

periment. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I think that this Bill will commend itself to the House. It seems to me there is some misunderstanding as to the power of married women to apply for separation orders on the husband being fined £5 for assault. Under this Bill, if a husband is fined £5 for assault, the wife may take out a summons calling upon him to show cause why an order should not be made against him, and, of course, justices will exercise a discretion and will only make an order where the facts warrant it. I have often come across cases where wives have wished to obtain separation orders, but have been too poor to go to the Supreme Court. Under this Bill they will be able to go to the police court and obtain a separation order and an allowance.

THE HON. C. A. PIESSE: It seems to me that this Bill provides a much needed want, but I can see a difficulty in regard to the sentence which must be imposed upon a man before a woman is entitled to apply for an order. Whether a man is fined £5 or £2 depends very much on the state of the liver of the justice who tries the case, and I hardly think that the order should depend upon that. For instance one black eye might be worth 40s., two black eyes 80s., and two with, perhaps, a good pulling of the hair and a dragging about the floor, might be worth £5 10s., and then the woman could apply for an order, but the black eye, or two alone, would be worth nothing to her in obtaining an order. I call attention to this matter because I do not think that a value should be placed on the assault.

THE HON. F. M. STONE: The order does not merely depend upon a fine of £5, but may be granted where a husband has been guilty of persistent cruelty.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Bill was then considered in committee, agreed to without amendment, reported, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House at 8:30 o'clock, p.m., adjourned until Thursday, 6th August, 1896, at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 5th August, 1896.

Question: Agent General's suggestions re orders for rolling stock, &c.—Question: reported offer of Broome Hill property by Lord Brassey—Purchase of fire engine by Perth City Council—Motion: water available locally on eastern goldfields—Motion: text-book on agriculture for schools—Coolgardie Water Supply Loan Bill; second reading; debate concluded—Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill; in committee—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION: AGENT GENERAL'S SUGGESTIONS RE ORDERS FOR ROLLING STOCK, &c.

MR. RANDELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier,—(a.) Whether the complaints contained in page 4 of the Agent General's Report for 1895, "That the Agency was not sufficiently furnished with important documents, maps, &c.," had received attention, and been complied with. (b.) Whether the remarks on page 5 of the Report, re system of ordering rolling stock, and the suggestions made thereon, had received attention; and if so, whether any alteration was intended to be made. (c.) Why the advice given by the Agent General, on page 6, as to purchase of material when low prices prevailed, was not followed. (d.) Was it intended, in accordance with suggestions on page 7, to revise the regulations applying to immigration; and, if so, in what direction?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied,—(a.) Every endeavour has been made to comply with the Agent General's requests, and, it is hoped, with some success. I will have the matter more closely attended to. (b.) The circumstances surrounding the rolling stock requirements of this colony are so exceptional as to preclude the ordering of a year's supply at one time; besides which, in building new railways, it is not usual to order the rolling stock until after the vote for the construction of the railway has been passed by Parliament, and then the rapidity with which railway construction proceeds in this colony does not permit sufficient interval between ordering rolling stock and the time it is required for

traffic to allow of its coming forward in small parcels at regular intervals, as suggested. As regards *wheels and axles, &c.*, for maintenance purposes, it has always been customary to include requirements in the half-yearly indents forwarded to the Agent General for general railway stores. The Government are, however, alive to the advisability of following the suggestion made by the Agent General, as far as circumstances will admit. (c.) All rails for works then authorised by Parliament were ordered at one time, viz., in January, 1895, including 15 miles for maintenance, additional sidings, &c., whereas the Agent General's letter, in which he tendered his advice on the subject, was received on 10th April, 1895. The Authorisation Acts for Coolgardie, Donnybrook to Bridgetown, and South-Western Railway to Collie Coalfields lines were assented to on 12th October, 1895. A cable ordering the rails for these lines was despatched to the Agent General on 1st November, 1895. The Agent General's remarks are apparently based on the assumption that the Government were in a position to order the rails for the lines mentioned some seven months before Parliament authorised their construction. (d.) There is no necessity at present to assist miners to come to the colony, and it is not proposed to amend the immigration regulations in this respect. Small farmers and their families have part of their passage money paid by the Colony.

QUESTION: REPORTED OFFER OF BROOME HILL PROPERTY BY LORD BRASSEY.

MR. RANDELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier,—(1.) Whether his attention had been drawn to a statement in the Press, that Lord Brassey had forwarded instructions to his agent to cease operations on his property at Broome Hill, as it was his intention to sell the property to the Government. (2.) If the statement were true, whether this action of Lord Brassey's was, in the Premier's opinion, to be attributed to the passing of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—(1.) Lord Brassey has informed the Government that he has abandoned the idea of making an experimental farm on his property at Broome Hill. Lord

Brassey also offered to sell his property to the Government. (2.) The Government does not think so.

PURCHASE OF FIRE ENGINE BY PERTH CITY COUNCIL.

MR. RANDELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether he was able to give the House any information as to the purchase and importation, by the Perth City Council, of the steam fire engine, for which £500 was some time since given by the Government.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—The Town Clerk informs me that inquiries have been made as to the best type of engine, and that in a few days the matter is to be decided, and the fire engine will then be at once ordered.

MR. RANDELL further asked, without notice, whether it was not a fact that the amount voted to Fremantle, for the purchase of a fire engine, was made after the similar vote given to Perth; and yet the engine for Fremantle had already arrived.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the money voted was paid in each case, and of course the Government had no further control.

MOTION: WATER AVAILABLE LOCALLY ON EASTERN GOLDFIELDS.

MR. MORAN, referring to his notice of motion "That, in the opinion of this House, the Government have not availed themselves of the ordinary means to obtain accurate information concerning the quantity and quality of water available locally on the Eastern goldfields," said this notice was the outcome of some little difference of opinion between himself and the Premier, in reference to a certain amount of water at present lying on the Coolgardie goldfields. He (Mr. Moran) had given to the House on the previous evening certain information on this matter. This motion had been placed on the notice paper with the sole intention of pressing the question of a local water supply more forcibly on the attention of the Government, in order that they might be induced to make use of the information, and utilise the water on the goldfields, especially during the three or four years which would be occupied in carrying out the great water scheme

which the Government had proposed. He had no doubt the Government were convinced there was a certain amount of truth in the information he gave to the House on the previous evening, and possibly they might be induced to make use of it. However, in view of the debate now going on in relation to the goldfields water supply, he did not consider it necessary to force this motion at present; and, in asking leave to withdraw it, he disclaimed any intention of hampering the Government, or being in any way hostile. He had seen mention made of this motion as being rather like a motion of want of confidence; but it had not been so intended, as he did not believe in "swapping horses while crossing a stream."

Notice of motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTION—TEXT-BOOK ON AGRICULTURE FOR SCHOOLS.

MR. COOKWORTHY, in accordance with notice, moved "That children in the Government schools should be instructed in the rudiments of agriculture, as recommended by the Bureau of Agriculture." He said his attention had been called to a paragraph in the *Journal of the Bureau of Agriculture*, which stated that a request had been made to the Educational Department from the Bureau for the teaching of the rudiments of agriculture in public schools. He understood the Bureau had offered to provide the department with a text-book on the rudiments of agriculture, and believed the offer was a wise and good one. He was not aware of any reason why the department had not accepted the proposal. There might not be an immediate direct advantage to any of the children in public schools from the teaching of the elements of agriculture; but he thought that the instilling of this kind of knowledge into the youth of the colony could do no harm, and might, eventually, be of great service. He hoped that, unless there were good and sufficient reasons why it should not be done, the Government would take advantage of the offer made by the Bureau.

MR. TRAYLEN said that if the proposed text-book on agriculture was intended to be anything more than a kind of reading book for the schools, he must object to it, for the reason that

such schools were intended to be elementary schools, and the time of the children should be devoted to acquiring the elements of an English education. If children were to continue attending public schools after the age of fourteen years, the case would be different; but, under present conditions, it would be a pity to pass such a resolution, binding the department to a course which would divert the attention of the children from subjects which would be of more use to them in after life.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said a proposal had emanated from the Bureau, recommending to the present Minister of Education that a kind of text-book on elementary agriculture should be prepared for use in the State schools, and that children should be allowed to read in this book during a certain portion of their time, instead of having reading lessons in books which treated of history and of subjects that would not be of the same practical use to them after leaving school. A reading exercise being necessary, why should not the children be allowed to use a text-book on agriculture, which would, at the same time, cultivate some taste for a knowledge of the elements of husbandry and agriculture? Such a practice would enable parents to detect in their children any growing taste for these pursuits, at an early age, and so guide them in putting children to future occupations. He could not see that a scholar's time would be in any way lost in reading from a text-book on agriculture, as compared with any other subject for a reading exercise. There was a good deal of science, even in agriculture, and such knowledge, taught in an elementary way, would be useful in almost any walk of life. The great point was to have the right kind of text-book; one that, while simple and elementary, would give some good, sound instruction, and which, having been carefully prepared and revised, would not teach them knowledge which was inaccurate and not up to date. If that was carefully looked into, a great amount of good must accrue to the children by learning even the elements of a profession—for it was called a profession—which must always play a prominent part in any nation's history.

MR. RANDELL supported the motion with great pleasure, and said he had expected the mover would have gone more fully into the question, and placed before the House some of the advantages of having a text-book of this kind used in public schools. The motion opened up a much larger question—one which he had advocated on several occasions—and that was the adoption of a system of technical education for the colony. The department should look carefully into the matter, and see if a beginning could not be made, such as would embrace the rudiments of agriculture. He could not agree with the hon. member for the Greenough in saying the children's time was fully occupied in learning the elements of an English education; because a boy could remain in the public schools until he passed the seventh standard, and that would prepare him for continuing higher studies afterwards. It was desirable that children should be brought up to a knowledge of plant life, and soils, and all things which made up successful farming. He believed the Bureau of Agriculture had offered to furnish to the Education Department a text-book on elementary agriculture; and, if the Government would accept their offer, he had no doubt there was the ability within the Bureau to compile a book that would be useful over the whole colony, and be the means of placing in the hands of every scholar the opportunity of acquiring this knowledge. At one school he had visited recently he was pleased to see the teacher occupied in showing the children how to cultivate a garden (the teacher's plot being near the school), and instructing them in habits of industry, and in knowledge which would be useful. That teacher was also stimulating them to compete in caring for the best cultivated plot, and nothing could be more beneficial to boys than to be brought up to a knowledge like that, rather than be left to run wild after school hours. He trusted the House would affirm the motion, so that the Education Department might take into consideration the desirability of instituting technical education as early as possible, for he believed that in the larger number of schools this might be done with beneficial consequences to the rising generation.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he failed

to see why this motion was placed before the House. Certainly, a large mass of the population we had at present were not likely ever to become agriculturists in this colony; consequently he rose to ask the hon. member to admit a slight amendment, namely, that after the words "rudiments of," there should be inserted the words "mining and." This amendment would embrace mining as a subject for elementary instruction in schools. He had no objection to teach our children the rudiments of agriculture; but, in a colony that was distinctly a mining colony, it did strike him as ridiculous in the extreme to select one particular industry, and propose to teach it in the State schools, while the primary industry of the colony, which required more care, and was calculated to produce immensely more interesting results than anything that could be obtained from books on agriculture, was not provided for in like manner. Why agriculture was to be singled out and made a subject for special teaching in the State schools passed his comprehension. If the mover was sincere in his desire to promote the best interests of this colony, and desired that the youth should be educated in such a manner that they might be able to make their way in life, that hon. member would readily accept the amendment. He (Mr. Illingworth) did not say it was not desirable to teach agriculture; but, if it were desirable, then it was ten times more desirable to teach mining, as being of infinitely more importance, and more difficult in its technical phases, as affecting a miner's life. If they had had technical education in this colony years ago, when the Premier had the privilege of first passing over the great gold country of Coolgardie, such knowledge of mining might have enabled him to find the Londonderry, or one of the other rich mines, and so have changed the face of this country years ago.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Do you mean practical mining, or mineralogy, to be taught in public schools?

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked, in reply, whether those who supported the motion meant that they should teach practical agriculture?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Yes.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said it seemed to him that the schoolmaster referred to by the hon. member for Perth was really getting his own little garden plot tilled at the expense of the labour of children attending a public school. The point was that the House should try to get a School of Mines in this colony, in which not only mining and mineralogy, but the other arts, would be taught. In that School of Mines would be taught not merely mining and mineralogy, but several other industries that he had on previous occasions mentioned in this House. He urged on the Government the importance of establishing a School of Mines, which should also teach agriculture and other matters that had a bearing on the prosperity of the country. He did not think there was much to be gained out of the mere teaching of the rudiments of agriculture in school lessons, and if it was the desire to occupy the attention of the children at all apart from their ordinary lessons, it seemed to him that they should be taught something of mining. He therefore had to ask the hon. member for Sussex to accept the amendment.

MR. MORAN said he was inclined to oppose both the original motion and the amendment. It was ridiculous that they should endeavour to teach mining in the State schools.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No more ridiculous than teaching agriculture.

