alone and not seek to meddle with it. That is what I desire to do, and that is why I am going to vote for the amendment." If the hon. member is not ashamed of having spoken in that way, twelve months ago, and of speaking as he has done to-night, then it is no use my using words in regard to him; but it may be of use that I should show to members here and to the people of the country that the hon. member for Albany has broken his pledges given to his constituents, and his pledges given to this House; and then, if they wish to allow the hon. member to get into these seats, which he is using every endeavor to do, they will know what to expect from him. I do not intend to say much more. I regret I am not in as good trim to-night for speaking as I should desire to be, although it is an easy matter to meet an attack like this from the hon. member, because he lays himself open to retort in a very easy way. I do not know what the hon. member thinks of his motion on this matter, but I should be ashamed if I acted in that inconsistent way. I have been a good many years in political life, as you all know, but I have never gone back and twisted right round from what I had said at a previous time. You may look through the *Hansard* reports, but will not find that I deliberately turned round within twelve months on what I had previously said

on any question. I think the hon. member's duty, if he has so changed his opinion, is to go back to his constituents for election, because he has broken the pledges he gave to them, and yet to-night he asks us here to trust him. Is any one going to trust the hon. member who breaks his word in the short space of twelve months? Is he a man to be entrusted with the Government of this country? I say he is not a fit person. [MR. LEAKE: I am thoroughly done.] He comes here and asks this House to follow him in the very opposite direction to what he advocated last year. I can very well understand that a man may change his opinion on a question—that is right enough—but there is a difference in changing an opinion. If the hon. member had been the follower of some one who was leading in the matter, and who had changed his opinion, the hon. member might then excuse himself in some degree for following such a change; but the hon. member is not content to follow the wisdom of the hon. member (Mr. Randell) and those who sit near him—he wants to lead, and is not content to follow. He rushes into the fray, and by breaking all his pledges given, not only on the hustings, but also to members of this House and to the country, he is now trying to lead on this question. I have said all I have to say. I hope hon. members will not regard this matter in the light of a religious question. The Government are willing to deal with the Education Question, and if they can find any means to allay this agitation that is going on, this setting of class against class, and putting friends one against another—if the Government can do anything to allay this dissension which has arisen only during the last year or two, and which has been stirred up by some one in the country who is trying to put dissension between different sections of the community—if the Government can do anything to sweep that dissension away, and at the same time do justice and right to those who have built up their interests under the law of the land, then no one will be more anxious than I, and those associated with me, to try and bring that great good to pass.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The logic of the Premier amounts to this, that the hon. member for Albany is inconsistent, therefore it is desirable to let the present system of Education remain as it is. The connection between the premises and the conclusion is not very clear. I desire to speak to this

question altogether apart from the suggestions which have been thrown out by the Premier, or even by the mover of the motion. Principles are principles, and they are for ordinary as well as for extraordinary occasions. I have been fighting this question for 30 years, and I have not come to Western Australia to go back upon principles I have always contended for elsewhere. I am not rising in my place to-night to speak to this motion for the purpose of ousting the Ministry. The question of the Ministry is with me a very secondary question to this question, and if the Hon. the Premier thinks, as he has announced and has absolutely stated to-night, that the object which I should have in supporting the motion now before the House is because I desire a seat upon the Treasury benches, he never made a greater mistake in his life. I have not a particle of ambition to sit on the Treasury benches; and though the Premier smiles because he does not believe it, that is so much the worse for himself, because it is true all the same. But apart from this question of the Ministry, I desire simply to discuss this motion on its merits. If a vote of mine puts a Ministry out, that is quite subsidiary to the question upon which I may speak or vote. I am not looking at the question from that standpoint. I am utterly unconcerned as to the consequence of the vote I give upon any question when it is a question of principle. Looking at the question as it stands, as already referred to by the hon. member for Albany, we discussed the Education Question last session, and a critical vote was given in which the Ministry came very near a defeat. A second motion came before the House, in which the Ministry were defeated; and since that time there have been two elections in the country which, despite anything that any one can say, were distinctly fought on the Education Question. The result of those elections, if they are to be understood at all, was the direct voice of the people, as far as these two electorates are concerned, adverse to the continuance of the dual system. It is, as I contend, an ineffective system. We have come now to a stage of this colony's history in which we shall have to take our place and stand in line with the sister colonies upon this and many other questions; and, as far as the other portions of Australia are concerned, the line which has been accepted by the people of those colonies is that the education of the children shall be undertaken by the State, and that

the education which is given shall be free, secular, and compulsory. Hon. members who sit on the Treasury benches seem to be surprised that, at this stage, there comes a desire to change a law which has existed for 25 years. Is it strange that in the population that has risen from 38,000 to 90,000, and is still rising, the great bulk of those persons have come from other colonies—colonies where this question had been a burning one, and where it has been fought out on its merits—is it surprising that there is more than one half of the people who have lately come to this country who are accustomed to and pledged to a different system of education, and that there should be a desire for a change? Does not the Premier know that if the vote of the people of this country were taken to-day, openly and fairly, more than two-thirds would vote for free, secular, and compulsory education? If he does not know that, it is time he did.

THE PREMIER: You don't know it any more than I do.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The whole question is a matter of opinion, and my opinion is worth perhaps nearly as much as that of the Hon. the Premier—not worth quite as much, because there is not as much of it. The system, however, is ineffective. I am not concerned at all about the question of the Ministry; and, as far as I am concerned, the present Ministry can stop in their places till the crack of doom, if they will govern the country rightly. I have no desire to displace the Ministry unless they are doing wrong. If there is one important question in connection with Government, in these enlightened days, it is that the children of the State, every child in it, rich and poor, shall receive a good, sound, practical education. I contend that the system which exists in Western Australia to-day is absolutely ineffective. It does not give to the children a good, sound, practical education. And if this system, after having been tried for 25 years, as the Premier tells us, can still be charged with inefficiency, surely there is nothing remarkable in desiring a change. The Premier will remember that on the Address-in-Reply, I urged that this question should be dealt with. I said then, and say again now, that never in the history of this country will there be a Ministry so capable, so far as their strength and position and opportunities are concerned—never a Ministry stronger and better able to deal with

a difficult question like this, than the present Ministry; and if this is to be a difficult question, the present Ministry are strong enough, and they ought to have courage enough, to face this question. As to my own action, after having dealt with the question from that standpoint, and allowing to the Ministry a considerable time for dealing with it, I come and ask the Ministry again, "Do you intend to deal with the question?" And to that I get an emphatic "no." [THE PREMIER: I said "Not at present."] Well, that is an emphatic "no," for you did not give any indication as as to how or when you would deal with it. Then, to justify myself in the position which I occupy to-night, I want just to explain why, at this particular time, I press the question on the House. The question, as it presents itself to me is this: There have grown up in this country vested interests in the dual system. Those vested interests must be respected. I am the last man in this country to deal with a vested right and do an injustice. I take it that before the Ministry bring in their Budget, and before they declare what they intend to do with the surplus revenue which they possess, it is right to urge on the Government the desirability of dealing with this vastly important question of Education, in order that they may appropriate as much of that surplus as may be necessary for doing justice to the vested interests which have grown up under the dual system. I say this to the country,—I say this to the vacant chair of the Premier—I say this to the Ministry to-night: that the primary object I have in bringing this question forcibly before the House at the present stage is that justice should be done to the vested interests, before that money of the surplus is allotted to other purposes. If it had not been for that, I would much have preferred to leave this question to be discussed later in the session; but, satisfied as I am that the dual system cannot be mended and must be ended—satisfied as I am that the voice of the country is absolutely against it—satisfied as I am that the system will go by the board the first time the country is appealed to on the question, I say no better chance than the present, while there is a large surplus of revenue to deal with, can be expected to arise for making the necessary change—while things are calm, while the Ministry are strong, and while they have sufficient money available for doing justice to all interests. I would like that this

