

like; but when I am convinced, as in the present instance I am convinced, that the proposed policy of reappropriation is detrimental to the best interests of the country, then I have no other course but to vote for the amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Leake's) put, and the SPEAKER declared: The Noes have it.

Mr. LEAKE: Divide!

Division taken, with the following result:—

Ayes	16
Noes	22

Majority against ... 6

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Burt
Mr. George	Mr. Connor
Mr. Hassell	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Holmes	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Gregory
Mr. James	Mr. Hall
Mr. Kenny	Mr. Harper
Mr. Kingsmill	Mr. Higham
Mr. Leake	Mr. Hooley
Mr. Oats	Mr. Hubble
Mr. Oldham	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Simpson	Mr. Locke
Mr. Solomon	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Wallace	Mr. Monger
Mr. Wilson	Mr. Moran
Mr. Vosper	Mr. Pennefather
(Teller).	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Wood
	Mr. Morgans
	(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

THE SPEAKER: The question is that the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be adopted.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): I think the debate ought to be adjourned till to-morrow, and I move accordingly.

Put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House adjourned at 11.19 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th June, 1898.

Papers presented—Question: Mullewa-Cue Railway Expenditure, and Cue-Nannine Extension—Question: Registration of Voters on Goldfields—Question: Peak Hill and Horseshoe Goldfields, Reports—Question: Commission on Mining, Report and Evidence—Motions (4): Leave of Absence—Public Education Bill: first reading—Fire Brigades Bill: first reading—Jury Bill: first reading—Reports ordered: Resumption of Land (re Postmaster General)—Papers ordered: Conviction of Barrett and Delaney—Papers ordered: Peak Hill Mining Accident—Papers ordered: Rioting (alleged) at Kalgoorlie—Return ordered: Public Batteries—Motion for Papers: Alluvial Disputes at Kalgoorlie, etc.; Speaker's Ruling as to limitation in calling for Papers—Return ordered: Public Works in Electoral Districts—Return ordered: Treasury Bills issued—Address-in-Reply; Sixth day of debate; conclusion—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Perth Park By-laws. Mining Commission, Report with appendices.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: Correspondence re Mining Accident at Peak Hill.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION: MULLEWA-CUE RAILWAY EXPENDITURE, and CUE-NANNINE EXTENSION.

MR. KENNY asked the Commissioner of Railways—1, The amount of money remaining to the credit of the Mullewa-Cue Railway Vote, after Baxter and Prince's first contract was provided for; 2, The amount expended on the line over and above Baxter and Prince's original contract; 3, The amount remaining now to credit of the Vote; 4, What became of the rails and other materials indented for, for the extension of the line from Cue to Nannine? 5, Whether the Government intended to proceed with the construction of the railway from Cue to Nannine at an early date; if not, why not?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—1, Amount

expended up to 30th June, 1895, £12,784 6s. 2d.; amount of Baxter and Prince's original contract, let on 27th December, 1895, £84,535 2s. 3d.; amount for rails and fastenings, £100,800; balance available on the latter date for turntables, cranes, telephone lines, water supply supervision, etc., etc., *£210,880 11s. 7d.; total, *£409,000. [*Note.—This is exclusive of £236 14s. 2d. reappropriated to this work by 60 Vict., No. 29.] 2, Amount expended to 31st May last, exclusive of amount of Baxter and Prince's original contract, £184,115, which includes expenditure on rails and fastenings (about £100,000), turntables, cranes, telephone material, water supply, supervision, etc., etc.; also reinstating wash-aways. 3, On 31st May last the unexpended balance of vote was £140,350, against which there are liabilities amounting to about £50,000, leaving a balance of £90,000. 4, Diverted from Geraldton to Fremantle, and now being used in the re-laying of the Yilgarn railway. 5, The Government do not propose to proceed with the construction of the railway for the present, for the reason that the present population and development do not give sufficient grounds for believing that the railway would pay.

QUESTION: REGISTRATION OF VOTERS ON GOLDFIELDS.