MR. MORAN said the teaching of the rudiments of agriculture had been established in some of the eastern colonies and had not been a success. He was, however, very much in favour of the establishment of a School of Mines, and would also be in favour of the establishment of an institution like the Roseworthy Agricultural College in South Australia. He understood that in the Roseworthy College several West Australian youths had received their education in agriculture. He had been through the College, and been very much impressed with the work it was doing, both practical and theoretical. He could not imagine, however, mining being taught in a practical way at a State school, with the master starting an underlay shaft, turning at the windlass, and teaching practical mining. Parents would be rather inclined to keep their children away from a school

of that sort. Nor could he imagine a school mistress going into the garden with a spade and teaching the children to dig "spuds." It had been proved in the other colonies that there was not much to be gained by teaching children agriculture in the slipshod way it was attempted in the State schools. The question of starting a School of Mines was a different thing altogether, for there the youths of the colony would be taught both the theory and the practice of mining. The school could be established at Coolgardie, and the students could go out from their school to the mines and learn something of the practical operations.

MR. A. FORREST supported the motion, because it was moving in the right direction. It was important they should do anything they could to force the people to understand the methods of cultivating the soil. That was an important question all over the world. The question was how the people were to be got on to the soil; and if youths in this colony could be taught something of agriculture from the time they got to know anything, they might achieve something in that direction. The country could not be built up entirely on the gold mining. It must have something else. If agriculture were taken away from England, how would the people be supported in the event of war breaking out, and a blockade of the ports being established? If this colony was ever to become great, it was absolutely necessary that agriculture should bear an important part in the colony's progress. The amendment of the hon. member for Nannine was going a little too far at the present time. It was easy, so far as he could see, to become competent to manage mines. Some time ago, a young man came to him with a recommendation, and asked for employment, and he gave him a letter to his agent, who employed him about the mines. In his last letter, this man who had been only a short time at the work said that he was now so thoroughly conversant with mining that he had to ask to be appointed to the managership of the mines. It was, therefore, not hard for anybody to become a mining manager or an expert. If the hon. member for Nannine brought in a motion in favour of the establishment of a School of Mines, he would have the support of everybody

in that House. He hoped, therefore, that the hon. member would not insist upon his amendment.

MR. LEFROY said he was surprised to hear the hon. member for Nannine asking to be allowed to add the word "mining" to the motion before the House. He did not appear to object to the teaching of agriculture in the State schools, and only wanted to add another little word. He (Mr. Lefroy) would as soon have expected the hon. member to ask to add "horse racing," as "mining" to the subjects taught in the State schools. It would do the children of the country no particular good to teach them the rudiments of mining. If the hon. member had asked to have the word "geology" inserted into the motion, there might have been something in it, but no good effect could come from the teaching of mining. He did not know there would be much benefit from the teaching of the rudiments of agriculture in the schools, in the manner in which those rudiments were likely to be taught, but there would be no harm in it, and the children at the same time would be learning to read. He would not oppose the motion, but should certainly object to the amendment.

MR. THROSSELL said money spent in agricultural education would give a better return to the country than money spent in any other educational direction. He would also be in favour of the placing of mineral specimens in all the schools, so that when afterwards boys went out into the country they might be able to recognise ores when they came across them. He was in favour, in connection with the country schools at least, of having gardens in which boys might be taught something in the direction of agriculture. In the schools there was always a certain percentage of the lads who were intended for working on the soil, and who left school without having received that instruction which might be of assistance to them in their work. In his own district they had made an effort to start a school garden, and had made application to the Board of Education that some effort might be made to interest the children in the operations of the garden. After a good deal of correspondence they had received 20 trees to be planted in the school ground. Those children would take an interest in those trees and would

watch them from year to year. In the other colonies they had school books on agriculture, which gave the A B C of the science, and the Bureau of Agriculture here had offered to prepare a similar book and supply it to the schools. He thought the Bureau quite capable of providing a suitable book, and saw no reason why the motion of the member for Sussex should not have the full support of the House.

MR. CLARKSON had pleasure in supporting the motion. Anything that would give the rising generation a taste for devoting their time to the study of agriculture was desirable. He did not think the teaching of the rudiments of agriculture would have a very great effect, but it would be a step in the right direction. It would be better for the children than running in the streets and going to the bad. A friend of his who had never seen a mine before two or three years ago was now a mining expert, so that it seemed easy to become a mining expert. There was apparently no need for the study of mineralogy, because a man blossomed all at once into an authority on mining. It seemed to him, therefore, unnecessary that mining should be taught in the State schools.

MR. VENN said there would possibly arise some difficulties, if they carried a motion of this sort, describing the style of education that should be given in the State schools. If he were asked to suggest another subject, he might say the children should be taught pastoral pursuits, and other members might suggest other subjects. He thought, however, it was not advisable to introduce these subjects into elementary schools, but they should provide means by which boys over 14 years of age could continue their studies, either in mining or in agriculture. It was only after reaching such an age that boys were ready to undertake these higher studies. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Perth in his advocacy of technical education; but that was a matter already in the hands of the Government, and it might well be left to the Minister of Education, who proposed to start a school for technical education, probably in Perth. He (Mr. Venn) did not think it would be any use starting a new system of this kind by a motion in the House, or by dictating what the State schools should

teach and what they should not teach. Members had all a great desire to see the children attending the State schools getting a fair general education, and he thought, beyond that, it was unwise for the House to interfere further than they had done.

MR. HASSELL said he saw no objection to the motion, but it was not going to do a great amount of good, though some members thought it would. At the same time, the Government might have brought forward a scheme to give children above elementary school age a higher education. Such a school might well be located in some healthy part of the colony, though he made no distinction in the locality so long as the school was established. At the present time parents who wished to give their children a higher education had to send them away to South Australia or England. Under these circumstances, it seemed to him that it was the duty of the Government to endow a school for dealing with this higher education, and it could be a school for children whose parents were well able to pay for their tuition. The State schools were very successful, and gave children up to a certain age a fair education.

MR. COOKWORTHY said the motion did not indicate that all the children were to be taught elementary agriculture, but there were, in all schools, children to whom such instruction would be useful. They all knew that what was learnt in youth lasted longest; and he could say that the text-book which would teach a child to read, and, at the same time, give the rudiments of agriculture, could do no harm; and, on the other hand, he believed it would be like casting bread on the waters—it would come back in after years. Young men would go out to the mines and make their fortunes, and afterwards many of them would like to return to the land, so that the instruction in agriculture they had received in their boyhood would then become useful to them. The member for Nannine was continually selling to the working classes pieces of land, so that they might have their own homes and cultivate their little plots. He (Mr. Cookworthy) did not object to a School of Mines, but he did not think that it was right to bring that forward in this motion. Let the

hon. member bring forward a motion in favour of the establishment of a School of Mines, and he had not the slightest doubt the House would support him.

Amendment put and negatived, and the motion passed.

COOLGARDIE GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY LOAN BILL.

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONCLUDED.

MR. VENN: In rising to speak on this subject, I desire to say that the few remarks I shall make will be confined entirely to the question now before the House, and that is the amendment moved by the hon. member for Geraldton. I shall reserve for myself any further remarks I may have to make on the scheme itself, until after the amendment of the hon. member has been dealt with. In speaking to the amendment now before the House, I feel, in common with the large majority of the people in the colony, and, I think, with the large majority of the members of this House, if they expressed the views inside the House that they do outside of it, that it is as unwise as it is improper to force this scheme, this Government scheme, upon the country, through the present House, with such short notice, and on the information at present before the House, and also before the electors have had an opportunity of expressing their views with regard to it. I can further say that if a question that means an increase of the national debt of the colony to the tune of three millions, or probably five millions of money before the scheme is completed, is not of sufficient importance for the Government to go to the country upon, it would be a difficult matter to conceive any question that would be of sufficient importance to induce the Government to go to the country. I think it is the proper and constitutional course for the Government to go to the country upon this scheme. I am quite aware and the members of this House are quite aware, without the noisy intimation of the hon. the Premier, that the House, as at present constituted, has all the powers necessary to deal with this Bill or to deal with any other Bill. But it is for this House to say whether it will exercise those powers or whether it will not, in view of the fact

that it has so recently intimated that it does not represent the whole of the electoral power of the colony. It is one thing to be vested with very great powers that may be exercised in an arbitrary way, and quite another thing not to exercise those powers before reference to the source from which those powers are derived. Consequently, I think the amendment now before the House should commend itself to the consideration of hon. members of the House. I may say that, to those gentleman on the opposite side of the House whose loyalty to the present Government is beyond any question, by enabling them to give it their support without in any way expressing an opinion antagonistic to the scheme itself, it gives an opportunity of expressing an opinion adverse to the views or policy of the Government. I think the resolution only suggests the wise and reasonable course that the taxpayers of the colony should have an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the subject at the hustings, to strengthen the hands of members themselves, and also the position of the Government, before it is finally dealt with by Parliament. Hon. members will recollect that when the hon. the Premier was dealing with this question, in reply to the hon. member for Nannine, he frankly admitted that this aspect of the question, as shadowed forth by the amendment now moved by the hon. member for Geraldton, had very great force indeed, so much force that it had been considered. Therefore I am pleased to say I am quite in accord with the hon. gentleman in that respect, inasmuch as I think it has a great deal of force, and I can confidently, under the circumstances, recommend hon. members to give generous support to the amendment now before us. It is one that every reflective mind should adopt, as it suggests a little time for further consideration, and for the further development of our goldfields, and another session of Parliament to confirm and strengthen the hands of the Government and of Parliament, before dealing with this great question, and the liability it will impose on the colony. The Premier has attempted to show the extreme urgency of this question brooks no delay, and the Attorney General last night attempted

to do exactly the same thing. I may say he advanced no very great reason beyond the urgency of the thing, for departing from what they decidedly admit would be the constitutional course, of referring it to the country. Hon. members of this House may be permitted to have some opinion as to the urgency of the question without blindly following the lead of the Premier, or anybody else, as the responsibility does not rest entirely with the Government, as the Premier would almost have us to suppose. The responsibility is thrown off the shoulders of the Government on to the Legislature the moment the Legislature agrees to the expenditure, and therefore members must ask themselves if there is sound reason for this extreme hurry, and they must not be misled by any fervour from one side of the House or the other, that may be stimulated by political motives; and I feel sure they will say that a delay of six, seven, eight, or even twelve months can have no possible injurious effect, or in any way affect the flow of speculation on our goldfields, when we reflect that even under the most favourable circumstances it will take three years—and the Attorney General was the first on the side of the Government to say very possibly four years—before this work is completed, or there is one drop of water on the fields ready for utilisation. The chances are that if the time is extended to four or five years there can be no doubt a few months can neither assist nor retard the permanent development of our goldfields, as, long before three years, and certainly long before five years, the foreign investor will expect a return for his capital, or otherwise he will seek some other investment from which he will get a return. He will certainly not pin his faith to a scheme, now in the air, which may improve his investment five years hence. We have also the great evidence of fact, which is the best evidence and better than any hearsay evidence, that at the present moment the best of the mines in the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie districts are returning very large dividends, and will for a considerable time continue to give them. [THE PREMIER: Where are they?] I am receiving dividends myself, so that I know it, and I think that is the best evidence.

MR. SIMPSON: That is the best evidence.

MR. A. FORREST: There is the interest on 60 millions.

MR. SIMPSON: 60 million grand-mothers.

MR. VENN: There is not sixty millions sterling invested in the mines at the present moment, but we are getting very fond of the word "millions." These mines are returning very large dividends and will continue to give them without the aid of this or any other scheme, and we have information that daily large bodies of water are being struck everywhere. Not fresh water, certainly, but salt, though, I take it, this scheme is for giving water for crushing purposes. I am not dealing with the scheme itself, nor do I say I am adverse to the scheme in any way whatever; but, so far as the urgency of the matter is concerned, I say there is no great urgency, inasmuch as mines are already paying large dividends with the water they have, and it is said that before long they will be troubled with too much water. This being so, it cannot make much difference to this scheme or the Coolgardie goldfields if a little wise and judicious delay takes place before the expenditure is incurred. I say it most advisedly—I do not see myself that there is any great hurry or reason for practically jamming down our throats, by the great majority the Government may have, this important question, which creates such an immense liability for the country. Certainly the hon. the Premier does not stand out alone in his desire to promote the best interests of this country.