question should be discussed to-night absolutely on its merits—that the question as to the Ministry should be left out—and, above all things, that the question of religious differences should be left out. My desire is to leave out the side issues; for, as far as the Ministry are concerned, that is a red herring drawn over the trail, simply to divert attention. Like the Premier's attack on the hon. member for Albany, there is a good deal of talk in it, but very little logic bearing on the real question. One would think, from the argument of the Premier, that it is better to be wrong in order to be consistent, than to change one's opinion in order to be right. I hope I shall never be right on that system. The man who changes his mind, even though he does it twice a week if necessary, is the man I believe in, rather than the man who sticks to his opinion for the sake of consistency. Let us be on the other side of right; let us vindicate the questions which are right. Of course if the Premier is prepared to say the hon. member for Albany is not sincere in changing an opinion, that will be another matter; but in the case of the man who changes his opinion and has the courage to say so, and who stands on the side of right, surely it is better that he should be inconsistently right than that he should be consistently wrong. Then there is the objection that this is an inopportune time for this motion, because it raises a question of want of confidence in the Ministry. I should like to know a time—I have never found it yet here or elsewhere—when it is opportune, in the opinion of the Ministry of the day, to propose a motion of want of confidence in them. Will the Attorney-General, for instance, be good enough, for once, to give us a date when it would be perfectly convenient to the present Ministry to have a motion of want of confidence brought in against them? Perhaps, in addition to choosing the time, they would like to select the member who should move the motion—in which case the motion might come on a couple of thousand years hence. Whenever I look at this Ministry, whenever I hear this funny talk, I am reminded of those oft-quoted lines of Tennyson:—

Men may come, and men may go—

But the Forrest Ministry go on for ever.

I have no objection to their going on so long as they go right. I do think it is unfair—at any rate, I feel it as an injustice—that because I am compelled to speak here in defence of a principle I have contended for

during thirty years, I am to be charged with hampering the Government. I appeal to hon. members whether any speech I have delivered, or any vote I have given, has been chargeable with any such motive as that. I think even the Premier will admit I have given support to this Government when I thought they were right. I have supported them over and over again, and have seen personal thanks recorded in *Hansard* for my doing so. To say, therefore, that I am supporting this motion for the purpose of hampering the Government or to jump the Ministerial seats, is a palpable injustice, and as such I take it. The Premier says this is a question that deserves grave consideration. I admit it deserves grave consideration, but will there be a House in the future—is it likely that under any franchise in the future—there will be a House more calculated to carefully consider and justly deal with this question? I am certain that, if the Ministry think over it, they must know there never was a time when absolute justice could be done to this question more completely than by the present House.

THE PREMIER: You don't give us time. You are in such a hurry.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If we had not brought this motion forward, you would have gone on for ever. If ever there was a Government desirous of leaving things alone, on this question, it is the present Government. I do not think it is at all desirable to enter into certain phases of this question, for the reasons I have suggested. The Ministerial question I care nothing about. The religious question is one I hope we shall not go into, for there is nothing I hate more than a contention of that kind. Of course we cannot avoid, at times, the necessity of discussing questions from that standpoint, but in Parliament I hope we shall think as little of it as possible; and speaking thus early in this debate, I entirely omit all reference to that question. I have simply to deal with the question of the efficiency of a system of education which will meet the wishes of the people, a system of education which more than two-thirds of the people in this country now need, and have been accustomed to before they came here, and which I conscientiously believe two-thirds of the people desire. I should be untrue to the principles I hold if I were not to support this motion as it stands; and, consequently, I rise early to speak on the question, and to say as little as I can say, consistently with the convictions

which I hold. Leaving out altogether questions which might raise painful debate, I say the system is inefficient. I say that now, while we have a financial surplus, is the time to make an alteration; and, before that surplus is allotted, let us deal, and deal justly and equitably, with those vested interests that have grown up. My one object in bringing this matter before the House, by a question put to the Government early in the session, was in order that it might be discussed and dealt with, and that the Premier might be free to deal with a portion of the surplus, and arrange a righteous and just settlement of this question, taking proper consideration of the vested interests that have grown up. If there had been no surplus to deal with, I would rather have left the Education Question to a later period of the session. That is my sole object for pressing the matter as I do upon the present occasion.

MR. RANDALL: I would like to say a few words upon this very important subject, which is of very great importance to myself, and in which I have taken a somewhat prominent part in regard to the abolition of the dual system. I am quite in accord with the opinion that the time has arrived when this question should be considered and dealt with. I feel assured the opinion of the country is maturing every day, and growing stronger on the question; and I believe those hon. members who have quoted the recent elections are right in saying those elections were fought out on this question. Indeed, sometimes when I think over the matter, I am surprised at the rapid advance this question has made in the politics of the country; and I am sure there will be continued agitation and strife in the colony if this question is not dealt with at the present opportunity. It is well known, however, that I believe the motion tabled by the hon. member for Albany is not the way to approach this question. I feel as strongly as he does that the question ought to be dealt with, and I feel as strongly as the hon. member for Nannine has expressed himself to-night that the present Ministry are in the best position to deal with it, while I feel equally as strongly that they have a right to choose their own time, within certain limitations. I recognise and I honor the position which the Premier himself has taken upon this question. It is well known that at the last general elections this was not a burning question in the constituencies to any great

extent. I quite admit that the elections in Perth have altered the features of the question altogether, and I believe they were the starting point of the progress that has since been made on this question. No doubt the three seats in Perth were won on this question, and that they have had a large influence on the opinions and feelings of the country. So you will find that election after election in the country will be won in this way, and that these expressions of opinion will be adverse to the dual system. Indeed, we find that in a vacancy occurring in a constituency of the Upper House, even a Roman Catholic candidate is not prepared to advocate a continuance of the dual system—that he is not in favor of it, though at the same time he is not quite in favor of adopting the system which some of us desire, and he has mentioned a system in America which I believe approaches somewhat nearly to our present system of education. It is because I believe the victory really has been won, and because I believe the Forrest Ministry are at present realising that the country is desiring this change; it is because, too, I read between the lines of the answer which the Premier has given to the question of the hon. member for Nannine, that they are prepared to deal with the question by and by, that I think the present motion is not opportune. I can quite agree with the opinion expressed by the Premier that the question should be approached with the greatest care and consideration. I give due weight to the statement which the Premier has made to-night, that this is a system which has grown up under Statute law, and that it should be approached deliberately; therefore I have no sympathy with the desire to force the Ministry to take up this question at the time which is not opportune to themselves. Still, I want to express my most decided opinion that it will be their duty to take up this question, and that they can do it with less disturbance to the political relations of the colony than if it were left to the next general elections, should the Ministry remain in power till then, as doubtless they will. If left till the next elections this will become a question that must disturb the constituencies throughout the country, and then it must promote strife and dissension amongst neighbours generally. I think the present system is altogether out of place. I think it is just a question of arrangement. I hope those who have desired to retain assistance for their schools are

realising that public opinion is against them, and is growing stronger and stronger, and I hope they will acquiesce in that opinion, and be willing to come to terms with the Government and Parliament as to the conditions upon which the aid now given to them shall cease. They are, no doubt, and every hon. member will realise that they are, interested, and ought to be considered, and that they should be dealt with fairly and equitably. It is because I think the question deserves the fullest consideration that I have not been able to give my adhesion to the motion which has been placed before the House to-night. I did not think it was a subject which demanded a resolution of this kind—a vote of no-confidence in the Forrest Ministry—for the reasons I have already stated, because I believe there is in the mind of the Government at present, a desire to take up this question and deal with it at the earliest opportunity. That is how I read the answer given by the Premier, and I hope I read it aright.