MR. KENNY asked the Premier—1, Whether Warden Bagot, of Peak Hill, received instructions to refuse applications from men entitled to have their names placed on the Electoral Roll of the North Murchison, and to refer the applicants to Nannine, one hundred and twenty miles from Peak Hill. 2, Whether the Minister approved of Warden Bagot's treatment of the applicants. 3, Whether the Minister would take steps to enable all entitled to do so, to register their claims as voters at Nannine, Peak Hill, Tuckanarra, Abbott's, or Star of the East.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—1, No such instructions have been given. 2, Not sufficient knowledge of the matter to express an opinion. No complaint has been made either to the Colonial Secretary or Inspector of Rolls. 3, The following persons are empowered

to attest applications from persons desiring to be placed on the Electoral Roll:—At Nannine, the Electoral Registrar and others; at Peak Hill, the Warden, Mining Registrar, and others. Deputy electoral registrars can be appointed at Tuckanarra and Abbott's, if required, and inquiries will be made on the subject.

QUESTION: PEAK HILL AND HORSESHOE GOLDFIELDS, REPORTS.

MR. KENNY, by leave and without notice, asked the Minister of Mines at what probable date the report of the Government Geologist, on the Peak Hill and Horseshoe goldfields, would be laid on the table.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) replied that he could, if desired by hon. members, lay the reports on the table now, as he had copies of them; but as the reports were being printed, he had considered it undesirable to lay them on the table, until the printed copies could be ready for the use of hon. members. The reports were in the Printer's hands.

MR. KENNY said he preferred to wait until printed copies could be obtained, as he wished to send copies to constituents at Peak Hill and the Horseshoe.

QUESTION: COMMISSION ON MINING. REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

MR. VOSPER, by leave and without notice, asked the Minister of Mines when the report of the Royal Commission on Mining, together with the evidence, would be laid on the table of the House.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) said the report would be ready on Tuesday next, but the appendices might be a few days later.

MOTIONS (4): LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by the PREMIER, leave of absence was granted for two months, on the ground of urgent private business, to Mr. Phillips (Irwin), Mr. H. W. Sholl (Roebourne), and Mr. Doherty (North Fremantle); also for one week to Mr. Razon (South Murchison).

PUBLIC EDUCATION BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER OF MINES, and read a first time.

FIRE BRIGADES BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, for the Attorney General, and read a first time.

JURY BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, for the Attorney General, and read a first time.

REPORTS: RESUMPTION OF LAND RE POSTMASTER GENERAL.

MR. SIMPSON moved that there be laid upon the table of the House the complete reports of the Crown Solicitor and the Law Department, regarding the resumption of certain lands lately the property of the Postmaster-General.

Put and passed.

PAPERS: CONVICTION OF BARRETT AND DELANEY.

MR. VOSPER moved that there be laid upon the table of the House all papers relating to the trial, conviction, and sentence of Barrett and Delaney, who were sentenced to five years' penal servitude in August, 1896, together with copies of all correspondence relating to their petition for release, on the ground that a miscarriage of justice has occurred.

Put and passed.

PAPERS: PEAK HILL MINING ACCIDENT.

MR. KENNY moved that there be laid upon the table of the House copies of all correspondence between Warden Bagot, of Peak Hill, and the Mines Department in reference to a certain accident that occurred at the mines of the "Peak Hill Goldfields, Limited," through which a miner named Davis fell down the shaft, dislocating both ankles, and receiving serious wounds on the head; also the report of the Inspector of Mines in reference to this accident.

Put and passed.

PAPERS: RIOTING (ALLEGED) AT KALGOORLIE.

MR. VOSPER moved that there be laid upon the table of the House all papers relating to the trial, conviction, and sentence of certain persons in March last for alleged rioting at Kalgoorlie, together with copies of the depositions taken be-

fore the Warden at Kalgoorlie at the hearing of the charges.

Put and passed.

[Debate ensued upon this motion, subsequently, in connection with the next following motion.]

RETURN: PUBLIC BATTERIES.