[MR. A. FORREST: We do here.] Certainly the hon. member does not. [MR. A. FORREST: We all do on this side.] We have it on the authority of the hon. member for Kimberley that he stands out alone to promote the best interests of this country, but certainly the Premier does not stand out alone in his desire. Surely each hon. member is stimulated with the same ardent desire to do the best for the country he lives in, and where his money is invested, and surely neither the Premier, the Ministry, or the other side of the House monopolises all the brains, all the patriotism and singleness of purpose, and the wealth of the colony, that the Premier should

come down to the House and force his definition of the urgency of the matter on the House, but surely other members have the right to express their opinions, and are as careful of the interests of the country as the Premier or the Ministry. We can do so without being bellowed at and called names. We don't wish to have names hurled at us, if we do not blindly follow the lead of any single man, whether on the Government side or not, as to what is right and best for the goldfields and the colony. I may further say that members of this House may surely be trusted to follow the instincts of reason and fair play prompting them to ask for a reasonable amount of time to consider this question now before the House. They only ask for that same reasonable time the Government themselves have given to this question, before bringing it to the House. That is what this motion now before the House asks. I do not mean to say the speech of the hon. member for Geraldton led up to the resolution, but at the same time, practically, it amounts very much to a resolution I felt I might have moved in this House. Inasmuch as the hon. member has moved this resolution which practically agrees with a resolution I thought might have been received favourably by this House, I feel I can give my support. The resolution I thought might have met with the favour of the House reads something like this:—"That in view of the fact that Parliament has deemed it imperative to amend the Constitution Act by increasing the representation of the colony in its Legislature by the addition of fourteen members (admitting that Parliament, as at present constituted, does not represent the whole body of electors), this House is of opinion that the question of a water supply to the Coolgardie goldfields—involving enormous expenditure and increasing the national debt of the colony to the extent of, probably, over three millions sterling—should be submitted to the consideration of the whole body of electors and ratepayers of the colony, and is therefore of opinion that the final consideration of this question should be postponed until the next session of Parliament. And this House is further of opinion that, in accordance with the recommendation of the Engineer-in-Chief,

the Government, before the meeting of next Parliament, and as early as possible, should obtain the further opinion of some eminent hydraulic engineer on the subject." That is the text of a resolution I felt I might have moved in the House, but the hon. member has anticipated that resolution by the amendment he has brought before the House, which, apart from the introductory remarks of the hon. member, practically means about the same thing. I say the present members may be trusted, with their instincts of right and reason, not to rush headlong into this matter before they have had the same time to consider it as the Government themselves have had before bringing the matter before this House. I feel sure no harm can result from delay, while the intelligence thrown on the question, and, probably, the strong criticism, would strengthen the hands of the Government in every possible way. I have no intention of criticising the Government scheme now, because, I remember, it was I who was the first to request the Engineer-in-Chief to get out figures for a pumping scheme somewhere in the Darling Ranges and the Moore River; and my object for doing so was to arm the Government with figures and information, so that when attacked for any delay on this question they could be able to show figures so enormous and large as to immediately stifle or check adverse criticism, but certainly not with the idea or intention on my part, nor do I think it was the intention of the Government at that time, to hurry the matter on without very mature consideration. It was intimated to me shortly afterwards that the Engineer-in-Chief should get out figures, but I had anticipated the suggestion. It was some time after this that the Premier, standing, as it were, in tights on Mount Burges, balanced himself on one leg on top of a balloon, and talked about living waters converting the wilderness into smiling farms and enchanting flower gardens. When this thing took on with the hon. gentleman, as usual with him, everything was swept out of his way like a tornado, though the Engineer-in-Chief, out of the chaos of papers, protests that he is not father of this scheme, that he is not responsible for it, and that the figures have been got out at the behest of the

Government. Further, the Engineer-in-Chief goes on to say that he hopes the Government, before finally considering this scheme, will seek the advice of some eminent hydraulic engineer on the question, and I think there the House is at one with the Engineer-in-Chief. I know I am. This resolution should commend itself to the favourable consideration of hon. members, because it will then leave it to the option of the Government to consult the best and highest authorities. So far as the scheme itself is concerned, I reiterate that every member is stimulated by the one desire to give proper drinking water, and water for domestic purposes, to the goldfields. They desire to see their brothers on the fields served with water as cheaply as they themselves are, but they desire to quietly think over the matter, as there is no great urgency for it. The hon. member for Yilgarn himself, in that wonderful piece of eloquence he delivered to this House last night, proved beyond a doubt that there was plenty of water there, but he intended to vote for the scheme, and I commend him for it. I think we can take his arguments for what they are worth; and he proved there was an enormous supply of water on the fields, and it would take 10 years for the Government to get a pumping scheme to pump anything like the amount of water that was in one lake there now. I do not advance that as a reason against the Government pumping scheme for the people eventually, but it shows, if the hon. member is correct, and I believe him, the few months elapsing between this time and the time when the House shall be properly represented cannot make any appreciable difference to the permanent or immediate development of the Coolgardie goldfields. The remarks made by the Attorney General upon this question were ingenious, but, at the same time, they had not the force they should have, inasmuch as I take it that the majority of the members who will be returned to this House next year will be goldfields' members; but it does not follow that those members will all be of one idea. In fact we have known of the best men at Coolgardie who will probably be in the House who are totally opposed to the scheme. They have larger sums invested than we have, and they see no

immediate necessity for it. I am not urging this against the scheme itself. I am urging it in regard to my view of the constitutional and proper course of submitting it to the country on the eve of a general election. That is the only ground on which I take my stand this evening, and I hope the Government and members of this House will thoroughly understand that I am only taking the position on proper and constitutional grounds, and I think it is improper and wrong for the House to easily allow the question of emergency to absolutely override what is the constitutional usage and the unwritten constitutional law, that where there is an enormous expenditure increasing the public debt, the question, except in case of war or some such calamity where the House could not be called together, should be submitted to the country, and the taxpayers have a voice in the matter. That is the only desire I have, to uphold the position and rights of this House, and I do think the view I have taken should commend itself to hon. members of this House. I know it is one shared in by a large majority outside of the house, and by gentlemen who may not be adverse to the scheme itself, but who desire to have proper time to consider it, and to have the proper forms carried out before this immense liability is cast on the country. I hope I have made myself clear on the matter. I have no strong feeling on the point, but I do desire again to say that my object is only to vindicate the rights and privileges of constitutional law.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): May I ask your ruling, sir? There seems to me some confusion in hon. members' minds as to how often members can speak. If members can speak on the amendment and then on the main question, I think it will interfere a good deal with the scope of the speeches of hon. members. I was under the impression that we could only speak once, but I have heard from you we can speak more often.

THE SPEAKER: When an amendment comes forward, there is a fresh subject before the House.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Then, as a number of amendments can be moved, members can speak on every one of them?

THE SPEAKER: Yes; after any amendments have been disposed of, any member who has not spoken on the original question can then speak to it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): And on the amendments?

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. VENN: I take it that members can speak on this amendment. I had no desire to speak to the original question.

THE SPEAKER: Any member who has not already spoken on the original question can speak again. The Premier, of course, has the right of reply.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I take it that any member who has now spoken, if the amendment is thrown out, can speak again.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, if he has not spoken before on the main question. I think it would be a very hard thing indeed if a member could not speak to an amendment. He might wish to deal with the Bill afterwards.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Members can speak to the main question and the amendment, but they are both so close together.

THE SPEAKER: They are quite different questions.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir John Forrest): It seems to me that members spoke last night on the main question when the amendment was put.

MR. SIMPSON: The Attorney General did.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Everyone who spoke did.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I hope the Premier will not attempt, in the smallest degree, to dispute the Speaker's ruling; because there is not the slightest doubt that hon. members are perfectly in order in speaking to the amendment. I should like it to be clearly understood that, if members can speak, they are at liberty to do so.

THE SPEAKER: Certainly; hon. members are at liberty to speak to the amendment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hon. members will recollect that the climax at which I arrived in my argument on the Address-in-Reply was that, granted it can be proved that the scheme for supplying the goldfields with water is practical, and that the scheme is desirable and

wise, there still remains the important question as to whether it is constitutionally correct to commit the country, on the eve of a general election, to a loan which would practically double the finances of this country. I ask the Government, and I ask the House, to consider this question, whether it is a wise policy, whether it is constitutional for the Government, when they are in the act of bringing in a reform of the constitution which demands a dissolution, that they should at the same time commit the colony to a loan of five millions of money. That is the question which the House is called upon to consider. That is the question which, at this moment, brings us face to face with the issue whether it is wise that we should take upon ourselves this large expenditure for the proposed waterworks, knowing as we do, and as every member of this House knows, that only six thousand votes were cast in this colony to elect this House, while there are to-day 125,000 people in the colony. [THE PREMIER: Men, women, and children.] Are these people to be committed for all time to bear the burden of five millions of borrowed money, without ever having been consulted on the question as to whether they are willing to have this money spent? Of course it is very well, theoretically, to say this House represents the country. Technically and legally it does. Technically and legally the House has the power to pass any resolution that can be carried by a majority of its members. Technically and legally, we have the power to commit this colony to public works which it will take the next twenty years to carry out, and perhaps the next hundred to pay for. But I would ask every member of this House whether we, as reasonable men, and men of conscience, ought to do so. Speaking for myself, I say it would be unfair—I consider it would be an injustice to the country—for me to vote for the expansion, for the duplication, of the national debt, while this House only represents six thousand votes out of a population of a hundred and twenty-five thousand. Now that is the question that is before this House and before this country. I want to say this, that I am not speaking in any spirit of opposition to the Waterworks Bill. I yield to no one in this colony in my most earnest

desire to see the wants of our goldfields population properly supplied with water, and the fields properly developed. But we have had both in the House and on the platform, as well as in the press, too much assumption that the concentrated wisdom of this country sits upon the Treasury benches. We have had it said, over and over again, that simply because the Government consider any course is wise, therefore it is wise. Now I wish to commend the Government for a vast amount of wisdom and discretion. No one who listens to the Premier can deny, or attempt to deny, his earnestness and seriousness—the absolute and full belief which he has in the wisdom of any measures which he proposes in this House; but it is possible to have too much personal confidence; it is possible to so cloud our minds with this confidence that we preclude ourselves from looking fairly and squarely at suggestions which may come from elsewhere; and I wish to say this, that the little experience I have had in the world has taught me, at any rate, this one lesson, that it is possible to learn from every man. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] And the most unlettered and most uncultured man can sometimes teach lessons which are well worthy of attention, and which we can profit by very largely. But while I am prepared to admit that, in the judgment of a great many people in this colony, in the judgment of many of the members of this House, the concentrated wisdom of the colony is sitting upon the Treasury benches, I do not deny there is devoted to the service of this colony a gentleman whose skill can be compared to that of the brightest geniuses that have ever occupied the position of an Engineer-in-Chief. No one in this colony has a higher regard for the skill of that gentleman than I have; but I have lived in a colony which has had as its engineer-in-chief a man of such renown as Mr. Higinbotham, the brother of the celebrated judge. Mr. Higinbotham stood very high as a civil engineer, but under his direction there were made, at great cost, some of the most serious mistakes ever known in Victoria; and under that burden the colony is suffering to-day. I would be false to all my experience and all I have been taught, and to my conceptions of what I believe to be

the duty of every man who has any interest in the country in which he lives, if I were to allow this Bill to pass without protest, at this stage in the history of this Parliament, and in the condition in which the House is to-day. The people of the colony have been crying out in all parts of the country for representation. The cry has been so loud, so full, and so continued, that it has slowly reached the Treasury benches, and has induced the wisest and the best possible of Australian governments to bring in a reform of the Constitution. Now it is just upon this point that I lay down my argument. The Government admit the claim of the people to representation to be a just claim. They admit it by bringing into this House a measure for the reform of the Constitution. They refused to admit that claim last year, for they said such a reform would naturally carry with it a dissolution. Consequently, when they admit this claim, and when they bring in this Bill to reform the Constitution, they admit that the House is moribund, that it has come to the position in which it ought no longer to exist, or, at any rate, that it should exist only to do necessary formal business. Had they not admitted that principle, the Bill for the reform of the Constitution should not have been introduced until the passing of it became the last action of this session; but, so far as the Government have gone, they have got away from that position. For before this question of the great water scheme has been discussed, in the interval between the introduction of the Bill and the adjourned debate on the second reading, the Government laid upon the table of this House a measure for the reform of the Constitution.

THE PREMIER: It is not a reform of the Constitution at all.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is a measure which the Government say will carry with it the dissolution of the House. Now if the Government say this is not a reform of the Constitution, it is difficult to understand what they mean, because the Bill says it is an alteration of the Constitution. It is, at any rate, a change in the Constitution that will necessitate a dissolution, and, that being so, we should not deal with large and important business in this House. I wish to say that the attitude of the Government

proves their sincerity, for which I commend them, in giving to the constituencies a larger representation which they denied last year, but which they have since found to be necessary. They are to be commended for having brought in this Bill to give increased representation to the people in both Houses of Parliament, but it seems to me they practically desire that this moribund Parliament shall commit the country to very heavy expenditure for the next three years. It comes to this, that while the Government are proposing to give the country larger representation, they practically tell the country this: You can put in what Government you like, you can put in what Parliament you like, but while we have the power we will obtain a loan of five millions in the British market, and we will commit this country to what we think is right, and the people who come after us can do exactly as they please. We will commit the country to the loan, and to our scheme of public works, and then we will give you increased representation." Now, what is the use of increased representation, if increased representation is not to have a voice in the settlement of these large questions? I think it is a very important point, and it is the reason why some hon. members are voting for the amendment proposed on the second reading of the Bill before the House. If the scheme is as vital as the Premier says it is; if the very interests of the goldfields are depending upon the effect that the water supply will have on the loan market; if, as we are told, the success or failure of the undertaking will affect the country in its most vital part, and will make the difference between complete success and failure for all time; if that is the position—for that is the position that has been placed before the House—I will ask the thinking men of this House to consider whether it is not absolutely necessary to be quite sure you are right. I say that if we are to take into consideration this view of the question, if the question of supplying water at three shillings and sixpence per thousand gallons to the population of Coolgardie is to make the difference between failure and success, it is of the most vital importance that we should be perfectly satisfied the scheme will do the work that the Government

expect it to do, for the reason that failure means absolute failure because it would mean the failure of all minor schemes. If the Government, according to their own showing, fail in this scheme, they not only destroy their own prospects, but they will destroy all minor prospects with them. The great importance of this scheme is that, if it should prove unequal to supplying water to Coolgardie, if a scheme that has a public loan behind it, and all the forces of a strong Government behind it, should fail, you may depend upon it that private enterprise will never try to do what the Bill before the House may have failed to do. The arguments which are used in favour of this Bill are that the scheme is the best one that can be devised, and that it is an absolute necessity. Now, are we completely satisfied on these points? Is the Premier willing himself to stake his reputation and the complete future of this colony upon the scheme? For he says that if it is not carried out, it means ruin. [THE PREMIER: I never used those words.] You used some other words having the same sense. It may not have been in those exact four letters, "ruin." [THE PREMIER: Be correct.] The hon. gentleman spoke of very grave and serious consequences. I notice that the Premier always desires to be technically correct, and if he were as correct in principles as he desires to be in technicalities, I should be willing to admit that he is, as some of his friends would lead us to suppose, the leading Premier living in Australia. We are asked to take a scheme which was rejected by the hon. member for Yilgarn when it was submitted to him privately. The only opinion that has been taken since is that of the Engineer-in-Chief. I am quite prepared to admit that the Engineer-in-Chief is a great engineer; but he does not know everything. I am quite prepared to admit he knows a great deal, but it may be quite possible that he does not know this water scheme. What creates a suspicion in my mind is the very guarded way in which the Engineer-in-Chief speaks of the scheme, and the manner in which he reiterates, "It is not my scheme, and I am not going to take the responsibility of it." [THE PREMIER: No; nothing of the kind.] I repeat, that is the only inference to be drawn from his remarks, and I say