MR. SIMPSON: There is not another man in this country reads it that way.

MR. RANDELL: I happen to know there are many others who do hold that opinion. Another reason I had for not joining my friend here, who wishes to force the question to the front with somewhat injudicious haste, was because I felt that an adverse vote in this House might jeopardise the question to some extent and might postpone its settlement to the end of the present Parliament, and that is a result I should be sorry for. My opinion is that the matter should be dealt with, at any rate, in the next session of this Parliament. I should like to have a distinct promise to-night on the subject, but I have an impression on my mind that it is the intention of the Government to deal with the question this session. If it is not dealt with by the Government in this, or the next session, the delay will be productive of great ill feeling and a deal of mischief in the country. I believe many hon. members on the other side of the House are with me on this point. That is the way I would deal with the question. I believe an hon. member will move an amendment, later on, something to the same effect. I only rose now to express emphatic desire to have this question settled, and I know no one will dispute my honesty of purpose, and I have it very near my heart. It gives me pain, to some extent, to have to vote against the motion of the hon. member for

Albany and others, who I believe are strictly honest in their desire on this question, and wish to force it. I desire more to vindicate the position I occupy with regard to this motion, which I look upon not so much as directed to the Education Question, as it is to a vote of no confidence in the Ministry of the day.

MR. SIMPSON: I am very glad indeed, Mr. Speaker, that we shall be able to send throughout the country the good news of the debate of this evening, and I know that it will be with a feeling of satisfaction that the people of this colony will receive the news that the great question of Education has been settled by the proceedings in this Assembly this evening. We have been told, Sir, that the Premier has really promised to take the matter up. So far as I am concerned, there is no doubt in my mind that the Forrest Government will take up anything so long as they can stick where they are. I was particularly struck by the fact that in his speech the Premier did not say very much about the Education Question. He seemed to devote the whole of his important time, and to sacrifice all the dignity of the great position he holds, to a full five and twenty minutes of a lid and liberal abuse directed against the hon. member for Albany. The worst of it was this abuse was not clever—there was no wit in it. He lost his temper and scolded. There was a good deal of what I might call “the old lady” about it, and from any point of view it cannot be said there was very much in what the Hon. the Premier had to say. The Premier suggested the other night that there was little in *et tu* arguments, but he has, I am sorry to say, used plenty to-night. I do not altogether agree with him in his methods. Somehow or other I have managed to drop across an official pamphlet, entitled, “The speech by the Hon. Sir John Forrest, K.C.M.G., Premier and Colonial Treasurer, to his constituents at Bunbury, on May 23rd, 1894.” This deliverance to his constituents was just on the eve of the general election, and in it he presented the policy of the Government, which everyone was waiting for with breathless interest. He had there reporters from all over the colony to take down the precious words as they fell from his lips—and give him the opportunity of correcting them afterwards. In this speech the Hon. the Premier referred to the Education question, and he said, “There is another subject I would like to touch on very shortly. Perhaps it is necessary I should say something on behalf of the Government

with regard to our system of education. “In 1871 —.” You see how he went back to the old Education Act of England, although he was careful not to say that the English Act had been amended twenty times since then.

MR. MARMION: Not in the way you want it. There was no alteration there.

MR. SIMPSON: Let me tell the hon. member that he will find it a very wise policy to never prophesy unless you know all about it. However I find the Premier said: “In 1871 the present Education Act was passed, and from that time to this it seems to have worked fairly well.” A little further on he said to his constituents: “My advice to you, and my advice to the people of this district and the colony, is to leave the principles of the Education Act, as regards the Assisted Schools, alone.” In his speech to-night the Hon. the Premier alluded to the action taken by the hon. member for Albany as being inconsistent. Now, to my mind, the action of the hon. member for Albany has been singularly consistent. Indeed I venture to say it has been remarkably so. On the other hand, the inconsistency of the Premier himself on this question has evidently been equally remarkable. In fact, Sir, I think that I am right in saying that he has presented us with the most marvellous example of “Jump Jim Crow” that we have ever had in this country. He has not only turned out, and turned in, and turned about, but I really believe he has succeeded in turning himself inside out. Now, Sir, what I want to more particularly draw attention to here, is the fact that we have really had no definite promise on this subject from the Hon. the Premier. It has been hinted that there will be proposed a friendly amendment to this motion of the hon. member for Albany. Well, let me say that there has been a good deal of coquetting going on with regard to the Education Question. Various gentlemen on the Government side of the House found themselves face to face with awkward pledges to their constituents. They know full well that the demand of the people of this colony is that the true, the free, the great National system of Education must be placed on the Statute Book of the colony, and on the other hand they want to know how they can have this and keep the Forrest Ministry in as well. Some of them seemed to think the Education Question could go and the Ministry remain. Those hon. members know, and I should like to impress the fact upon them, that

once the people of this country get hold of the fact that some members were likely to sacrifice the great principles of the National Education system, simply in order to keep the Ministry in, a good number of them will have the opportunity of spending the rest of their political career in a period of oblivion. It is understood there is going to be an amendment—a diplomatic amendment—drawn up by the diplomatic members of the House, for diplomatic reasons, and with the object of allowing the Government to climb down and meet the wishes of, as well as save, their supporters.

THE PREMIER: I have not seen the amendment.

MR. SIMPSON: I have heard of a man who said he had not seen a certain motion, and he did not see it for the simple reason that he turned his back to the man who was reading it.

THE PREMIER: It has never been read to me.

MR. SIMPSON: As I said before this amendment is to be diplomatically drawn up so that the Premier can make a step down, and allow the matter to come on in spite of what he said before. The reason why the Premier has made, or proposes to make, any promise is simply to be found in the fact that he has had to give way to the pressure from those on his own side. The Hon. the Premier has been the recipient of a lot of sound advice on this question. He has always been in the habit of treating any advice I have given him with a considerable amount of acerbity, but he has to admit to himself that the advice given him on this very question before the House is about the soundest advice he ever got in his life, and I am pleased that he has found it somewhat advisable to give a little attention to the voice of the people. The hon. member for Nannine was quite right when he said that the growth of public opinion on this question has been marvellous, and I am more than glad that to-night we are able to send it forth throughout the country, that beyond the question or shadow of doubt, the vexed question of Education has really been settled. The dual system has to go. There can be no mistake, Mr. Speaker, in the handwriting on the wall. It is there plainly and unmistakeably, and it tells the people that the settlement of this question is to be on the basis of equity, of justice, and of respect to the legal or moral rights of all parties who will be concerned. The manner in which justice can best be

secured will be a matter for the most careful consideration and discussion, but whatever is done must be done in a spirit of equity, liberality, and justice to all. I have had a good deal to do with this question. I have taken a large interest in it wherever it was possible. I felt, Sir, that in this matter of a national system of Education, I had a sacred duty to perform. I have endeavored to perform that duty without flinching. One gentleman has said to-night that I ran an election on this question, and gained my seat. He should have said that I ran the question and that it nearly lost me my seat, for the simple reason that I was then one of those who was fighting for what was regarded as the losing cause.