MR. VOSPER moved that there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the number of public batteries erected by the Government, in course of erection, contracted for, or purchased; the localities in which these batteries are to be, or have been, located; the reports of the inspectors who have recommended such localities; the names of persons who have sold batteries to the Government, and the amounts paid for such batteries; together with copies of tenders and contracts for such batteries and advertisements calling for tenders, if any.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he could support this motion for a return; but, as to the previous motion of the same hon. member, in reference to the conviction and sentence of persons for alleged rioting at Kalgoorlie—the matter escaped him for the moment, when the motion was being put—he must now say he did not think the hon. member should ask for papers relating to a trial without giving some reason. The information could easily be obtained, but he thought some reason should be given for the motion.

MR. VOSPER called attention to the fact that the motion referred to by the Premier had already been passed.

THE SPEAKER said he had put the motion, and it was passed.

MR. VOSPER: If it was the desire of the House, he would be happy to afford the explanation asked for by the Premier. He had received letters and petitions from people residing in his electorate, also in the Kalgoorlie district, asking that those persons should be released. He was desirous of ascertaining the merits of the case before making such an application, and his only object was to see that no injustice was done.

Motion put and passed.

MOTION—ALLUVIAL DISPUTES AT KALGOORLIE, ETC.

MR. VOSPER moved:

That there be laid on the table of the House all correspondence between Wardens and Ministers in reference to the late alluvial disputes at Kalgoorlie, Bulong, Kanowna, and Peak Hill, together with copies of the depositions taken in the various cases in connection with these disputes, with the notes of the Warden concerned thereupon.

In order to anticipate anything the Premier might say, he explained that his object was to place the evidence before the House, so that, when the Mining Bill came under consideration, any ambiguities might be cleared up. The decisions in dispute were of the most varied and sometimes contradictory character; and it was desirable the House should know what the disputes were in order that any obscurity might be obviated when the Goldfields Bill came before the Assembly.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What was the object of the hon. member in submitting this motion? He (the Premier) had not the slightest idea what correspondence had taken place, but he supposed Ministers might exercise their discretion as to whether they produced minutes between themselves and their officers. The next thing hon. members would be asking for would be the minutes between the Premier and the Commissioner of Railways. He was of opinion that communications between a Minister and his officers were privileged, and that it would not be in the interests of the country to produce them. He did not suppose there was anything in such correspondence to which objection could be taken. Perhaps the Speaker would tell the House whether it was usual in England for communications between Ministers and officers to be produced to Parliament, on motions of this sort now before the House. It seemed to him that such communications were not a public matter. Many communications passed in that way which it would not be in the interests of the colony to make public. He himself would have no objection to producing in Parliament communications of his own, because anything he wrote as Minister he was quite willing that other people should see; but, at the same time, he did not think it was a good thing to go too fast in these matters. Members should be careful to

keep to good constitutional usage, and he was not sure that the course proposed by the member for North-East Coolgardie was constitutional.

MR. LEAKE: The Premier could edit the correspondence before publication.

THE SPEAKER: As the right hon. gentleman has appealed to me, I have no hesitation in telling the House that it is not usual for such correspondence to be produced to Parliament.

MR. VOSPER said he wished to confine himself to the objects he had stated in his explanation. He was desirous of clearing up the differences of opinion between the various wardens. The object of the House should be to pass a really workable Goldfields Bill, and in this work the House would be assisted by the information he had asked for.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member had better not press the motion.

MR. VOSPER: At the same time, he would like to obtain a specific ruling as to what documents were excluded from the cognisance of Parliament. While there was an absence of definition on this point, the action of Parliament might be hampered. He could assure the Premier that he had no desire that particular and private papers should be produced.

HON. H. W. VENN said he sympathised with the remarks made by the Premier. It would be introducing a most injurious principle into the proceedings, if confidential papers were brought before the House. Such a course would destroy the confidence, and feeling of responsibility and respect, which existed between the Minister and the heads of departments, and would prevent the due exercise of duty if officers thought it possible such papers would be submitted to Parliament. It would be most unwise to establish a precedent of the sort. If the information desired by the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie could be obtained in some other way, his action would commend itself to the House, were he not to ask for documents the production of which might at some future time result in injury to the service and the Government itself.