that it is drawn. [THE PREMIER: It's an exaggeration.] But I need not go further than the local press, to show that this interpretation has been drawn from the Engineer-in-Chief's report. In a leading article it is stated that this is the only conclusion which can be arrived at.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: It must be true.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: When we are brought to such conclusions, I ask, is it unreasonable that the Government should be requested to stay their hand until we get into this House, under the Redistribution of Seats Bill, the representatives of the goldfield for whom this water scheme is meant? As the honourable member for West Kimberley says, that everyone on the goldfields is in favour of the water scheme, the Government would not be injured by waiting for the election of those members; neither has the scheme anything to lose by waiting until we get the voice of those new members. The country cannot lose anything by this delay. I do not think the Premier will deny that there will necessarily be a considerable amount of preliminary work and preliminary inquiry before the waterworks are constructed, even if the Bill were passed to-night. [THE PREMIER: We will soon get to work.] Many months must elapse before the Government can get the necessary information to carry out this work. The Engineer-in-Chief, in his report, says that on the pumping question he must have advice from the old country. This information could be gathered during the recess, and no time need be lost. The Government are not very particular what they do in recess. They spent half a million of money last year, during the recess, without the authority of Parliament. As this scheme cannot be carried out until certain information is got, the delay in postponing the Bill till it can be considered by the new Parliament will be very little indeed; and by that time we can go forward, if we are going forward, with the voice of the country behind us, and with the knowledge that the scheme will have been submitted to experts in other places, and have been confirmed by them. We shall be able to go forward knowing that this undertaking, upon which the success or the failure of the goldfields depends, is declared to be a wise and judicious one,

and no man can then reflect upon himself, or upon any individual in connection with it, no matter how it may turn out. The Engineer-in-Chief has said he requires more information in regard to the pumping, that looks so simple to the Attorney General, who said last night that if you can pump water a certain height at one lift, you can do it eight times over, or as many times as you like. But the point is this, and it touches the very question that the Engineer-in-Chief wants the advice of hydraulic engineers upon: suppose you do pump eight times over, hon. members who know anything about engineering are aware that every time you touch machinery you risk a breakdown.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Is a pump more intricate than a locomotive?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If the hon. gentleman will allow me to proceed, he will understand what I am going to say, that if you have a risk of a breakdown with one pump, you are eight times more likely to have breakdowns with eight pumps.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: There are thirty-two. Why don't you be correct?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That only makes it worse. I am stating an argument, and as I am not going into details, and for the purposes of that argument it does not matter whether there are eight pumps or thirty-two, what I contend is that risk and danger are indicated by the Engineer-in-Chief in using the pumps, and a breakdown of them means the failure of the water supply. If you have a breakdown of the pumps there will be no water passing through the pipes, and that will stop the water of Coolgardie. If you increase your pumping stations you increase your risks, and it is on this pumping question that the Engineer-in-Chief says he wants further evidence. I say it is not unreasonable to ask that we should have this delay until after the general election; a delay that will not mean the putting off of the construction of the works, because the time will be employed in getting necessary data to work upon. The delay will not keep back the water from Coolgardie. It will hasten the getting of the water there, and it will give increased strength to this House by

increasing the number of its members. I hope and trust it will increase its intelligence. If thirty-three men in this House are wise in passing a scheme of such magnitude as this, that is to "make the desert blossom as the rose," and create a "river in the wilderness"; if there is such a tremendous advantage to result from the combined wisdom of thirty-three members of this House, what will be the result of the deliberations of forty-four members, if we get the intelligence of the men from the fields where this water is required, and upon which these two and a half millions of money are to be expended? I say there is no more reasonable proposition to put before intelligent men than that there should be a reasonable delay and care observed before we start upon this tremendous scheme; and the amendment only asks that a delay should be granted. I would emphasise that it will not delay the scheme; it will probably hasten it. [**THE PREMIER:** Are you in favour of it?] If I were in favour of it, I should probably say what I am saying now. I am not going to give the Premier the satisfaction of saying he has converted me. I am aware he has been on a missionary expedition. I know he has been going about saying that he has converted people to this scheme wholesale. If he were as successful as a missionary in the South Seas as he is in this House, I think he would make a first-class archbishop for those islands. But, here is the question which stares us in the face: the Government say they want water at Coolgardie. We all say "yes" to that. There has never been any opposition to that.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: You have just opposed it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have not opposed it. What I say is that we do not want fresh water for crushing purposes.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Who says so?

MR. SIMPSON: The member for the district proved it last night.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I say the people of these fields must be supplied with water, and my only objection to the scheme is that it does not supply them early enough. While I say that, I would rather wait another year and be sure they would get the water, than

have to leave them to suppose they were going to get an effective pumping scheme, and then disappoint them with an utter failure that would crush the fields.

THE PREMIER: What will you give them?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Let me get on the Treasury benches, and I will show the Government.

THE PREMIER: Ah! No fear.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Well, I suppose not. The Government have taken out a forty years' lease of those benches, but they want some of the waters of life to keep them going. I want to make it clear that what I ask, and what is asked in this amendment, is a reasonable request, which should commend itself to each member of the House. Of course I must admit this House is composed of the best men in the colony; but I would like to announce that there really are some men not in this House who have brains, and who think; men who have some ideas that are useful to the colony, although those men are not here. It is a pity they are not here. These people, while they desire that everything should be done for the fields, think this question should be delayed in order to get a correct opinion from proper authorities. I commend these suggestions to the Premier. I would commend to him that very wise American axiom, "Be quite 'sure you are right, and then go ahead.'" But we are not sure we are right, and at this stage the Engineer-in-Chief wants information and is asking for it. I say that when you are going to ask the Engineer-in-Chief to carry out this gigantic scheme, you should give him the information he is asking for; and the time that will be necessary to get this information will allow hon. members to come fresh from the hustings, with the consciousness that they have the will of the people behind them; and this work can be carried to a successful issue, without any hesitation, and without any delay.

At 6-30 p.m. the **SPEAKER** left the chair.

At 7-30 p.m. the **SPEAKER** resumed the chair.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I do

not intend to make many remarks at this stage, and the few words I propose to make use of will be directed to the amendment of the hon. member for Geraldton. I may, perhaps, reserve to myself the right to say something on the main question later, if necessary, although it may not be necessary. It appeared to me that all the arguments which have been addressed to us by several hon. members who have spoken in favour of the amendment, especially by the members for Wellington and Nannine, have been to reiterate and demonstrate the necessity for delay. I think we can, in one word, sum up their doctrine that what they desire the Government to do is to delay. Now, if there were any virtue in delay, I hope the Government would not be adverse to delaying the carrying out of this scheme. If we are to know a great deal more than we do now, and if a lot of knowledge would accrue to us by that delay, then I would not gainsay the argument that there may be some virtue in delay. But the tone of the hon. members' remarks would lead us to suppose that, if we were to delay until we get the eleven new members who are to be elected under the new Constitution Bill into this House, then we would be able to say that we should be absolutely right—[**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** You would have the voice of the country behind you]—that we should have the voice of the country behind us, and, therefore, that we should be sure to be right. The hon. member for Nannine forces this view of the question: that we must be sure we are absolutely right before we commit the country to this great increase of the national debt; that we want to be sure we are right. I do not know how these eleven new members are going to be constituted, mentally and otherwise; but if their accession to our numbers is going to make us perfectly sure we are right, they must be a different class of men from those we have got at present; because it is difficult for any of us to be sure we are right, even in simple matters, and much more so in dealing with a large scheme like this. With all due respect and deference to the voters under our new Constitution (I believe the new members will be just as good a class of men as we have now), I cannot see that there is to be in their brains such concen-

tration of accurate knowledge and intelligence as some members here seem to anticipate.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is not the point. Give us time to get information.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): But if these eleven members are, according to the hon. gentleman's argument, to make us perfectly sure we are going to be right in dealing with this scheme, when there appears a lot of doubt and mistrust that we may be wrong, then that is a doctrine I cannot accept. I do not know what is to make the new members more to be relied on than the others already in this House. It is recognised and admitted by all that the necessity for the increase of members has been the sudden and unexpected arrival of several thousands of new people from other countries, who come here almost as strangers. I do not know that the adoption of this scheme can be any more serious for those persons who came here but yesterday, and may go away to-morrow. I am not prepared to admit that it is a much more serious thing to them if we incur some failure in undertaking the responsibility and liability of this scheme, than it is for those who have been settled in the colony for years, who are here to remain, who have a considerable stake in the country, and who know that if the country goes down they will go down with it. I cannot help thinking that the people who have, to use a hackneyed phrase, "borne the burden and heat of the day," who cannot easily get out of the country if they wish to do so, and who will be here to face this great national debt, must be more likely to feel that it will be a more serious matter for them if this scheme fails, than it can be for any of the new arrivals. Therefore I do not see that we have any right to defer to the opinions of fresh arrivals, whether in the country or in this chamber, rather than rely on the opinion of those who know the country well, and whose interests are bound up in the prosperity and destiny of this colony. I do not see this marvellous virtue in delay, if the delay is only for the sake of getting the opinion and obtaining the judgment of those men who are to be sent to this House by the votes of these large accessions of fresh arrivals in the colony. But if, on the other

hand, the delay is for professional reasons, then I am not prepared to say there is not more cause for delay, at any rate on the surface of the argument; but whether there is more in it when you come to examine the matter, I do not know. It does seem more reasonable, when persons ask for the opinions of hydraulic engineers, for instance, and for more time and leisure to examine into the scheme. Now, if this were some new notion, some fresh discovery in engineering science, something that had never been tried in the world before, or never successfully carried out, there would be a tremendous lot of force in the argument.

MR. SIMPSON: Where has it been carried out?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): If it were the construction of some great work, some great harbour work for instance, in which our engineers had not had previous experience in their knowledge of science, there would be something in the argument; but, on the other hand, if this scheme were only to construct a reservoir for holding, say, 1,500 million gallons of water, would it be considered necessary to defer to the opinions of some eminent engineers elsewhere, far more qualified than the engineers in the colony at present? The answer to that question would be that an engineer of ordinary experience and practical training ought to be quite competent to deal with such an ordinary work, and also to estimate the cost. These are works constructed every day in every country, and nearly every hydraulic engineer has an intimate acquaintance with the cost of such works. Then what else is there that is very intricate about this scheme before the House. If it were a scheme to pump one million gallons of water per day, and raise it 100ft., then lift the water a further 100ft., and so on until the required elevation is reached, would hon. members consider that was a question which ought to be referred to some eminent hydraulic engineer outside the colony? I maintain they would not. What is there so different from this scheme, as the Attorney General has pointed out, to a succession of these little water schemes, extended by a succession of lifts of the same kind? There are hundreds of large farmers and squatters

who have often had to obtain pumps for throwing one million gallons of water per day, and pumping the water 100ft. high. I believe these things are reduced to a formula of tables: How much horsepower, and how much pressure of steam is required, to raise so many gallons at so many foot lbs. It appears to me there is not much more force in this argument, which requires this delay which is to accomplish everything. It does not seem to me to be much more important than the argument for delay in order that we may get these accessions of eleven new members to this House. I think the question narrows down to this—the object of this delay I do not think is intended to be one that we may know very much more about the possibilities or requirements of this scheme, for I think we are in as good a position to know whether a scheme of this sort is necessary and practicable as we would be in twelve months' time, with the addition of eleven new members to this House. We would then be faced with the same question and the same arguments; and the end of it would be that we should simply have to decide the matter by the vote of the majority.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You would have the country behind you.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): If the fact of having the country behind us will add to our wisdom and knowledge, and will be any consolation to us in failure—for if we fail now, the disaster will also ruin the individual, and we know that if the country fails, we fail with it, and that is the thing that touches us to the core—but if this scheme succeeds, and the country succeeds, we succeed with it. I am inclined to think every man looks at this question, more or less, through these spectacles; so that unless we can have an accession of wisdom, of superior intelligence, and of more accurate knowledge, by this delay till after the elections, I do not know where the virtue of delay is to come in. I am not going to deal much more with this phase of the question, except to say this, that it appears to me to resolve itself into this proposition: Is a greater and larger supply of water required on the goldfields? The hon. member for Geraldton distinctly tells us not. [MR.