THE PREMIER: You said you would support the Government, and that is why you got in.

MR. SIMPSON: I never said any such thing, and, what is more, there was a good reason why I would not. That good reason was in the fact that I knew the Government were doing all they possibly could to have me defeated, although they may be surprised to find that I knew it.

MR. LEAKE: Why, you are almost as bad as I.

MR. SIMPSON: I have said I have had a good deal to do with this question. Well, Sir, I think there is one thing the House can do when the subject is before it, as it is promised it will be, and that is to give a most generous recognition of the great work done by the educational institutions that have been established and carried on here in the past. In this respect we cannot be too liberal. For my own part I view the great work done in this direction with feelings of the deepest respect and admiration. I do not believe it can be said of me that I have said one unkind word, one single unkind syllable, as to the existing Educational establishment, and I really know of no disability or obstacle which ought to be placed in the Act that may possibly prevent a happy union and a perfect concord in the matter of the education of the whole of the children of this land. An idea has been brought forward—and I can only regard it as an idea that has been imported here from the old world—that even in a national system of education there should be placed invidious barriers between the children, but this could not be so in this colony, “as the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined,” and if there were any invidious barriers to keep the

children apart from each other it would mean that a bad feeling would grow up between them through life. There should be no bar to the harmonious education of the youth of this colony. This subject was referred to on one occasion by a man who was greatly connected with the progress of this question in Australia. In 1881 Sir Henry Parkes succeeded in carrying through the New South Wales Parliament the principles which the great majority of the people in this colony are fighting for now. In referring to the success of the Act in the colony, the great legislator I have referred to said: "Our system is so completely non-sectarian that any parent—let his faith be whatever it may be—can send his child to the public school without the slightest fear that his child's faith can be tampered with. And what more is wanted? And I must say a word or two—and I say them the more readily because I believe there is a very large proportion of this community belonging to the Roman Catholic Church—I must say a word or two with respect to our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens. I cannot comprehend why Roman Catholic parents cannot send their children to our public schools. . . . I cannot see, when we have of necessity to grow up together to perform the same duties in society, to arrive at the same ends of life—I cannot comprehend how it need interfere with the religious faith of the Roman Catholic child when he attends school to read, to sum up figures, to understand a little of the geographical features of the earth, with Protestant children—how that can unfit the child for receiving his religious faith. . . . We must rub shoulders together, we must work in the same workshops together, we must follow the same plough, we must man the same ships together, we must use the same tools in erecting our houses together—and why should not our children sit side by side in being taught to read?" This is the spirit I should like to see imparted into the public schools of this colony when the Government bring in this measure as they have promised, and as I believe they intend to. I would also like to say this, that I am very pleased indeed to see the efforts—and the successful efforts—made by the Minister of Education to extend and improve the system now in force in the colony. He has done good work, and laid the foundation of work which

we will find to be invaluable later on in the history of the colony. I am glad to see the action the House has taken on this subject to-night, and I cannot help saying that by securing this National System of Education—free, compulsory and secular—for the people of the colony, we will have done the greatest public good ever accomplished here, the greatest boon ever written in the statute books of the colony, and the brightest page in the *Hansard* of Western Australia. I would like to look upon the schools under this new system of education as intellectual granaries, through whose open doors would flow the streams of enlightenment, of useful knowledge, of powers of invention, and of manufactures, so that in the years to come our children may be a credit to, and well worthy of the great Empire to which we belong. I congratulate the country on having a man whose regard for the public interest is so great that he has tabled this motion to-night and has been the active means of compelling the Forrester Government to acknowledge the fact that the demand of the people is that this much vexed question shall be settled, and to promise that it will bring in a Bill to provide for the introduction of the system the people of the colony are demanding.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I do not intend to extend the length of this debate in any serious degree. My action on this question at present, and the position I have occupied in the past in relation to it appears to have struck the hon. member for Albany as being somewhat curious. He says he fails to see how I can reconcile my past action with my present position. All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that if my explanation is as inefficient, lame, and miserable as the one he put forward to excuse his own inconsistency, I shall utterly fail to reconcile my present position with my past professions. The hon. member appeared to me to studiously avoid the pages of *Hansard*. Everyone else appears to have also avoided *Hansard* on the subject. I am going to pursue a different course and propose to quote *Hansard* even if it is against myself, which I know will give the hon. member for Albany every satisfaction. The first occasion I had anything to do with a vote on the Education Question was in connection with a motion brought forward by the hon. member Geraldton on October 8th, 1894. The hon. member then moved. "That,

in the opinion of this House, it is undesirable to further extend the system of State aid to Assisted Schools, and I said:—"I do not know that there is any reason why members should give a silent vote on this question, if it is only just a few words to set forth the reasons why we intend to vote for or against it. I take particular note of the tenor of the motion, and I find that the crux of it is contained in the two words, 'further extend'—that is whether the present system should be further extended. Whether the motion goes far enough is a matter of opinion. and I cannot enter into that question at present. The motion as it stands affirms that 'it is undesirable to further extend the system of State aid to Assisted Schools. Therefore, I take it that anyone who votes against the motion votes for what is tantamount to saying that it shall be further extended. I see no getting out of that. If we cannot affirm that it is not desirable to further extend the present system, we simply mean to affirm that it is desirable to further extend it. I think it is well for the House to consider that point seriously, not only as it affects the present, but also the future, for we are not dealing alone with the present, but also the future, for we are not dealing alone with the present, but the further extension of the present system." When I voted in favor of this motion that it was not desirable to extend the State aid to assisted schools, I supported a principle which I again affirm now. The next time I had the opportunity to say anything on the question, was when a Bill was brought in to increase the grants to State and Assisted Schools by a large amount. I then said:—"I do not intend to say much on this subject. It is one that has been threshed out on several occasions. I desire to look at it from a common sense point of view, a plain and simple point of view. I cannot help thinking that the relation between the State and these Assisted Schools is something in the nature of a contract under which the State agrees to pay them a subsidy of £1 15s. per head on condition that they comply with certain regulations and stipulations. While that agreement lasts—and it is only a tentative or conditional agreement durable only so long as Parliament considers it ought to last—it ought to be adhered to by both the contracting

parties, and I cannot for the life of me find anything in this contract which gives these schools the right to expect that the amount payable to them by the State under its contract with them shall be increased upon any sort of condition, or under any circumstances." I am still of that opinion, and quite firmly so, too. It is a proper argument that the position of the Assisted Schools and the State is very much in the nature of a contract. If they have no legal rights no one can say they have not moral rights under this implied contract, and, while I oppose the increase, I would not dream of ruthlessly taking away the subsidy or acting without regard to the vested rights which the Hon. the Premier has properly said were created by statute. That has been my action in the past. I say that under no circumstances is it inconsistent with my action at the present time. If anyone were to ask me as a direct question if I was in favor of the dual system of education, I would most emphatically answer no, and I would go further, and say that I am doing my uttermost as a member of the Ministry to get the system altered. Whatever influence I have had I have used, and I do hope it will bring good results. I have not found any great opposition so far in furthering that end. The difficulty in the way is really as to the best way to bring the matter on. We have to acknowledge that these Assisted Schools have vested rights, and that under the Statute law they have expended large sums of money. They have acted under a contract, and the Government cannot ruthlessly sever the contract without due and just regard to the vested interests. Not to do so would be asking the Government to commit a greater breach of faith than it would care to perpetrate. Another consideration is as to the time, and when any alteration should take place. This is the main question that influences the consideration of the Ministry now. The hon. member for Albany and the hon. member for Geraldton have both declared that the growth of public opinion on this question has been simply marvellous. This in itself is ample proof of the justification for a change in the ideas of the Ministry on this question. They, too, must see the handwriting on the wall, like other people. While the question lay dormant, and while there was no agitation on the part of the public, or decided expressions of opinion, the Government did right to leave the question alone.