THE PREMIER: Wardens wrote most confidentially to the Government on all sorts of subjects, and so did magistrates.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): There was no objection to the latter part of the motion, which simply asked for copies of all depositions taken in the various cases. Those, he believed, were all it was necessary to produce. The Government obtained the wardens' views in regard to the legal aspect of cases; and, in order to deal with this matter, all that was necessary for the House would be copies of the depositions taken. The House should be particularly careful in introducing a precedent of the sort proposed. He quite agreed with the Premier and the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn), that it would not be advisable in the interests of the colony to produce all the private correspondence which passed between Ministers and their officers. Even in a private business it was not advisable that everything written, although it might be perfectly sound and above board, should be made public. If the member for North-East Coolgardie would be good enough to withdraw the first part of his motion, the remaining portion would, perhaps, be acceptable to the Government and the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison) said he had considered the suggestion thrown out by Ministers on the question; and perhaps it would be advisable to amend the motion by inserting between the words "all" and "correspondence" the word "official." That was all the House was entitled to ask for. Members were not, in his opinion, entitled to ask for private correspondence; but he would like the ruling of the Speaker on the amendment he had suggested. It should be clearly understood that all official correspondence connected with the ordinary office work was at the disposal of hon. members.

THE PREMIER: It ought not to be.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, in order to test the question, moved an amendment to the effect he had indicated.

THE PREMIER: Everything was official, and it was not in the interests of the public to publish such documents.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Did the Premier know what was meant by "official" correspondence?

THE PREMIER: The hon. member might as well ask for the correspondence be-

tween two Ministers—say the Commissioner of Railways and the Premier, who wrote to each other every day.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was exactly the kind of correspondence that the House had no right to ask for. But the correspondence that gave information in regard to the practice and dealings of the Government, and communications between Ministers and officers relating to the public, the House had a right to have access to, if necessary.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Hon. members would be asking for police reports, next.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It would be quite within the province of the Minister to withhold information of vital importance to the House. There was no doubt a vast quantity of correspondence in connection with this matter, and the House had a right to see all the Government were prepared to produce. But, beneath that, there might be correspondence which was semi-official; such correspondence as that which would take place between the Commissioner of Railways and the Premier as to what quantity of rails might be ordered for some specific occasion. What was wanted was all the official correspondence, so that it might be placed at the disposal of hon. members. Such was his opinion, and he would ask the ruling of the Speaker on the question.

POINT OF PROCEDURE—THE SPEAKER'S RULING.

THE SPEAKER: I have no hesitation in saying that the constitutional practice is that Parliament cannot demand the correspondence between Ministers and their departments. I do not see very well how it is possible to draw a line between what is called "official" and what is called "private" correspondence. I have not had any experience, but I should think there is no such thing as "private" correspondence between a Minister and his department.

THE PREMIER: Some documents are marked "confidential;" some are not.

THE SPEAKER: Some are confidential, no doubt. I am asked to rule what is the constitutional practice. I cannot put my hand on any quotation just at present. This matter has been sprung suddenly upon me, but I could find, I have no doubt,

an authority as to the constitutional practice. The Clerk has just shown me a paragraph in May's "Parliamentary Practice" on "Restrictions on the power of moving for a Return." It says:—

Returns may be moved for, either by order or address, relating to any public matter in which the House or the Crown has jurisdiction. They may be obtained from all public offices, and from corporations, bodies, or officers constituted for public purposes, by Acts of Parliament or otherwise; but not from private associations, such as Lloyd's, for example, nor from individuals not exercising public functions. The papers and correspondence sought from Government departments should be of a public and official character, and not private or confidential. On the 3rd July, 1894, notice having been taken that the order for an address for a copy of Dr. Crichton Browne's treatise on education, related to a private matter over which the House had no jurisdiction, and involved a question of copyright, the order was discharged. The opinions of the law officers of the Crown, given for the guidance of Ministers, in any question of diplomacy or state policy, being included in the class of confidential documents, have generally been withheld from Parliament. In 1858, however, this rule was, under peculiar and exceptional circumstances, departed from, and the opinions of the law officers of the Crown, upon the case of Cagliari, were laid before Parliament.

It goes on to say:

But however ample the power of each House to enforce the production of the papers, a sufficient cause must be shown for the exercise of that power; and if considerations of public policy can be urged against a motion for papers, it is either withdrawn or otherwise dealt with, according to the judgment of the House.