SIMPSON: Not for mining purposes.] He distinctly tells us the miners do not want this water; that they can get on very well without it; that they are finding water every day, and the trouble will be to get rid of the water rather than finding it. I am not prepared in any way to deny the possibility of that—it is a possible phase of the question we have got to look at straight in the face, that after we have delivered water at Coolgardie there is a possibility this water which the Government propose to supply will not be required by the miners for gold-washing purposes. But while one member for the goldfields will say the miners do not want this water which the Government propose to supply, another member representing the goldfields will say the whole of the goldfields are languishing for a sufficient supply of water. Therefore, taking these opposite opinions of members representing the goldfields, there does not seem to be much prospect of our getting down to bed-rock on that question. Even when the eleven new members come into this House, some of them will be likely to say the goldfields want this water, and some may say they do not want it. But supposing, for the sake of argument, that the only failure that accrues to this scheme is because the goldfields can do very well without this water, then I say it will be a failure on the right side. It is not quite fair to call it an absolute disaster if we find the miners have got such quantities of water, and that it is so cheap they will be able to wash gold without this scheme of the Government. We should be able to congratulate ourselves on that state of things, rather than condole with each other on it as a disaster; and the 2½ millions we should have spent on the scheme won't hurt us much, if that be the case. Another factor in the success of our goldfields, when they have got such an abundance of water that they can wash the gold with local supplies, is that this very fact will bring such an enormous increase of population to those fields that, for domestic purposes alone, all this water will be required in the country round Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They won't pay.

THE PREMIER: Why won't they pay?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): If

they can strike water enough to wash gold at the mines, you will see such a population in and around those cities that all the water which the Government can supply will hardly be sufficient for them; so that the possibility of failure in that direction is not an unmixed evil. The hon. member for Nannine says those people will not pay for the water, but I have a better opinion of my fellow men than that. I do not believe the hon. member can point to any experience of his where the population in a city absolutely refused to pay the water rate.

MR. SIMPSON: Why, Fremantle did not pay for years.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): That was because they were not pressed to pay; but, when called upon, they paid up like men.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You will have to put a rate on to get the money.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): Then we will put a rate on. I am inclined to think the easiest way to make people pay will be to stop the water. I suppose these eleven new members will bring so much political pressure to bear, that they will not stand that sort of thing; so that if we look at that phase of the question, it is not so very bad. Many members have said this scheme is not necessary; that it is quite possible to conserve water, and possible to get it on the fields in other ways. The member for Yilgarn said there is such an accumulation in those lakes that the water can be conserved. But we have had some experience in the conservation of water, and it must be admitted that conservation in this country is very expensive indeed. Another thing is, the country is so liable to droughts that you have to ensure a two or three years' supply before you can be safe.

MR. RANDELL: I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman is addressing himself to the main question, and not to the amendment.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I am afraid I have been out of order; but I have done, so far as that is concerned. I do not think there is much in this argument for delay. If hon. members can show that, by delay, we can ensure

such an increase of wisdom, and an increase of knowledge and intelligence, I may go with them; but until they can prove that the eleven, or rather the forty-four men who are coming into this House under the new Constitution Bill, and who are to be sent in by these new voters, are going to be a superior class, with wider knowledge, higher wisdom, and a better grasp of the question, I, for one, decline to yield the palm. If they show they know more than we can know, and are also more deeply interested in the success or failure of this scheme, then I say we, who have been in the country and have interests in it, are more deeply interested in it than any new arrivals can be.

MR. RANDELL: I am not quite sure that I understood some of the words used in the amendment. I do not know in what sense the mover used the word "premature;" whether he used it with regard to the necessity for a water supply to the goldfields, or whether he intended it to apply to the latter part of the sentence. If the hon. member is of opinion that the scheme is premature—

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Bill before the House is to borrow two and a-half millions.

MR. RANDELL: Does the hon. member mean that the time has not yet arrived for giving a water supply to the goldfields, or does he mean that it is premature in the sense that the constituencies that are proposed to be created by the re-adjustment of seats should have an opportunity of expressing themselves at the poll? As regards the first, if the hon. member really means that it is premature, I think most other hon. members in this House will be in opposition to him. There is an almost unanimous feeling in this House that a water supply scheme is not premature—that a supply of water from some source should be given to the goldfields. With regard to the latter part of the question, and to which I think hon. members ought now to address themselves—that is the constitutional aspect, which has been raised especially by the hon. members for Wellington, Nannine, and Geraldton—I will not say much, because I am not a constitutional authority. But I cannot conceal from myself the fact that we ought to bring to bear a

little common sense and practical knowledge as to the necessities of our position at the present time. If I had an opportunity of consulting English history, which to some extent, though perhaps not in every case, is a guide to this House in its proceedings, we should find the procedure of the Ministry in the old country is very much like that which has been pursued by the Ministry here in bringing forward this scheme. I believe no Ministry, on entering office, sets forth a full statement of all the acts and proceedings which it intends to take during that Parliament. Many important matters are necessarily brought in, without previous notice, during the career of a Ministry. I do think, however, that in this case the Government might have given more publicity to this scheme which they have laid on the table of the House, so that it could receive the criticism of a large number of people outside this House before the session began, and in this way we could have obtained the opinion of the country on the scheme almost as completely as through a general election. Still this Bill has now been before the House a fortnight, and there have been opportunities for people in different parts of the colony to examine it and pronounce upon it; so that the argument which has been based on the constitutional aspect of the question is to a certain extent discounted. I shall be glad if some further time can be given before this measure finally passes through this House, so that there may be no regrets expressed afterwards that we did not examine into every phase of it. Considering the important interests that are at stake in the colony, I believe the scheme is not premature, but that the necessity has arisen for giving to the goldfields a more ample, certain, and superior water supply than they possess at present, or are likely to possess according to the statements made by the hon. member for Yilgarn himself. The hon. member for the DeGrey has dealt, I think pretty fully, with the aspect of the question as presented to us in this amendment as to the introduction of eleven new members into this House, and the effect their opinions would have upon the other members. We might reasonably suppose their opinions would be on the side of supporting the scheme which

has been put forward by the Government, as being the best in all the circumstances which, at any rate, has been presented to the colony. It seems to me to be eminently superior to a scheme which has been placed in the hands of hon. members from a private source. I will go further, and say that the Bill having been before the country for three weeks, the people in all the large centres of population—Perth, Fremantle, and the country towns—have had an ample opportunity to examine into the details of this scheme. If they had entertained an adverse opinion with regard to it, they could have called public meetings, and could have asked their members to attend, either to listen or to give their opinions, and then some resolution could have been passed on the subject. I think that would have been a very proper course to pursue; and if in the country there was a strong opposition to the scheme, that course would certainly have been adopted. Before the scheme was made known and the reasons for it given, I was one of those who were not favourable to it, because it involved a large expenditure of money and a great increase of the public debt; but after having considered the scheme I have, as I believe a large number of people have also, altered my opinion upon it. It is evident that a great many people look much more respectfully, at any rate, upon the scheme than they did before the details were made known; and we have reason to think that the country generally is not opposed to the scheme, for, if it had been, there would have been the meetings of which I have spoken. It is just possible that some portions of the colony may, for reasons which hon. members will be able to understand, not be very much in favour of the scheme, because, perhaps, it does not benefit themselves. The scheme provides for a large expenditure in one particular part of the colony, and one can understand and sympathise with, to a very considerable extent, the feeling that I have described. It may be that the Murchison, and even Geraldton itself, have no particular interest in the Eastern goldfields, and, therefore, do not look upon the scheme from the same point of view as hon. members from this part of the colony or those further South. I do not propose to say very much on this

point. I must say, however, that, on the face of it, I have considerable sympathy with the views of hon. members who express themselves in the amendment that has been moved; and I believe, as a general rule, it is best to consult the country in all cases in important matters of this kind, especially and more so in matters of principle. I do not know that any great principle is involved in this scheme more than is involved in the consideration of a railway scheme, and I think that there is not so much risk in the construction of waterworks as in the construction of railways into some parts of the colony. I have, as I have said, sympathy with them thus far; that it is desirable, as far as possible, in great enterprises of this kind that the people should be consulted; and, further, there is, taking into consideration the circumstance in which we stand at the present moment, a strong element of reasonableness in the proposition which has been made that the constituencies should be consulted. It is claimed that the members to be elected for the new goldfields constituencies should be consulted, and I think that hon. members who consider that there should be delay should remember that that delay will certainly run twelve months. They should, therefore, look upon the question in that aspect, and ask themselves whether we should be prepared to undergo that delay for the sake of sentiment, which, at the same time, I will say is, to a large extent, right and proper sentiment. They ask us to delay for that period works which on all hands are admitted to be urgently necessary. I believe the goldfields centres realise that the time has come when this step should be taken and, therefore, seeing that the matter is urgent, I think we should as speedily as possible proceed with this great work for the development of the resources of the goldfields and for placing them on a better footing than they are at the present moment. It is beside the question whether the mines use the water or not. We will deal with that question when considering the original motion, but I certainly cannot agree with the amendment when it says that the proposal of the Government is premature. Looking at the question from a practical point of view, if we desire to promote the interests of the colony at the earliest

possible moment, the time has come for this scheme, and if we are satisfied with the proposal placed before us, we should agree to the Bill that has been introduced by the Government. I am afraid, sir, that I have not spoken very effectively, as I was not quite prepared to speak on this subject, but I hope that I have made myself clear that, whilst sympathising with the hon. member for Geraldton, I think we should bring our reasoning faculties and practical knowledge to bear on the question, and not delay the consideration of the original motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Although I think there is very little necessity for me to speak on the present occasion, still, as I have the opportunity and the right, I should like to say a few words in order to deal with the question that has been raised by the hon. member for Geraldton—an opportunity which I will probably not have if I do not take the present one. The hon. member's proposal has for its object the shelving of this Bill—getting rid of it altogether this session. I suppose that everyone has noticed that there are many members of this House who have not yet had an opportunity of expressing their opinion upon the main features of the Bill, and I hope to see them take the opportunity they will have later on. The desire of the hon. members opposite has been that these shall not have the opportunity—that they should confine their observations to saying whether this Bill is premature or not. The hon. member in urging on the House that the Bill is not necessary at the present time made two statements which I wish to see put forward plainly, and which I hope will not be forgotten. First of all, he said that there was no necessity for this water scheme, and next he said that the mines at Coolgardie do not want the water. These are two statements which I hope hon. members and the people of the colony will remember. It will be noticed, I am sure, that although I talked for more than two hours before hon. members on the main features of this Bill, giving all the reasons I could find and saying all that I thought suitable in order to impress upon hon. members the importance of this scheme and also its necessity, when the hon. member resumes the debate after an adjournment for a

fortnight, he does not touch on any of the points that I then made, never deals with any of the figures I used in that long attempt on my part to place the matter carefully before hon. members. What he does do is to raise the question that the Bill is not necessary, that there is no necessity for the scheme, that the mines do not want the water. An attempt has been made, and I think it was a very poor one, and not a very worthy one, to attribute to the Engineer-in-Chief motives and views that he does not entertain. It has been made to appear that all this information which he has so carefully placed before us in all its details has been prepared under pressure from the Government, and that his heart is not in the scheme. I am quite sure that any one reading his report cannot come to that conclusion, although the Engineer-in-Chief quite properly says that he is not responsible for the project, being only the adviser of the Government. But to say that he is adverse to the scheme, or that it has been pressed upon him by the Government against his wishes, is as far from the truth as the poles are asunder. The only point that has been made, in trying to induce hon. members to vote for the shelving of this Bill for getting rid of it for a year, is the constitutional point that this House is not competent to deal with it, or should not undertake to deal with important measures, because during the next 12 months a general election will probably take place. I may point out to hon. members that under ordinary circumstances this House would have two years to live. We have been in existence two years only out of four; and it was only in order to meet the demands occasioned by large influxes of population that we have decided to cut short our ordinary life of four years. We have taken that course simply with the view of admitting into this House the representatives of those districts that have been newly formed. The hon. member for Perth, although he did not quote any instances, said that in England great measures were proposed by the Government, and carried through the House, without reference to a general election. Can you imagine that in England, where a Parliament can last for 7 years, the Government being prevented from introducing any great measure because, if

they did so, they would have to go to the country and ascertain the voice of the people upon it? I do not think that that will be found to be the case in England, and I see no reason why it should be so here, unless in matters that can afford to wait. The contention of the Government is that this is a pressing matter and ought to be dealt with; and we say further that the great majority of the people of this country are in favour of the proposals of the Government. I say that the object of those who are opposing this scheme is not to consult the constituencies, but to delay the passing of this Bill and to defeat the Government. I do not think they will be able to do it. The hon. member for Wellington poses for the first time in this House as a constitutional authority, and has given us a lot of fatherly advice. One would have thought that we were schoolboys. I need not tell the hon. member that it was said by a great poet that—

A little learning is a dangerous thing :
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