The member for Albany was himself in favor of leaving the subject alone a little while back. As soon as it is evident that the majority of the people desire new legislation, the Ministry would be untrue to the country, and untrue to their position, if they failed to recognise the position. The Government have given careful thought to this question, and if it was worth while, the Premier could produce documentary evidence to show that he had the matter under his serious consideration before the question in regard to it was asked by the hon. member for Nannine. I am prepared to say for myself that if the proposal of the hon. member for Albany was a direct one in favor of the National Education system I would vote for it. That would be acting in accordance with my private opinion. Although one may be a member of a Cabinet, there could be no reason on a question of this sort, why I, or any other member, should not exercise our private convictions. There is no dissension in the Cabinet over this. For my own part, I am fully satisfied that the Government does intend to bring in a measure to be in accord with the wishes of the House and of the people. What I would like hon. members to bear in mind is that they must be ready to accept compromises. You find that in our everyday dealings there are all sorts of compromises between men, and the same thing had to apply to politicians.

MR. LEAKE: The Premier denies that.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I think the weakest and most pitiable part of the address of the hon. member for Albany is where he says he has been studying this question for a great number of years without being able to make up his mind.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: His is a large mind.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): Evidently, and it occurred to me that such a large mind must take a great deal of making up. He was many years in making up his mind, and then it was to change it. However, I am not going to trouble myself by copious arguments to attack individual members. These recriminating charges of inconsistency do not do any good, for the simple reason that if members cared to do it, it would be found that no member of the House was consistent. Every man thinks he is the only consistent person living. The hon. member for Geraldton was somewhat

unfair to the Ministry in his remarks. He said that the Ministry was ready to do anything the people wished, so long as it meant keeping their seats. Now, I don't think that is a fair construction to put on any change of opinion on the part of a Ministry. If a Government changes its policy because there is a demand on the part of the public for certain legislation, it should not be charged with changing its opinion merely to remain in power. It might just as well be said that in any movement of the Opposition the sole reason for it would be to try and get the Ministerial seats for themselves.

MR. SIMPSON: The Premier charges us with trying to do that about every twenty minutes.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): There may be something in the charge. However, as I said before, we want to deal with this great question in a satisfactory manner, and that is not going to be done by hon. members proposing a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry. It appears to me that those who support this motion are quite prepared to risk the sacrifice of the principle in order to get the Ministerial seats. There are many members of the House prepared to vote strongly on the Education Question if the issue is put direct to them, but they are forbidden to do so by the reason that their support would jeopardise the Government. It is sure to be shown that members who do not vote for this motion will be inconsistent, but as I said before, charges of inconsistency do no good, and members have a perfect right to say they do not approve of the manner in which the question has been brought forward. It appears to me that when certain members were elected with pledges on this question, the hon. member for Albany made himself a leader, and has adopted what I think is a trick in order to make other members appear in a false position. If the hon. member had proposed a substantial resolution on the Education Question alone, I believe he would have had a fair prospect of it being carried. It is not my place to say whether it would have been carried. As it is, no one can possibly say that if a vote is taken on the proposal of the hon. member for Albany, and it is a vote taken on the Education Question. There may be some who do not care twopence about the Education Question who would vote to put the Government out on any pretext, and on the other hand many members thoroughly

staunch on the Education Question would not assist to put the Government out upon it. The motion does not get to the real issue. If there were really only an honest desire on the part of the hon. members opposite to test the feeling of the House on the Education Question they would have brought the subject forward in a very different manner.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Many a Ministry has been defeated on less important questions.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): Possibly there have been. However, what the hon. member has done here is to make it a question not of the Education Act, but whether the Government should be kept in or turned out. To many members there are hundred of questions that appear to them to be of more burning interest than that of education. We must admit the conviction that the present system of education is absolutely and truly obnoxious. If anyone would be suffering under persecution, or under great disabilities, or if feelings were trampled on, or if religious convictions were interfered with, it would be quite a different matter; but it is not such a burning question that it should be settled, or upon which the Government should go out. Here the boot is on the other leg. If anyone is likely to suffer it is the minority. I do not think that in the whole history of politics there can be found a case where a large majority allowed themselves to be persecuted. In this matter the rights and interests of the minority have to be protected, and when the Government take the matter up, as I believe they will very shortly, I trust there will be a careful, just, and honorable regard for the interests of the minority, and such steps taken that no one can suffer in the way of persecution. I would like to impress this on honorable members, that whenever the question is settled we want that settlement on such a basis that it will not always be rising up to meet us. We do not want the whole clamor and agitation continually arising, nor do we want any section to be in a position to come forward and say they have been harshly dealt with. Let us deal fairly and even generously with those who may be affected in the hope that their good sense will bring about a state of good feeling that will last for ever. After the question has again quietened down let it rest. When we proceed to settle this question there is no reason why it should not be pro-

ceeded with in a perfectly amicable and friendly way, but let it be on such a basis that there will be no chance of raising the ghost of the Education Question, or the slightest possibility of any persecution towards any who might be affected.

MR. GEORGE: Mr. Speaker, if the Forrest Government will only look upon this debate to-night in the right way, I think they will find they have every reason to congratulate themselves, and the country they represent upon what has taken place. If for one thing more than another, it would be because it has given this House an opportunity of letting it go forth to the country that the Education Question is about to be settled—in fact, that it is already practically settled—and that the basis of settlement is to be the fair, equitable, and generous treatment of all who have any interest in the subject. What I was sorry to see this evening was that the Premier cannot approach a question of this sort, without regarding a resolution as a personal attack against himself. The diatribe directed against the mover of this resolution was unnecessary. It had little bearing on the question of education, and, on a great and important subject such as this is, it ought to have been beneath his dignity to have spoken in such a foolish, and I may say, peurile way. If there is one thing more than another very plain to my mind, it is that the Premier is himself responsible for this question being brought up to-night, and that was by the way he replied to the hon. member for Nannine's question earlier in the session. That hon. member, Sir, merely asked the Government if it would bring in a Bill to amend the Education Act by abolishing the present dual system and establishing a national system, free, secular and compulsory. What did the Premier say in reply to the hon. member? His reply was like many of those replies I get from the Director of Public Works. The Hon. the Premier fenced with the question, and that is why it has had to be brought before this House to-night, with such happy results. If the Premier had frankly informed the House that it was the intention of the Government to deal with the question, whether it would be in this session or the next session, or any definite time at all, then, Sir, we would have had no necessity whatever for the motion of the hon. member for Albany, and the question would not have been raised to-night.

THE PREMIER: Question.

MR. GEORGE: I have stated my opinion, and I have very good grounds for what I say. If the Premier had given the proper reply to the hon. member for Nannine, we would not have had the question raised now.

THE PREMIER: You go too quick for us.

MR. GEORGE: Ver, possibly, for the reason that I come from a country where the fight on this question has been raging for years. I have fought the question myself for a great portion of my life, and twenty-five years ago we beat the Bible Eight people on this very question.

THE PREMIER: Oh, that was in England. That is not here.