DEBATE RESUMED.

MR. VOSPER said he was perfectly willing to accept the amendment proposed by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), that the word "official" should be inserted between the words "all" and "correspondence." The quotation which the Speaker had just read from *May* implied that official correspondence might be called for. He had no desire to establish an inquisition into the private affairs of the department, but he wanted all the information necessary to discuss this question.

THE PREMIER: What particular paper did the hon. member want?

MR. VOSPER: Hon. members could not do themselves justice, or the public justice, without these papers; and he asked the Minister of Mines to reconsider

his decision in regard to opposing this motion.

THE PREMIER: The Government would exercise their judgment in what they gave the House. They would give the House all they could.

The word "official" was, by leave, inserted.

Motion, as amended, put and passed.

RETURN: PUBLIC WORKS IN ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved:

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing (for the present and last financial year)—1, The total amount expended on public works in each electoral district, exclusive of railway expenditure. 2, The estimated population of each of these districts. 3, Details of such expenditure, classified under the heading in use in the Public Works Department.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piessé) said he offered no objection to the motion, except with regard to the second paragraph, in reference to the estimated population of each of the districts. He had been in communication with the Registrar General on the subject, and was informed by that officer that it was impossible to give even an estimated number of the population of these electoral districts. The Registrar General told him that no census had been taken since the last general census; therefore any information which would be given could not be at all accurate. He asked the hon. member to consider this point, with a view to altering or striking out paragraph 2. The other information would be furnished. He did not feel inclined to give any information in regard to the population of the electoral districts, unless it could be authenticated in some way.

THE PREMIER: Why was the return required, without the cost of the railways?

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he was asking for information as to the estimated population, because a return had been sent in from the different districts giving the estimated population, and the Registrar General should have this return. This information need not be absolutely correct, but an estimate would be sufficiently accurate for the purpose he desired. He could not see his way to ac-

cept the amendment to strike out the second paragraph

MR. A. FORREST asked the hon. member whether, if this return were laid on the table of the House, it would not be very misleading. There were many towns where little or no public works had been carried out because such towns were connected with a railway system; but in the northern division of the colony people had to look to the Government for a bridge or a wharf, and if a return were laid on the table it would show that in a certain Northern district or a coastal district—take Geraldton, for instance—a very large amount of money had been spent on wharves and jetties; and it would be suggested by hon. members that £20,000 and been spent in the district he (Mr. A. Forrest) represented, and that £20,000 had been spent in some other districts. The return would go forth that certain constituencies had had large amounts of money expended in them, and others had none.

THE PREMIER: The word "inclusive" could be substituted for "exclusive."

MR. A. FORREST requested the hon. member to include the cost of the railways. In Northern coastal towns there was no railway communication, and the Government had to supply facilities for shipping.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he would be glad to accept the suggestion of the hon. member for West Kimberley, but he was dealing with the Public Works Department, and not with railway works.

THE PREMIER: They were public works.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It would be very little trouble to the department to supply the information, and he would ask for a return of the cost of the railways as well. He would accept the suggestion, and, by leave of the House, would alter his motion.

MR. SIMPSON suggested, further, that the hon. member add the word "present" to his motion, so as to obtain the cost during the present as well as the last financial year.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he had already added the word.

THE PREMIER: Did the hon. member mean the amount expended during the year ended on the 30th June.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS said he understood that the hon. member wanted the information from the 1st of July of last year to the 30th June this year.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he wanted the information for two years.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS said that would be all right.

Motion, by leave, amended by the insertion of the word "inclusive" in place of "exclusive," in paragraph 1.

Put and passed.

RETURN: TREASURY BILLS ISSUED.

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved that there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing—1, the total amount of loans covered by Treasury bills issued to date; 2, the amount taken up in this colony; 3, the amounts taken up in the eastern colonies; 4, the amounts taken up in London or elsewhere; 5, the rates of interest to be paid on these bills; 6, the premiums obtained, if any, or rebates given; 7, the due dates of all Treasury bills now in circulation; 8, the costs, charges, commissions, and expenses of all kinds connected with the issue of Treasury bills of £500,000 to the A.M.P. Society, the rate of interest, and the due dates of such bonds.