With regard to this proposal that we should refer this matter to the constituencies, one moment's consideration will show how impossible that would be. If we were to refer this matter to the constituencies at the present time—and we cannot brook a delay of twelve months—the new electorates would not have an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it. The electorates that are in existence at the present moment would alone have the opportunity of saying “Yes” or “No” to the scheme. Hon. members know that very well. There is one feature of the measure that hon. members will have noticed. It is that the three members who have opposed this measure—who have urged that this matter should be postponed—have not had the pluck to say they are opposed to it themselves. They do not say they are opposed to the scheme, but they say they are opposed to its being proceeded with at the present time. If they were in earnest about it, they would have come out and said they were opposed to it, and shown reasons why it should not be carried out. They have not done that: their desire is to destroy the Bill without showing themselves actually opposed to the proposals of the Government. It

must not be forgotten that we have often heard in this House that the Coolgardie electorate has some 30,000 adult residents, and those 30,000 people are practically unanimous in regard to the proposals of the Government. I hold in my hand a newspaper that I came across to-day, the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of August 3rd, in which appears the following, with reference to a mass meeting held there with regard to this scheme, that meeting being attended by thousands of miners: "Not a single voice was raised against the Government project from the vast concourse that assembled. Hostile critics were invited to come forward, but none put in an appearance, and when the resolution favouring the scheme was put, every hand was raised in support, and not one against the motion." This extract represents the feeling all over the Coolgardie goldfields, and I say this with reference to the members who are likely to be returned for those constituencies at Coolgardie, that no candidate would ever be able to find a place in this House if he went before those people and said he was opposed to our dealing with the great want they are so desirous of having supplied. It is not likely that such a candidate would be able to get more than a few votes in all that great community. You may take it from me that when Coolgardie returns those six members, they will all be in favour of this scheme, and not one opposed to it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Government will be all the stronger.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Hon. members who support the amendment have not said that they are opposed to the scheme, and that is what they ought to have said if they were in earnest. But they are determined, if possible, to kill the Bill by setting up what is a mere subterfuge. They do not propose any alternative, and I did expect that the hon. member for Geraldton, after a fortnight's deliberation, after being urged on on by the press, would have had some alternative to bring forward. What did he tell us? He told us nothing. He had no proposal showing what he would do for all those people who are living in discomfort owing to not having sufficient water. Another hon. member, the member for Nannine, who poses as one

desirous of helping the goldfields, and as one possessing great sympathy with his fellow men, what does he propose?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is not our place to propose.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): If you condemn the proposals of the Government, it is your duty to put some other proposals before the country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is never done in the world.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): If you oppose the carrying out of this important scheme, a scheme that has for its object not only the opening up of the goldfields, but also the preserving of the lives of the people there, it is your duty to give some alternative, some proposal of your own for dealing with this water difficulty. The hon. members have not done that, but they have urged us to delay the scheme and do nothing. We have, during the last few years, had many times to oppose those who have been crying out "Delay, delay," but we are not going to delay if we can help it. Another thing: it must have been almost amusing to hon. members on this side of the House to be warned by the two members opposite, not to bring ruin on the colony. Only fancy the men around me, men of substance and position and long service in the colony, being warned by the hon. members opposite not to ruin ourselves! It almost makes one laugh. I would ask hon. members, who have most to lose? Which are most likely to be careful of the interests of the country? We are not going to ruin ourselves and to ruin this colony, and I do not know why we need a warning from the hon. members opposite. It is not the Bill they are so anxious about as their desire to defeat the Government. What I ask hon. members is that they shall pass the measure, and not delay it on account of this side proposal. I do not know why any one on the cross benches should move a motion on this subject. Where are the leaders? [MR. ILLINGWORTH: In England.] You are all leaders.

MR. SIMPSON: We are better off than your side.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What I say, in conclusion, is this, that those who are opposed to this measure

should oppose the Bill out and out and attempt to throw it out, and not by a side wind, or a side issue, or a subterfuge try to get rid of the Bill. It is a plain matter, easily understood; a matter that anyone can understand for himself. Is this Bill necessary, or is it not? Is the scheme urgent, or is it not? If it is so, support it. If it is not wanted, if it is not necessary, if, as the hon. member for Geraldton says, there is no necessity for the scheme, if the mines do not want the water, well then it is not a good Bill and should not be supported. That is the plain English of the question; but we have had to go off that track owing to the subterfuge set up by the hon. member for Geraldton. We have had to discuss the matter as to whether the scheme is premature or not, while it would be just as easy to say "no" to the Bill. Hon. members should confine themselves to that position. I may tell hon. members, who are asking for delay, that every man they meet is in favour of the Bill, and, therefore, they do not like to say they are opposed to it. They simply say they will delay the Bill, they will consider it by-and-by, but I declare that now is the more convenient season. This measure brooks of no delay; this is the convenient season; and I believe that hon. members will agree with me and vote accordingly.

Amendment (Mr. Simpson's) put, and negatived on the voices by a large majority.

[Discussion on the main question resumed.]

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): Although this measure has been introduced by the hon. the Premier, still I think it will after all resolve itself, if carried, into a matter to be dealt with by the department over which I preside. The Premier has so fully placed before this House all the particulars in connection with the Bill, and I think it has been so well threshed out by those who have spoken for and against, that there is little for me to say, except to place before the House a few facts in connection with the scheme. Some points have been raised by hon. members as to the practicability of the scheme, and I think those points have been dispelled by the remarks which have been made by those who have supported the scheme. I think that the

estimates that I have placed on the table of the House, showing how the various amounts named in the scheme were arrived at by the Engineer-in-Chief, are convincing proofs that in arriving at these facts and figures the Engineer-in-Chief had fully considered the subject before putting his scheme in the hands of the Government for submission to Parliament. Some remarks have been made as to whether the House should obtain further information from persons qualified to give an opinion as to the practicability of the scheme. I may say that there is hardly any necessity to obtain any further information because, although schemes of this magnitude are not common, still we have pumping schemes in other parts of the world which are quite equal to the present scheme. There is therefore no need, in my opinion, to obtain further opinions as to whether the pumping can be done or not, for we have proof already that this can be done. Those who have opposed the scheme have, in a measure, admitted that it is practicable. From Tasmania we have recently received information of a scheme for pumping water to the mines of that colony, and it has been mentioned here by a gentleman who has addressed a letter on the subject to the hon. the Premier. He says: "The Tasmanian Gold Mining Company have good reason to expect, within a month or two, offers of plant to pump 6,000,000 and 8,000,000 gallons of water respectively in 24 hours to 1,500 feet. Their present plant is pumping over 3,500,000 gallons per day through 718 feet in three lifts, using 560 horse power. The engines are on the surface, but if we had room below, 1,000 feet in one lift could be done at much less cost. One of the factors of modern pumping is a quicker valve motion, and the cost is reduced by use of quadruple expansion engines and water tube boilers (vertical tubes); and I expect our engines to pump 6,000,000 gallons at not much more than the present cost of pumping 3,500,000 gallons. Under the circumstances, the mechanical difficulties in your water scheme appear to be a very small factor." I think this will show that there is no necessity to obtain further information as to what can be obtained

in the way of pumping, for it is already in practice, not only in Tasmania, but in other parts of Australia. In New Zealand the pumping system is in force; and it is evident to everyone that we need have no apprehension on that score. There have also been offers made, since this scheme has been put forward by the Government, to supply the pumping machinery necessary for the purpose; and to-day there are in South Australia pumps of the character that we need, that have been offered to the Government, so there is no need for inquiry as to whether they can be obtained or not. We have also had proof by letters that have appeared from gentlemen who, no doubt, know what they are talking about. For instance, Mr. Cox, who recently wrote on the subject, pronounced the scheme practicable. He mentioned then that, although supporting boring for artesian supplies, he did not look on this scheme as impracticable, but pronounced it feasible. We have information from other practical men who support the scheme, so that on the whole we may set aside any doubts as to the practicability of the scheme. As to the Engineer-in-Chief's estimates, it has been proved to you that they have been most carefully compiled; and when he tells us there is no doubt he can carry out the work within a reasonable time, we can believe those estimates. It was mentioned with regard to the rainfall on the goldfields that a larger supply could be obtained by catchment. Of course, no doubt during the last year or two the rainfall has been very much better than during the preceding years; but when we come to remember that, though the rainfall was better (it was only some 5 inches per annum), we see it is not sufficient to warrant us in depending on it. The catchment areas no doubt in many instances are good, but it has been proved by those prospecting in this country for areas, that the holding ground is not of a character warranting us in expending large sums in a country where we are not certain of having good holding ground. It is expensive to make these reservoirs, and then there is the uncertainty of the rainfall, and while that uncertainty exists we cannot provide a certain supply for those working on our goldfields. The question was asked of

the Government the other night what they intended doing while carrying out this scheme to provide water on the fields. That question is of great importance, and one I am pleased to find was asked. I think it can be proved the Government are not unmindful of the wants of the people, and they are also honestly trying to do all possible to obtain a water supply in the interim that must take place between the carrying through of this Bill and the completion of the scheme. As you are aware, previous to my assuming office, the Premier, who travelled through the fields, sanctioned the expenditure of £160,000 for the purpose of conserving water on the fields, and to-day there is no department, except the Railway Department with its vast construction works, spending such large sums as the Water Supply Department. These sums of money are being spent under careful management, and the engineer who has been appointed to take charge of this department has recently visited the fields, and travelled through their length and breadth; and the officers in charge on the fields have given him every information as to the best site to select, and selections have been made, and trial shafts put down in different places, with different results. Some have been satisfactory, and some not, as the holding ground is not of the best, and much difficulty has been experienced in selecting good holding ground. The Government have sanctioned the construction of a large reservoir at Niagara to cost £30,000, which will impound many millions of gallons of water, and this will serve, I think, that portion of the fields. We have to depend on the rainfall, which is uncertain, but admitting this, it shows we are alive to the occasion by providing the necessary reservoirs. This large expenditure is no doubt warranted, and the Government have not been unmindful of the people in that neighbourhood, because instructions have been issued to go on with the work at once. Not only are we doing this in the Niagara district and other parts of the fields, but we have commenced a diamond drill bore near Coolgardie. That, I may say, is down now 130ft. and the work is in fair progress. The Government have also ordered another bore to commence operations at a point to

be selected somewhere near Kalgoorlie. The place will be determined on when the Government Geologist, who has recently been appointed, is able to assist our water supply department in selecting the site where this bore will be placed. This will prove that everything is being done now that can be done to give a water supply to the fields, and if the rains favour us there is no doubt that the large reservoirs that have been provided may for some time to come provide for the wants of the fields. As to the diamond drill which has now commenced work, I think we have it on good authority that it will take at least two years before we reach the depth authorised by this House—3,000 feet—and then we are uncertain as to the result. Opinions given by geologists are against artesian water supplies being obtained there, but the Government, in acting in the way they are, are acting with the authority of the House, and the bore will prove whether artesian supplies exist or not. It will set at rest a doubt that for so long has existed in the minds of those knowing something of those parts, and it will be useful knowledge for us to obtain. Though I hope for success, I am afraid that we are not likely to be successful, taking into consideration the opinions we have regarding a water supply on the fields. I have learned, on good authority, that although much of the water consumed there during summer is condensed, and is assumed to be pure, there must be something deleterious in this water, which undoubtedly causes bad health. Though supposed to be pure water, it is not perfectly pure, as it contains chemicals and other substances injurious to life. Though admitting that distilled water should be pure, there may be properties in that water that cannot be extracted from it, and it must in a way interfere with the health of people, as it has been proved that, though the water is supposed to be pure, sickness is rife in that district. The sooner the people do not have to use the condensed water, the better it will be, and the less sickness we shall hear of. I think the remarks I have made should convince hon. members that during the time this construction is going on, the Government will take every measure to obtain a water supply. I think the large sums that have been spent

in the past, and authorised for the future, prove we intend to do all we can to make the water supply as secure as it is possible it can be made under the circumstances. There is one other matter I would like to touch upon. I know very little about mining, but I have heard something about the cost of water and the crushing of ore. I would like to say that, though I do not wish to throw any obstacle in the way of those inclined to carry the ore from the fields to the coast, still, when we look at the cost at which water can be supplied—3s. 6d. per thousand gallons—it only means 8d. and a fraction for crushing, as against 14s. it would cost to convey the ore from the nearest point of the fields to the coast.

MR. MORAN: How many gallons to the ton?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): Two hundred gallons to the ton, or about 8d. per ton. I think this, of course, should be an encouragement to miners. At the same time, I do not wish to interfere with any schemes that may be brought forward for the conveyance of the ore by the railways, but it would be better for those intending to carry the ore through to have the water taken up to them, as it would give a large saving. I do not wish to detract from the benefits of private schemes, as it has been proved that the Government wish to encourage those who wish to carry out a private scheme for supplying water to the fields, but I would point out one or two errors in the prospectus of one of these schemes as to the height of Menzies. For instance, it is stated they intend to pump water to a mount near Menzies, and then allow it to gravitate to Coolgardie and other places below, but we have proved by surveys made by railway surveyors that Menzies is four feet lower than Coolgardie, and as it is necessary there should be a fall for gravitation purposes, it will be proved by that that it is impossible to have a gravitation scheme from Menzies to any point near Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie. It can be seen there must be something inaccurate in the figures given.

MR. MORAN: It is only aneroid measurement.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): It is only an aneroid calculation as to the height,

but after these figures were obtained a survey has been finished from Coolgardie to Menzies, and levels taken so that the height is clearly shown. As to the time which it will take for completion, I would like to say I have also some figures that will give some information to hon. members as to schemes carried out in other countries. In the Sydney waterworks, from Bark Hut Creek towards Sydney, in the duplication of the main in 1892, there were 49-inch water pipes, each 27 feet long, and weighing about 5 tons 3 cwt. each, laid at a maximum rate of 80 pipes per day, that is equal to 2,160 feet. The pipes proposed to be used for the Coolgardie goldfields supply are 30 inches, as against the 49-inch pipes mentioned above, but if laid at even the rate at which those 49-inch pipes were laid, 2,160 feet per day, the total length of pipe to Coolgardie—330 miles—could be laid in about two years and seven months, as they are much smaller and lighter, and all along a railway line they could probably be laid much quicker than that. We have a railway line all the way there, which means we can carry the pipes much easier than in the case I mention. I can do more in carrying these pipes than in talking on this scheme.