MR. GEORGE: I have only mentioned it to show that the question is one I know something about. However, we are now dealing with Western Australia and with the people of Western Australia and their children. I, for one, do not intend to give a silent vote on this subject. I sincerely hope no member of this House will do so either. If we have any views at all, let us be men and let us declare them. Do not let us be afraid to let the people of the country know what the opinions of the hon. members are on this subject. Don't let us have any beating about the bush. If we pretend to be men, let us be manly, and not afraid to say what we think. One of the leading writers, and one of the greatest authorities on questions of political economy, has well said that the latter portion of a wise man's life is spent in correcting the false impressions created in the earlier portions of his life. While I regard this statement as a statement of truth, I fail to see anything inconsistent in the action of the hon. member for Albany. The fact that he had been years debating this subject to himself before he made up his mind, and that now he had settled the question to his own satisfaction, and meant to act upon it, shows most conclusively that he belongs to the party of progress. The Premier, on the other hand, has not been progressive on this question, but has retrograded. The Premier should have shown the same progressive spirit on this question that we have admired him for in others. If this agitation has done nothing less than that it has brought the Government to see that the question of the Education Act must be settled—and settled too on an equitable basis—much good will have been done. It is one of the best steps we have taken towards securing a National System of Education, so that the children of this country will

not grow up ignorant or like little savages, and a National System of Education must be free, compulsory, and secular. Free, Sir, because in a country like this, poverty should be no bar to a child receiving a proper education to fit him as a future citizen; compulsory, because it should not be in the power of parents to debar any of their children from receiving the benefits of a good education for the sake of their being able to earn a mere pittance if kept away from school; and secular, because you can hardly find two persons who think exactly alike on religious questions. The question of religion should never interfere with the education of our children. There has been some reference during this debate to the two last elections that have taken place. One of these returned my friend, the hon. member for North Fremantle, and the other resulted in the return of myself. I can therefore speak fully as to the feeling of the people on the Education Question, and I do hope that this question will be settled before another election takes place. I say this, Sir, because the great historic Church fights tooth and nail for a continuance of the present system. I say, Sir, and I say it advisedly, for there is plenty of evidence to support me, that the representatives of that great historic Church do not care one jot what may be the merits of any man who might come forward, if he will only pledge himself to support a continuance of this dual system of education. If for no reason more than this one, I hope this Assembly will let its voice go forth that it intends to settle this question, and to for ever heal what rankles at every election now, like a festering sore. There can be nothing whatever in the argument that a National System of Education will in any way interfere with the religion of any of the children who go to the schools. I have yet to learn that it is impossible to give a child an ordinary school education without interfering with his, or her religious faith. That even the great church to which I have alluded does not think the system is impossible, is to be found in the way in which it conducts its own schools. Members will find that none of these schools have been built outside of the centres of population. Look at the Jarrahdale school, for instance. That is a school with about 90 scholars, and they are of all denominations, and the Roman Catholics do not seem to think

there is anything antagonistic to their religion in letting the children receive their education together. If there is no interference with religion in the country, why should any be feared in the centres of population? I say there should be no separate system of educating our children because of the question of religion. A man's religious faith is his own private affair, and something that should not be interfered with. For my own part, I do not care what a man's religion is, so long as he is fair and square in his dealings, and an honest man. I do not ask a man what his religion is, nor do I care. When we are twitted with trying to raise any vexed question of religion, the arguments for such a contention are found to be absolutely untenable. I do not intend to say much more on this subject. Any scheme for the settlement of this question will obtain support from me so long as it is a scheme based upon equitable conditions for dealing with those who are interested in the system now in force. I would not even see the present system interfered with, unless the change to be brought about could be secured justly and equitably. In a time like the present, when we are, as a colony, in the full stream of prosperity, is the fitting opportunity to deal with this question. The Hon. the Premier will shortly be delivering his Budget Speech, and I hope to see a portion of the surplus he will announce, devoted to the doing away of the old system of education. It has been said to-night that it is only recently that there has been any great agitation on this subject. Of course it is, and the reason is very plain. During the last few years our population has very largely increased, and I might almost say that the native population has been overwhelmed by the influx of people from the other colonies. These people who come here from the other colonies, agitate on this question for the reason that they have seen the benefits of a National System of Education in the countries where they have been living. We want people with families to remain here, but we cannot expect that if people are not able to have their children educated totally free from the question of religion. Now, Sir, I think the Premier will be doing a very graceful act indeed, and he will consolidate the confidence felt in him by members even on this side of the House, if he will take up this question without delay. I, for one, would be glad to see it, and glad to after-

wards support the Premier to carry out the great schemes we know he has in view for the continued advancement of this country. I say, Sir, that it would be a matter of great satisfaction, after what has been said here, if the Premier would definitely declare when, and how, he intended dealing with this question.

MR. LEFROY: I think, Sir, that this question of Assisted Schools and our present system of education has been thoroughly threshed out in this House, and through the country, on previous occasions. It is almost unnecessary for me to say anything at the present moment with regard to the motion that has been tabled by the hon. member for Albany. I think, Sir, that the motion is unnecessary, for the reason that in the reply given by the Premier to the question put by the hon. member for Nannine there was ample to indicate that the Government had the matter under consideration, and intended to deal with it. It is true the Premier then said that the Government did not intend to deal with the matter at that time. It appears to me that the words "at present" indicated that there must have been some intention on the part of the Premier to suggest that he did intend to deal with the subject later on. The hon. member for Albany, in bringing forward this motion, appears to me to be simply endeavoring to strike a blow at the dual system of education. He never referred to the question as to whether the system should be either free or compulsory, but harped continually on this dual system—that is the question of Assisted Schools against National Schools. Well, now, the hon. member for Albany asks other hon. members to be consistent on this matter. I could say some things about the consistency of some people, but I do not care to be harsh in reference to an honorable member who sits very close to me in this House. So far as I am concerned I propose to be distinctly consistent. I came into this House elected unopposed and with the confidence of those who elected me. I gave it as my opinion that we should not attempt to deal any blow at the dual system of education. I shall be consistent therefore in refusing to lend my assistance in dealing a blow at that system as is proposed in the motion of the hon. member. I consider myself, as I said before, that the question of the hon. member for Nannine and the reply that was given to the question by the Premier, are entirely satisfactory, not only to this House, but also to the people

who are interested in the question. That this is the case, I believe the hon. member for Albany will easily ascertain when the division takes place on his motion. This will be the proof that the reply of the Premier is satisfactory to members of this House—or, at least, to the majority of the members. Now, the hon. member for Nannine has told us that the settlement of this question is wanted by three-fourths of the people of this colony. He says that three-fourths of the people are in favor of doing away with the dual system of education. He bases that belief solely on a calculation of the numerical strength of the religious denominations.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not.

MR. LEFROY: He seems to be desirous of pitting the strength of one denomination against the others, for the simple reason that it is well known that the numerical strength of the Roman Catholics is only about one-fourth of the total population.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I was not using any calculation based in that way at all. I was taking my calculations from the new arrivals in the colony.

MR. LEFROY: I am not prepared in this way to deal a blow at a church for which I, at any rate, have the greatest respect.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Neither am I.

MR. LEFROY: I say, Sir, that no matter to what religious denomination one may belong, one can at least admire that church for having one of the most wonderful organisations the world over, and I think that, for that reason, if the church is not so powerful in numbers as other denominations in this country, we should treat it with respect, and that we should regard and respect the feelings of all those who may be opposed to us in their religious creed. I would also like to express my opinion that it has not altogether been due to the Education Question that certain members have recently been returned to this House, but that the reason is largely to be found in religious grounds. It ought not to be so, but in recent elections a man's religion has been an important factor in returning him.