Put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SIXTH DAY OF DEBATE—CONCLUSION.

Debate resumed on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, and upon the main question; the amendment moved by Mr. Leake having been negatived on division at the last sitting.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): Before touching on the Address-in-Reply, I would like to remark that we have had one of the most important debates, and one of the most important divisions, since the Forrest Government came into power. There can be no denying the importance of that division. The subject of the motion was supplied by inspiration from the Upper House. It was adroitly taken possession of by the leader of the Opposition. The first notice which he gave us was with reference to a certain point in connection with railway construction, but the notice which he afterwards gave us was of the most vital importance to

Western Australia at the present moment. It is of vital importance to us to know whether we have gone sufficiently far with our railway policy for the present, or whether we shall extend our railway system into the interior, in view of the difficulties we have to encounter in connection with water supply. The main question at issue was whether we should go on with railway construction by the reappropriation of moneys voted for some other purpose. Almost everyone was voting exactly upon his own opinion on that particular point. Had the motion of want of confidence in the Ministry been tabled at first, two hon. members would not, I think, have been found voting as they did. Had the leader of the Opposition brought forward such a motion as Sir John Downer did in South Australia recently—"We wish to inform your Excellency that we have no longer any confidence in the Government"—I hardly think that he would have obtained the support which he did. The form given above was the proper one to have used in such a case. I do not presume to offer advice to the Opposition on this point, but I do not hesitate to express the opinion that my view of looking at the matter is possibly correct. Two votes would not have been given against the Government if the motion had been a general one of want of confidence. The House is not prepared to turn the Forrest Ministry out of power. I am not in a position to say whether the country is or no: but the House is not, for two reasons—first of all because the House as a whole has not lost confidence in the Government, and secondly because the Opposition aver, both inside and outside the House, that they are not prepared to take office.

A MEMBER: Who told you that?

MR. MORAN: I am using the very words of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans). Independent members see this, and ask themselves "What is the use of bringing about a crisis which will result in turning out the Forrest Ministry, for the sake of bringing the Forrest Ministry back again?" But if the Opposition only want to stop the further extension of railways into the interior at the present time, they have already gone far in the way of accomplishing their object. I think it will be a very, very hard struggle for the

Government to pass all these railways through the Assembly. I fancy it will be almost impossible. Although I am a goldfields member, I am not prepared to support the Government in the further extension of the railway policy into the interior at the present time.

MR. MORGANS: I am sorry to hear that.

MR. MORAN: It is true: pity 'tis, 'tis true; but it is true all the same. I am going to give reasons for the course I intend to pursue, especially for the benefit of the independent members of this House, who are open to receive information from those who have travelled in those parts of the colony where it is proposed to construct these lines. With the permission of the Assembly I will now read extracts from a letter from Mr. Alpin F. Thomson, Under Secretary of Railways, addressed to me on the 27th inst.:—

I am directed to point out that the cost of working the Yilgarn line has increased during the last three or four months; this is principally attributable to the difficulties in connection with the supply of water. No doubt the argument will now be used that we have an abundant supply, and that therefore the expenses will not be so great; but the fact must be borne in mind that, although we have sufficient for present requirements, we have still to haul water for a long distance beyond Boorabbin (where there is only a small supply), the principal source being Karalee, which is not very far on the Coolgardie side of Southern Cross. Admitting that our supply is better than it was, we shall always have this difficulty to face until we have a more permanent supply. Another feature is the cost of maintaining rolling stock. The engines, carriages, and wagons in use during the last two years were principally new; but, in consequence of the heat, and of the dusty nature of the permanent way, and the lengthy running entailed by the goldfields traffic, we are faced with the prospect in the near future of providing a larger amount for maintenance than hitherto.