AN HON. MEMBER: You have not the Fremantle block clear yet.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): We will get that done soon, and then you will be like the boy in the song—you won't know where you are. I do not know there is much more I can say about this, except on the question of delay. It has been mentioned by some members that there is no necessity to go on with this work at once. Some have said we are acting rather prematurely, and we should delay and take the opinion of the country, but my opinion is that by this delay we are certainly doing a great injustice to the fields. If we are going to carry out this scheme, let us carry it out as quickly as possible, as it is hardly necessary to wait for the information asked for by some hon. members. It is a most feasible scheme, and there is nothing uncertain about it. We can carry out the whole thing provided the House sanctions it, as it is only a matter of time and money, and if the means are placed in the hands of the Government, I have no doubt as to

the ultimate result, which will be satisfactory. I am sure the work will be of immense advantage to the fields, and it should be carried out as quickly as possible. I only hope it will pass through its different stages and be finally agreed to, as I am sure it must be acceptable to the country. I must say this, that if I have then the honour of filling the position I now fill—though this Bill has been introduced by the hon. the Premier, it will fall to my lot to have a greater connection with it than he may have—if it is my pleasure to deal with this question, I think hon. members can rely on my doing all that can be done in conjunction with those who certainly will have the practical carrying out of this work, men in whom I have the greatest confidence. I think we have men in this country capable of carrying out this very great work, men who have given us this data to work on, and I think the work the Government have now proposed is quite safe in the hands of those who will be deputed to carry it out. We should not have any delay, and I hope hon. members will agree to the scheme. In fact, I think we may look on it as one acceptable to the country, and one of such magnitude and benefit that it must be considered as a great saving scheme for the fields. No doubt it will eventually benefit the people there to such an extent that it must further develop the fields, and in doing that we are developing every other portion of the colony, as we are staking all on the fields. We are quite justified in committing the country to the large expenditure named in the schedule of the Bill, and I am sure those now engaged on the fields, and those who may afterwards come forward to develop them, will thank the Government for introducing the scheme, and this House for passing it through and making it the law of the country, and so assisting us to carry out a work which must certainly develop the fields.

MR. CLARKSON: Before this very important matter is decided—and I am sure it will be decided in the way the Government wish, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition from the hon. gentlemen opposite—I should like to say a few words upon it. I am not one of those who are converted by that very able

speech of the Premier. I confess when I first saw the measure I thought it was a very big scheme indeed, but on further consideration I came to the conclusion that some scheme of the sort was absolutely necessary in the interests of the colony. I can speak with experience about that country, as, in former years, I travelled over it.

MR. SIMPSON: Why didn't you discover the gold.

MR. CLARKSON: I was not smart enough. My object was to discover pastoral country, but, I am sorry to say, I failed in that; but I know it is destitute of permanent water, and subject to prolonged droughts extending over two or three years at a time. I should much like to know where these lakes of water, described by the hon. member for Yilgarn, would be after a two years' drought. I am afraid we would not find much of the beautiful lake, but only a heap of salt at the bottom of the lake. The natives of the country are very few in number and a miserable race. They follow the thunderstorms that occasionally visit those parts and manage to exist in a miserable state; so much so that they are sometimes compelled to drink their own blood and the blood of their friends. I have seen it done. Kangaroos, as members are aware, can live without water as long as the scrub has sufficient moisture in it, but when you come to consider the case of thousands of men, it is a very different matter. I have no faith whatever in these proposed schemes for providing water to the fields from these lakes. I think the Government are rather to blame for not testing that country for artesian water long ago, as it is possible it may exist, notwithstanding the opinion of geologists that it will not be discovered there. I believe now they are testing the country. Very great fault was found with this scheme of the Government by some people, but it is rather remarkable that no other scheme to take its place has been brought forward. We are told by the hon. member for Nannine it will be a gigantic failure, and that, naturally, what the Engineer-in-Chief had in view was to have his name associated with some great scheme. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: I never said it.] Then it was the hon. member for Geraldton. [MR. SIMPSON: I did not say it.] If this great scheme turns

out, as that hon. member said, a gigantic failure, where does the honour come to the Engineer-in-Chief, or the engineer who planned this gigantic failure? [MR. SIMPSON: A very good point.] I think it is. There is one matter I should like to touch upon. I believe the Government have selected a site for a reservoir. Would it not be possible to find a suitable site on the eastern slope of the Darling Range—I mean the valley of the Avon, on the eastern side of the slope? The Avon itself I do not think would be suitable, as I think the water would be brackish. Take Spencer's Brook, for instance. I believe any amount of water can be conserved there; and would it not be well to ascertain if sufficient catchment area could be found there? It would save the cost of hauling the pipes, and save cost all round, while it would be worth having that country properly tested.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It would not supply Perth then.

MR. CLARKSON: That is what it is intended for. I have heard it stated that people on the goldfields are strongly opposed to this water scheme. The hon. member for Yilgarn told me himself that to a man they were opposed to it. [MR. MORAN: When was that?] The hon. member told me in this room, and he also told me he was dead against it himself; but I am glad to see he is converted, as any sensible man would be. In fact he had not looked into the scheme sufficiently at the time he made the assertion.

AN HON. MEMBER: You are converted yourself.

MR. CLARKSON: No, I am not. I feel quite certain this measure will be accepted by this House, and I see no advantage in prolonging this debate.

MR. SIMPSON: I agree with you.

MR. A. FORREST: I rise to support the proposals of the Government, and I think that such a very important question as the spending of two or three millions of money will appeal to every hon. member who knows anything about the subject, as being a matter of interest to every one, both to private individuals and to mining companies at home and abroad, which have had the greatest trouble in obtaining water on the fields to the eastward of Perth. The question, to my

mind, is so important that it behoves everyone in the colony to strengthen the hands of those who are in charge of the affairs of this colony in order to get this work carried out with the least possible delay. The hon. member for Geraldton says that no public meetings have been held in the different goldfield districts, to ask the Government to devise this water scheme. But if the people of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie do not call public meetings upon this subject, it is because they know that the scheme is before the House, and that it will be undertaken. I say that if you were to take a poll of the whole of the people of the colony, including the people of Perth and Fremantle, I do not believe you would find one individual who would not agree that something must be done to supply the people on the fields with water. The question is one that brooks no delay whatever, and the reception that has been given to the delay proposed by the hon. member for Geraldton shows that the good sense of members of this House will induce them to support the Government, and see the scheme carried out. No one can get up in this House, who has had any experience of the operations of mining companies or the working of mines, without being aware of the excessive cost of the cartage of water to all parts of the fields. Of course, as population increases and more condensers are erected, the cost of condensed water may be cheapened, but it can never be brought down from sixpence or ninepence per gallon which we have to pay now, to anything like the proposed Government price of three shillings and sixpence the thousand gallons. In the arguments used on this question by hon. members in this House, I think that very important centre, Southern Cross, has been overlooked. I know the hon. member for Geraldton has had a deal of experience in the mines of Southern Cross, and that he has taken an active part in establishing some of the mines which are at work there. I can assure the hon. member that there are mines at Southern Cross working only eight hours out of twenty-four, and then having to stop, for the reason that they are not able to get even salt water; and I will go further, and say that if they get this water from the coast at Southern Cross,

the companies will use it for their machinery, even if they have plenty of salt water in their own workings, for it will pay them to give three shillings and sixpence per thousand gallons in order to keep their boilers clean. Southern Cross is a very important centre, and the water difficulty has been one of the great drawbacks there ever since that field was started. At present the people who are going there are living on this wretched condensed water, and then it has to be brought from a long distance. I ask the House and the people of the colony whether we are going to continue this wretched system, and leave our own flesh and blood who are living up there without a proper supply of water. The proposal made by the Government should be carried out, although the money it will cost seems to be a large sum; because, if people are to live in a new country, they must have water, and it has been shown that it will pay to supply water to them. Now, are we not certain this scheme is a practicable one, and that it should commend itself to hon. members on its merits? I certainly would not vote for any Government that would propose an unworkable scheme, because it would be like throwing money away; but what do we find? We find that a company of gentlemen in Melbourne have organised a scheme on the same lines, but they do not find their scheme is impracticable. They want the scheme because it will undoubtedly pay. It is fair to put this gigantic scheme in the hands of the Government rather than in the hands of any private company. The Government may, at the present time, borrow money at 50 per cent. less than a private company. They can borrow at 3 per cent., while a private company could not get the money at less than 5 per cent., and then a large number of the shares would have to be given away. I think that in this great question the issue arises that the water scheme should be placed on the same basis as the railways; and as long as I live I shall never vote for the private ownership of railways in this colony, unless, as is done in England, private companies are to own the whole of the lines. Look at the experience we have had. There is the Great Southern Railway, which has never paid its debenture-holders sixpence. They cannot

get any interest, and now there is talk of the railway being bought by the Government. Take again the case of the Perth Waterworks, as an example of private enterprise in this colony, and which has resulted in the Government being about to buy out the owners of those works. We find that every private scheme which has been passed has been a failure. I say it is far better for the Government to make a failure than for foreign capital to do so. It is far better, even if this water scheme is to be a failure, that the loss should fall upon the country rather than upon private investors, because every member knows that wherever a man has lost his money he gives a bad name to that country. I am glad the hon. member for Yilgarn has been brought to support this scheme, which he was at one time against; but still the hon. member complains that the water will not reach all parts of the fields, but only Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. I believe the estimates provide for the laying of 100 miles of reticulation pipes, and therefore the water will be taken to Black Flag and the 25-Mile, and many other important centres around. I know the distance and I know the places. The hon. member for Yilgarn has told us the lakes on the Eastern goldfields are full of water at times, but they are not to be depended on. I know the country, for I have travelled through it. In 1871 I had the honour of being sent out by the Government of the colony to explore that country, to see if it were fit for pastoral purposes. I found splendid country out there. I had never seen any country like it. There were splendid grassy plains, and all the creeks and rocks were full of water. I made up my mind that I would put 10,000 sheep on that country in February. But I returned in 1873 with the next expedition, and found no water. The whole territory was in a state of drought, and we had to run for our lives back to where he had come from. Now, what a contrast was there between the country in 1871 and 1873! The first time I saw it, there was plenty of feed and water, with lots of game; there were kangaroos, turkeys, ducks, and other birds and animals; but when I went back again, I found the place all dried up and all life had disappeared. The whole country was suffering from great drought. I am sure that for years together very

little rain falls in that country. If rain fell regularly, there would be fresh water lakes in the territory; but in 1873 I found nothing of the sort in the district. Therefore, from my own experience, I did not think anything of sheep farming there, or I might have been there now. The drought was against me, and I thought it was better to give up that class of business where rain was so scarce. The hon. member for Geraldton says it is not necessary to carry water to the fields, that the mine managers will have too much water. I have never known any mining manager up to the present time say he had struck too much water, nor do I know that one single mine has got sufficient water. I am sure the batteries will not be kept going until some better means of water supply is provided for the mines. The hon. member for Wellington rather twitted those who supported him for many years by saying the members on this side of the House would carry any measure which the Government proposed; but we only support those measures which are in our opinion for the good of the country. The Government would not bring down measures which they know are not demanded in the interests of the country, and such measures are entitled to the support of hon. members and of the country itself. The hon. member for Wellington also states that we should wait until we get further opinions from engineers to support the Engineer-in-Chief. I have heard the hon. member in this House time after time telling hon. members that the Engineer-in-Chief could not be wrong; there was no man like the Engineer-in-Chief. I am therefore sorry to find the hon. member for Wellington asking for further engineering opinions. The only question upon which it is necessary to consult other authorities is that of hydraulic power; and there will be plenty of work to be done before the engines are ordered, and plenty of time for the further opinions to be obtained. This water scheme is not entirely a question for experts. The water can be carried to any distance or lifted to any height. It is only a matter of pumping power. The hon. members for Geraldton and Nannine ask us to postpone the passing of this Bill until a general election takes place, and the new members come into the House;

but I do not think the people of Coolgardie or of the eastern goldfields, or the new members who will be elected by those districts, will thank us for putting off the carrying out of a proper system of water supply for a single day, simply because those new members are not here to add their votes to the passing of the Bill. I say the new representatives of the goldfields must support this Bill, that they cannot be elected unless they do so. I am sure it would be impossible for anyone to go into those new districts and say from any platform that we must not bring the water from the seaboard. I do not think that such a man would get any votes at all; and I am sure the hon. member for Yilgarn knew this when he said he would support the Bill, which he was at first opposed to.

MR. MORAN: I must ask the hon. member not to state I was against the scheme. I deny this *in toto*, and I ask him to confine himself to my published address.

MR. A. FORREST: I have no wish to misrepresent the hon. member; I would rather support him. No doubt, in voting for the Bill, the hon. member would be consulting the wishes of those who sent him into Parliament. I feel that I have hardly done justice to this subject, which is a very important one; but I cannot help saying what I know about the country and the difficulty of obtaining a local supply of water for the fields. The water scheme proposed by the Government will be of immense benefit to the country; and, when the Bill is passed, it will give great confidence to investors in our mines to find we have sufficient faith in our goldfields to spend so much money in providing them with water. There is, no doubt, plenty of gold in those fields; but capital would not continue to flow into Western Australia at the same rate that it has been doing, unless by such an undertaking as that which is before the House it could be shown that it is possible to readily extract the gold, and that a good return can be given for the cost of opening up the mines.