MR. CONNOR: Yes, that it has.

MR. LEFROY: There are, unfortunately, grounds for believing that the feeling I refer to has arisen throughout the country, and hon. members can judge for themselves why this feeling has arisen. I think it is a most dreadful thing to do, or assist in doing, anything

that will bring a country like this into religious strife, and I am glad that the Government feel with me on this question. The Government have said that they are not prepared to deal with the question at the present time, and they have given reasons. With those reasons I am perfectly well satisfied. These Assisted Schools have been created by Statute, and we must have the respect for them, and for the law that brought them into existence. As I said before, I came into this House pledged not to deal any blow at the present system of education, and therefore I certainly cannot vote for the motion of the hon. member for Albany. He has told us to be consistent, and I am going to be consistent. Not only is the hon. member trying to deal a blow at the dual system of education, but he is taking an action which may possibly have the effect of arousing unrest and disquiet throughout the country. I came into this House and took my seat on this side of it. I held certain views when I came here, and I have consistently supported those views. When these views have agreed with the proposals of the Government I have supported them, and when otherwise, I have voted against the Government.

MR. LEAKE: Generally in favor of the Government, though.

MR. LEFROY: I do not think it is in accord with common sense that, because I have taken my seat on this side of the House, I can be twitted with doing something I have no right to do in this House when I exercise my own opinion on any question that comes before it. There is no necessity whatever for considering the question of National Schools now. The time has not arrived for a change. I can only say, further, Sir, that I came into this House with the thorough confidence of the people I represent, and, although I may not have the eloquence or the silvery tongue of the hon. member for Albany, I don't believe that if that hon. gentleman, with all his eloquence and legal learning, were to meet me on the hustings in my own electorate, he would be further privileged to be in this House.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I do not intend to occupy the time of the House by making any remarks with a view of endeavoring to establish the consistency of the hon. member for Albany in the action he is now taking. I shall endeavor merely to bring the debate to a focus, and to explain to the House the exact position of the Government

a little more clearly, and, perhaps, a little more in detail, than would be gathered from the statement of the Premier. I propose to tell the House what it is exactly the Government propose to do on this question. I must say in passing, however, that it seems to me that the hon. member for Albany has really placed himself, to some extent, in a false position. Having found that certain members of this House were returned pledged to certain views on the Education Question, he assumed a lead of those who agree with him on this question. I would point out to the House, to the hon. member himself, and to those members he is endeavoring to lead, that these gentlemen were returned pledged on quite a different point to the one the hon. member for Albany was returned upon. They were pledged to abolish the dual system, and the hon. member was pledged to leave it alone. The Hon. the Premier has, to my mind, completely torpedoed the position taken up by the hon. member for Albany, who is now acting so inconsistently with his pledge to leave the dual system alone.

MR. LEAKE: There was no pledge.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The statement the Premier made to his constituents at Bunbury was the policy of the Government on the Education Question. The Hon. the Premier then said he deprecated religious questions being raised in this country, and that until the Education Question could be regarded as a vexed one, his advice to the people would be to leave the present system alone. The Government have abided by that, and we would have continued to abide by that, had not other people who were interested in these Assisted Schools raised the question themselves. The question has been further raised by the discussion in the House this evening, and it will consequently be still further raised throughout the country. Whether the question will remain at this point, and whether it will be possible for the Government to abide by their determination to leave the matter alone, will depend very largely upon the people who are immediately concerned with the question. When the people who are interested in these Assisted Schools desire to approach the Government and ask that the question might be settled at once, and that it should not be left alone, and when we find, as we do now for the first time within my recollection, that hon. members on the other side of the House will be in accord with the Government,

then the question becomes one that demands the most serious attention of the Ministry. When we find hon. members on the opposite side of the House agreeing with the Government that the question requires to be approached in a most careful way, and that with the utmost consideration they should deal liberally and generously with the interests and legal rights created under the present system, then I say the Government would be wrong in holding back any longer, or in neglecting to give our assistance with a view of settling this question at the present time. I say then, if we find both parties asking the Government to deal with the question, I should like to know why it becomes the duty of the Government to abide by what was said on its behalf in the first instance, when there was no agitation on the question. The Government, when approached by both sides, will have no right to refuse its assistance towards arriving at an amicable conclusion of this question. It would be distinctly wrong to hold back, when both sides came to the Government and asked it to deal with the question. If the House did not desire the present Government to deal with the question it could carry a resolution which would put some other Government in. The Premier has not said that he is in favor of the continuance of the dual system. All that he said was that the best thing for the people to do, at the time he was speaking, was to leave the matter alone. When the question is raised by both parties, why should the Government hesitate to lend its assistance? It would be our duty to do all we could to meet the wishes of those who are concerned. We would not be acting in a proper spirit if we did not do so. The intentions of the Government have undergone a change, for the simple reason that the feelings of the people seemed to have done the same thing. However, if both sides are now desirous that the question should be settled, and that the Government should act as arbitrators, why should we not consent to do so? Some of the hon. members opposite were quite ready to leave the question alone themselves until this recent agitation. The hon. members for Nanine, for Perth, for Geraldton, and for the Murray, to their honor be it said, have expressed themselves as being quite ready to deal with the question in an equitable, generous and honorable way with regard to the vested

rights that have come into existence under the present law. I say to their honor be it said that they are in this frame of mind.

MR. SIMPSON: We were never in any other.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): That is something quite new. It is possible that in the past the Government have not gone far enough to draw a definite expression of opinion from them. At any rate, I am very glad to know that they are prepared to approach this question of vested rights in an honorable and equitable manner. There really is no difference of opinion between hon. members and the Government on this matter.

MR. GEORGE: You have only just expressed your opinion.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): If hon. members express a desire to deal with the question in an honorable and generous way, in every way that affects those who have vested rights in the Assisted Schools, then their desire is the same as that of the Government, and in accord with the terms under which such a subject should be dealt with by this House. Let us deal with it part by part, and dispose of this first, for it is the larger part of the answer. It is six lines out of seven, and it is something to have established that six lines out of seven are satisfactory. So far as those six lines are concerned then, we are not at issue. Even the hon. member for Albany says that those six lines are satisfactory. The rest of the answer is simply this: "the Government do not propose to deal with the question at present." I suppose the hon. member for Nannine will say that is what he was alluding to. What was the question asked? It was, whether the Government intended to bring in a Bill to amend the Education Act, and abolish the present dual system, and establish a system free secular, and compulsory. We have heard very little to-night about the free, secular, and compulsory, and very little about any system to be established if we abolish the dual system. The Government have not, as yet, thoroughly considered how far any new system to be introduced shall be either free, secular, or compulsory. I do not know that on these points the country has pronounced any decided opinion. I am not prepared to say there would be no difference of opinion upon these points. At this moment I cannot give any absolute pledge on behalf of the Government as to the system that will be set up. At the same time, I do not wish to suggest that it will be on any

other than free, secular, and compulsory principles that the House will be asked to pass a Bill. With regard to dealing with the matter at the present time, we were not asked to bring in a Bill this session. All we said was, we did not propose to deal with it at present. The hon. member for Perth was correct when he said that, reading between the lines, he concluded the Government were considering the question, and desired to deal with it. If we should find that we are approached by the other side—and I hope this debate will lead to that—I say, if we are approached by the other side, then our course and duty in this matter are clear; and we should attempt to deal with it at no distant date. On behalf of the Government I ask the House to leave the matter to us, and we will undertake to deal with it, and, assuming that we are approached from the other side, and by the other party, we will endeavor to deal with it this session. Then there is another point, for it becomes then a question of compensation. How can that question best be dealt with? It is a big question, and the Government have been considering it, and had got a long way with it before the question was raised here this session. It is a question that bristles with difficulties. At first our thought was to appoint a joint committee of both Houses to fix the compensation at that which is just, and equitable, and honorable, in view of those vested rights that have grown up. I hope I have made clear what the Government propose to do; assuming, of course, that the parties who are pledged to leave the matter alone ask us not to leave it alone. This is an opportune time, as some hon. members remarked, and, if we are asked by the other party, it is our intention to do something this session. Probably we shall ask the House to appoint a Joint Committee to deal particularly with the question of compensation. I do not wish to leave the question in any doubt with regard to the agreement existing with those who are interested in the Assisted Schools. We have every reason to believe, and know, they will fall in with this arrangement, particularly after what has taken place to-night, and the views expressed from the benches opposite; we believe that those who are interested in the Assisted Schools will not hang back, but will join hands and ask us to settle this matter upon these principles.

MR. THROSELL: I think the hon. member for Albany is to be congratulated upon bringing this matter before the House as he

did. He is, I fear, like a soldier leading a forlorn hope. Whatever the future may have to present, it would appear the motion to-night will be defeated. There is no denying the fact that there is a general feeling in the country that a change will have to be made sooner or later. When it shall be made is a matter to be considered hereafter. I venture to think the Government will make no mistake in the matter, but will exhibit true statesmanship, if they kill agitation by anticipating it. The question will have to be dealt with, upon fair and liberal lines, and no hon. member of this House will accept any other settlement, except with due regard to the vested interests of those most concerned. It is not a question as to whether the present system has done good work or not; but it is a question as to whether the country is growing weary of it. That is my view of the matter. I think the country is tired of it. What will be the position hereafter if this is put to the country? I think those who are most interested in this question will have occasion to curse these would-be friends, if the matter is not settled now. The proper way to deal with it is, I think, for the Government to face the matter, and agree to give fair compensation to those concerned. No other method would be so acceptable to the country, or to the majority of the members of this House. I believe I am voicing the opinion of a majority of the members of this House when I say the present system must go. The history of the other colonies tells us that, and I should regret if it had to be fought out here at the sword's point. We know that the Assisted School system has done good and noble work, at the time when the Government School system was at a very low ebb. Some of our best men have received their education at these schools; and I consider, if they must be wiped out, it should be on fair and liberal terms.

MR. LEAKE: Had the Government thought fit to put up the Hon. the Attorney-General earlier in this debate, or had the Government thought fit to give expression to those opinions which the Attorney-General has uttered to-night—and I think the thanks of this House are due to that hon. gentleman—this question might have come to a speedy and an amicable settlement. I am glad to think that this motion which I have proposed has not prejudiced the settlement of this important matter. The Attorney-General, again I say, is to be

congratulated upon his observations, and for the temperate and considerate way in which he has dealt with those hon. members who have thought fit to support me in this resolution. I am very pleased to think he has acted as he has done; and had the Hon. the Premier adopted the same course, instead of indulging in that tirade of criticism—I won't say abuse—of the unfortunate member for Albany, it would have been infinitely better received on this side of the House. I am sure we are pleased with the Hon. the Attorney-General's assurance, and I accordingly rose as quickly as I could to ask the House for permission to withdraw my resolution. The Hon. the Attorney-General has told us that as soon as it appears to be the wish of hon. members on both sides of the House that this question should be settled, the Government are prepared, not only to settle it, but to approach its consideration this session, with a view to a settlement. I hope I do not misquote the Hon. the Attorney-General when I say this question will be settled this session. I am glad to hear it. I would merely explain, with regard to the wording of the answer to the question of the hon. member for Nannine, that if the Government had been a little more definite in their reply, there would not have been any necessity to resort to what some hon. members may call extreme measures. I am personally satisfied that this question will now be settled; and, in saying that, I know I am only echoing the views of hon. members on this side of the House. I therefore beg that the House will permit me to withdraw this contentious motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE ADMINISTRATOR.

ASSENT TO BILL.

The following message was delivered to, and read by Mr. Speaker:—

A. C. ONSLOW,
Administrator.

The Administrator has the honor to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has this day assented, in Her Majesty's name, to the under-mentioned Bill:—

"An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of £200,000 to the service of the year ending 30th June, 1896."

Government House, Perth, 24th July, 1895.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 10.45 p.m. the House adjourned until 4.30 p.m. on Thursday, July 25th.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 25th July, 1895.

Petition of John Maher—Appointment, Salary etc. of Mr. Edwards as veterinary surgeon—Loan Act, 1891, Re-Appropriation Bill; third reading—Municipal Institutions Bill: Committee's report; New Sub-clause—Customs Duties Repeal Bill: in Committee; Committee's Report—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION OF JOHN MAHER.

MR. WOOD: I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, whether this is the proper time for me to present a petition given into my hands.

THE SPEAKER: Yes; but may I ask whether the petition is the one the hon. member spoke to me about the other day, and which I told him could not be received because it was not in order.

MR. WOOD: It is on the same subject, Sir, but the objectionable portions have been taken out. The petition does not now contain any reflection upon the Legislature.

THE SPEAKER: It was distinctly out of order.

MR. WOOD: I have seen to that, Mr. Speaker. The petition is from John Maher, and I move that it be read.

The motion being agreed to, the Clerk read the petition, which prayed for redress for loss sustained in connection with the contract for the Government buildings, and asked for an enquiry into the alleged unfair treatment meted out to petitioner by the supervisor of the said contract.

THE SPEAKER: This petition is most distinctly not in order, for the simple reason

that the only redress the petitioner prayed for would be the granting of some monetary compensation. I can see no other form of redress he could have. I am decidedly of opinion that the petition cannot be received by this House.

MR. WOOD: He could obtain some redress on a report from a committee.

THE SPEAKER: Only as a recommendation from the Governor. It would have to be brought before the House in the same way as any ordinary vote.

MR. MORAN: I know a little about this petition—

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot be in order in speaking on the petition now. It appears to me that all the petitioner can be seeking for is a monetary compensation; that is all he can be wanting. This may be an attempt to obtain a monetary compensation by a side wind.

MR. WOOD: The petition speaks for itself.

THE SPEAKER: What result can the petitioner possibly want unless it is monetary compensation.

MR. WOOD: That will rest with a committee.

THE SPEAKER: A committee should not recommend monetary compensation being given him without the recommendation of the Governor.

MR. MORAN: I do not think he wants a monetary compensation.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He may only want this man dismissed.

THE SPEAKER: I believe the man has been dismissed already.

THE PREMIER: I have not heard of him before.

MR. WOOD: I believe this is really a hard case. I had a deputation from the Contractor's Association to-day, and from what I was informed the contractor who now petitions this House did suffer greatly from the general tyranny exercised over him by this official. There is no doubt also that he suffered considerable monetary loss.

THE PREMIER: Is the man complained of in the service at the present time?

MR. WOOD: I do not know.

THE SPEAKER: This petition does seem to me to be an attempt to obtain by a side wind what the petitioner could not obtain if he proceeded openly.

MR. WOOD: You will recollect, Mr. Speaker, that I showed you the draft of this petition.