MR. LEFROY: I do not think we are likely to hear much more adverse criticism of the Bill that is under discussion, for those who are not favourable to the scheme which it proposes have already spoken on

the subject. For my own part, I am glad the hon. members for Nannine, Geraldton, and Wellington have taken up the position they have, for I think it would be a matter for regret if such an important measure as this should be allowed to go through the House without some adverse criticism being placed before the country. I think it is the duty of the hon. members who occupy seats on the Opposition side of the House to review the Bill from their point of view; and I am pleased they have asked for delay in this matter, because it has enabled every phase of this subject to be discussed. Those hon. gentlemen who have spoken against the scheme have called it all sorts of names. They have called it "childish." They have declared that the Government are trying to ram this measure down the throats of hon. members of this House; they have criticised those members who supported the Government, and have said they only follow their leader. I do not think the hon. members who sit on these benches follow anybody's lead. If you look into their private concerns, you will find that they would not occupy the positions they do if they did not possess more brains and common sense than some hon. members on the opposite side of the House give them credit for. It has been sought to be shown that this scheme is impracticable; but, while I am not an engineer, I look at the professional evidence that is before us to show it is practicable. The only doubt that has presented itself to my mind is whether we are right in pledging the credit of the country to the extent we are asked to do, at the present moment. No one in this House, or out of it, has shown, in the slightest degree, that the scheme is impracticable; and if there had been any doubt on this point, I should certainly have been inclined to vote against the Bill. But, when I come to consider that the five members of the Government, supported by their Engineer-in-Chief, are fully satisfied that the scheme will be successful, there must be a great deal in it, and I think it is worthy of careful and dispassionate consideration. The prosperity of the whole colony depends upon the prosperity of the goldfields. It is very necessary that clean, fresh water should be obtainable there, in order that the mining centres may be populated;

and, no doubt, with such a catchment area as that available in the Darling Ranges, the supply will run no risk of pollution whatever, and that is a very important consideration. It has been said by some hon. members that this question is not a very important one; but the whole future of this colony depends on the fields, and a good water supply to the fields means that they will continue to make progress, and that the population there will have a proper and healthy existence. Again, under this scheme, we are shown that it will be self-supporting when it is carried out. Some hon. members seem to imagine that those who use this water will endeavour to repudiate their liabilities. I do not think that for a moment. In these towns do we find people endeavouring to repudiate their liabilities when the rates are called in? No, we do not. I certainly think that, in a question of this kind, the very essence will be the cost of the water we use; and I think people will not be likely, in the least degree, to repudiate their liabilities for the water which the Government propose to supply to the goldfields. As to the loan, it does appear to be a large sum; but, as I have said, the scheme will be self-supporting, and I think we are right in undertaking it. Some hon. members have tried to point out that the Engineer-in-Chief is himself rather half-hearted in his belief in this scheme; but I think that suggestion has been made only as a little honest criticism—a sort of weak argument against the scheme. I can read between the lines, and while I have not the honour of a very intimate acquaintance with the Engineer-in-Chief, and do not get information from him about these points as many hon. members seem to do, yet what appears to my mind, in reading between the lines in his report, is that before this scheme was brought into this House the Engineer-in-Chief had evidently heard, from outside sources, that it was reported the scheme was his idea, and that he was trying to build for himself a monument on Mount Burges. The Engineer-in-Chief, in his report, says: "I would ask, "in the first place, to be permitted to say " (as there appears to be a tendency to "misconception on the subject) that this "proposal should not be regarded as

"an undertaking which I am urging "upon the Government for adoption." He said, in effect, that there appeared to be a tendency to misconception, and as that misconception had already arisen, the Engineer-in-Chief—very properly in the position he holds to the Government and to this House—was quite right in saying the proposal was not his. As an honest man he said so, and I think he was quite right in saying so. He did not say—"As there is likely to be a tendency "to misconception, I would inform you "that this scheme is not my own," but he said this misconception had already arisen. Again, it has been pointed out that the Engineer-in-Chief is not, himself, quite convinced that the scheme will be a success; and the reason for that statement is that, in the concluding part of his report, he states: "It has always been "my intention, in the event of this "pumping scheme being adopted, to "recommend the Government to arrange "for a consultation of high-class specialists in England, more particularly as "regards the height and distance which "it would be most desirable to adopt "between the several pumping stations, "and consequently the location of the "said pumping stations." He does not, in that passage, express any doubt with regard to the scheme itself—not in the least. He simply states that, if there should be any doubt, he would like, before bringing the whole scheme to completion, to arrange for a consultation of high-class specialists in England, because two heads are usually considered to be better than one. These "childish" minds of ours, on this side of the House, can quite realise that, if it is possible to pump water 300 feet, it will be possible to repeat, over and over again, the pumping of that water until it is elevated to the height required. As regards the practicability of the scheme, there appears to be not the slightest doubt; and no hon. member has been able to point out any particular in which the scheme is not practicable. I think the more this scheme is looked at, the more we like it; and, although the carrying out will take a long time—I hope it will be finished within the three years stated—still I feel sure that the Government, hand in hand with it, will use every means they can to help the

people on the goldfields in obtaining an adequate supply of water during the period of constructing this work. During last summer it was a terrible thing to hear of the distress caused to people on the goldfields by the want of water; and I hope there will not be a repetition of such a painful state of affairs. But yet, if we find those goldfields do not require this water—to my mind, a most remote contingency—and that to supply it is a loss of labour, and a waste of strength, and a waste of money, still there will be some compensation in the fact that they will then have got sufficient water for all purposes. Remembering that, to some extent, the carrying of water along the railway during last summer was a cause of the block in the railway traffic at Fremantle, of which we heard so much, it is to be hoped we shall be saved from a repetition of that. The railway will be wanted for ordinary carrying purposes, without using it for carrying water. It has been urged, too, that this is not a Bill for supplying the goldfields with water, but to make up for errors in the estimates of railway construction. Well, even if that be so, and if this water is required for the railway, surely we are not going to say now that, because there was an error made once in the estimates of railway construction, we will therefore not go on with this scheme for supplying water to the railway. The water will be useful for the railway in any case, and even this assistance to the railway will be a great advantage in itself. There is no necessity for me to dwell longer on the subject. It is a great subject, and I think it behoves all hon. members to express their views and give their reasons for voting in the way they will vote. We have arrived at an interesting and important stage in our history, and there are times when, even at a risk, we have to risk a little, although I know there will be no risk on this occasion, and I think I may conclude with the remarks of Montrose:

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who fears to put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all.

Mr. WOOD: I always think that, in discussing great questions of policy, or in dealing with great schemes, the heads of the parties constituted in this House should be allowed to fight out the questions at issue; and, as I am a firm

believer in party government, I therefore leave the main features of this scheme to be fought out by the occupants of the front benches on either side of the House. But it is the duty of hon. members to say something on this important Bill, whether for or against; and, in doing so, they may well confine their remarks to what they are supposed specially to understand, giving a fair idea of what their opinions are on the matter. As regards the necessity for this scheme, I think there can be no doubt whatever in the minds of hon. members that it is the most necessary scheme that has ever been brought forward by the Government, because we all know the great difficulty of the goldfields for years has been the want of sufficient water; yet now, directly the Government come forward with a scheme to supply that want, some hon. members in this House have the audacity to say there is no want of water there at all. However they can say such a thing is beyond my conception altogether. [Mr. SIMPSON: Hear, hear.] The hon. member for Geraldton says there is no necessity for this water being taken to the goldfields; yet, while I do not think he "fathers" the private scheme of Mr. Wilson, he is certainly a great believer in allowing private persons to develop the goldfields. At the same time, I believe he is identified, to a certain extent, with Mr. Wilson's scheme for supplying water to the goldfields, as he quoted a telegram from that gentleman the other day which showed how close his relation is. Taking the question altogether apart from the advantages of an abundant domestic supply of water on the goldfields, Mr. Wilson's own scheme is to supply water for the mining industry. That being so, the fact of some members supporting Mr. Wilson's scheme rather increases the arguments in favour of the practicability of the Government scheme, and the hon. member for Geraldton has admitted that it is practicable. When the scheme was first promulgated by the Government, I received it with a certain amount of trepidation, and so did many others; but after it was brought before the House and explained so fully by the Premier, the effect it produced was such that on the next day I could hardly go down a street in Perth without meeting someone

who was enthusiastically in favour of the scheme.

MR. SIMPSON: You did not go down the right street.

MR. WOOD: Oh, yes, I did. That was the general feeling in Perth; the people wanted the scheme. I think it is absolutely imperative on those who are opposing this scheme to bring forward some alternative scheme which they may have in view. To those who are against it we must say, "If you do not approve of this scheme, you should provide us with something better." We say they must admit the necessity of accepting this scheme, or produce something better. As the hon. member for West Kimberley said, we, who are supporting this scheme, are not bound to any party or section in this House, and we go for the best scheme that is put forward. When an opposing section in this House is attacking the administration of the Government, it is a different thing from attacking the policy of the Government; for when attacking the administration, I have heard the hon. member for Nannine say, "It is not for us to make alternative proposals, or to make suggestions; it is for the Government to do what is necessary." I say that, in a matter of this kind, the urgency of the case is such that it is necessary for those who oppose this scheme to show an alternative scheme, or to make suggestions of a practical nature. They have not controverted the arguments of the Premier in one single instance, nor brought forward an alternative scheme. They have nothing else to bring forward; and in their hearts I believe they wish to see this scheme go through. As regards private efforts, I think there is room both for this scheme and for private individuals to do all they can in supplying the wants of the goldfields. There is no necessity to interfere with the efforts of private individuals, nor to prevent them from obtaining concessions where no responsibility is incurred for the success of the schemes, and where no inconvenience will be caused to the public of the country by its failure, I should support any reasonable measure of that kind; but I would not grant concessions where, by their failure, the country would be inconvenienced. As regards the necessity for this scheme, I do not think there can be the slightest doubt about it,

if all we hear with regard to the wants of the goldfields is true. The hon. members for Nannine and Geraldton tell us these are the greatest goldfields in the world, and this is going to be the greatest colony in the world. I believe that is true; and if it is true, there is an absolute necessity for this scheme. If all the stories we hear from the goldfields are true, as to the great developments that are taking place, and the efforts that are being made to provide mines with water, then these fields are going to carry a big population, and that population cannot stay there unless we supply them with sufficient water. Mr. Wilson's scheme appears too vague and too local in its scope, in my opinion, for supplying the needs of a great area of gold-bearing country; for it only proposes to go from Menzies to Coolgardie, and there is an important belt of country which the hon. member for Geraldton has referred to as an honest country, and that country is not provided for at all in Mr. Wilson's scheme. Menzies may be provided for by private enterprise, I dare say, but that is not enough. We must look at the wants of Southern Cross, and that is the place which, as many of us know, first gave an impetus for going further afield in the search for gold. We must not forget also, that the mines of Southern Cross have been faithful and honest mines, and that the further they go down the better is their output of gold. With a good supply of water, Southern Cross will be one of the best payable little fields in the colony. A good deal has been said about what is going to be done in the meantime, while this scheme is under construction; but even if nothing be done during that time, we shall be no worse off after this scheme is constructed than if the scheme were not carried out. On the other hand, at the end of three years we shall, if this scheme is completed, and if we then have sources of local supply, be in a perfect state of bliss. The hon. member for Nannine has often told us, in his free and easy way, how the goldfields have paid for everything, and how they do not owe the colony for railways or any other facilities given them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We will owe you for this lot.

MR. WOOD: They say we shall be indebted to them, and I suppose they

will be able to come upon us for anything they want. I am glad to be able to support the second reading of this bill; and I do hope that the voting will be unanimous. The acting leader of the Opposition, my friend the member for Nannine, must see that he has no chance whatever of defeating this Bill; and therefore I say, let them throw in their lot with us and carry it unanimously. The member for Geraldton, if he goes for a goldfields constituency, which I hear he intends doing, will find it difficult to face the electors as an opponent of this Bill. I hope these members will come round like sensible men, and allow a unanimous vote to be taken on this measure. I consider it is one of the most progressive measures ever brought into the Parliament of this country.

Question—that the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed, on the voices, by a large majority.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE:

The House went into Committee for the consideration of this Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of 59 Vic., sec. 99:

Mr. RANDELL moved that the words "For the preservation of public decency and public health," be inserted after the words "Licensing of weighbridges in public places." He said that, by a previous oversight, the clause dealing with public decency had been dropped out of the old Act. The intention of this amendment was to give the municipal councils power to provide for the screening of water closets in the city. Anybody who walked through the city would observe that the water closets were not properly sheltered from the public, and that they were, in that respect, nuisances.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Vehicles to have name of owner, &c., painted on conspicuous part:

Mr. MOSS said the marginal note was not accurate, as the intention of the clause was not to provide for the painting of the owner's name on a vehicle, but the weight of the vehicle. He therefore

moved that the marginal note be amended so as to read: "Vehicles to have their weight painted on conspicuous part."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. RANDELL said he did not see how owners of vehicles were going to paint the weight on their vehicles, until the municipal councils had provided weighbridges. Some provision, therefore, should be made so that the Act would not be enforced until weighbridges had been provided.

Mr. MOSS said the objection was a reasonable one; and, to meet it, he moved that the words "immediately after a weighbridge be erected in a municipality" be inserted after the word "shall," in the third line.

Amendment agreed to, and the clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 5 and 6—agreed to.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10 o'clock, p.m., until next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 6th August, 1896.

Duty chargeable on outside packages—Receipts to Lighters on Fremantle Jetty—Perth Mint: cost of—Transfer of Lands Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Companies Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Summary Jurisdiction (Married Women's) Bill: third reading—Married Women's Property Act Amendment Bill: second reading; committee—Streets Closure Bill: second reading; committee—Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill: second reading—Meat Supply: appointment of Joint Select Committee—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

DUTY CHARGEABLE ON OUTSIDE PACKAGES.

THE HON. W. ALEXANDER asked the Minister for Mines:—(1.) If it was with the sanction and by direction of the