Mark particularly the reasons given by the Government for raising the railway freights. Perhaps progress may develop into rashness. We are, perhaps, going a little bit too fast. The writer then proceeds:—

A comparative statement given to the Press a little time ago shows that the rates in W.A. are lower than in the other colonies; and although the argument is adduced that the cost of construction of our lines is small when compared with New South Wales, still the difference in gauge must not be overlooked. Their gauge of 4ft. 8½in. lessens considerably the cost of maintenance, and another advan-

tage is that they are able to convey larger quantities of goods in their wagons with less tractive power than we have to use, hence our rates compare most favourably with theirs. There seems to be an impression abroad that the revised rates only apply to the goldfields line, whereas they are general.

The writer also states that the increase in freight only amounts to one-eighth of a penny per lb. If so, what was the use of raising it at all unless a large sum of money was to be derived from it? And let me remind hon. members that whatever the increase, the money would have to be derived from the consumers. Here is an official document supplied me by the Under-Secretary of Railways, which contains an account of an interview by a representative of the *Morning Herald* with the Commissioner of Railways on the 31st ult. In the course of the interview the Commissioner of Railways said:—

Before the assimilation of rates, the cost of working was something under 47 per cent.; but it subsequently rose, and this year it has reached 89 per cent. The great increase of traffic has caused a shortage of water supply, and has led to very great expense in carrying out the traffic. Although large amounts have been expended in building additional reservoirs, these, up to the present time, have not been filled. These, together with other causes, which I have mentioned previously, necessitated the revision of the tariff with a view to providing for the increased working in connection with the traffic, the cost of which would otherwise, if continued, have landed the country in a loss. Another item in the expenditure is the cost of fuel, which, compared with the eastern colonies, is from 50 per cent. to 75 per cent. in excess of the rate paid there. Wages, too, in the eastern colonies are lower than those obtaining in Western Australia.

The remarks contained in this interview refer only to about 70 miles of railway line. We do not know what the supply of fresh water is there yet. Nobody knows it. I am sorry to say that a great deal of the fresh water supplied on our fields is worse than salt water, and is absolutely useless for mining purposes. It is highly mineralised; although it can be used with safety for drinking purposes. This only applies at most to the Leonora extension. Now, with reference to the proposed line from Coolgardie to Norseman, I know the country intimately, and I may inform the House that the engineering difficulties are greater than on any line yet built in this colony. I know, also, that there are not sufficient develop-

ments on that line to prove that it is a payable auriferous zone. Widgeemooltha is almost abandoned. In the course of the officially-published interview from which I have already quoted, the Commissioner of Railways says:—

First of all, I should like to deal with the principle which has guided me in introducing the revised rate, and point out that the reason for its introduction is that the conditions of working have so altered during the past eighteen months, owing to the great distance to which the lines have been extended inland, that the rates which previously existed are not in this instance applicable.

Let us take him at his own words:—

Before the assimilation of rates, the cost of working was something under 47 per cent.; but it subsequently rose, and this year it has reached 89 per cent.

This year the working expenses reached 89 per cent. on the goldfields line, and yet the Government propose to extend that line to exactly double the present distance. The Government propose to leave themselves in the hands of fortune and Providence, from Northam right on to Leonora, or from Northam to Coolgardie; and, by doubling the distance, double the working expenses, up to 170 per cent.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Oh! That is a curious calculation.

MR. MORAN: I am giving the Commissioner of Railways a chance to display that large amount of technical knowledge which he has acquired since he undertook the management of the railways. If it costs 89 per cent. to work the railway to Coolgardie, hauling two trucks of water from Northam for every truck of goods, how much is it going to cost to haul the water from Northam to Norseman? I shall quote some distinguished authorities—none other than the Premier and the Commissioner of Railways—on the reliability of the water supply from Northam to Norseman. The Commissioner of Railways said:

Although the profit upon working as far as Boorabbin has been fairly satisfactory, the increased distance to Kalgoorlie, with the consequent extra cost of working and maintenance, and the increased rate of wages to the employees, soon began to tell.

He is always harping on the same thing, namely, the increased distance; and he is perfectly correct. I believe that after the first burst of traffic was over on the Coolgardie line—when the large machinery

had been completed all round Coolgardie—it was natural to expect the traffic to fall off somewhat. We have had a dry season, during which the cost of working the railways rose from 47 to 89 per cent., or an increase of 42 per cent., principally because the water supply was not reliable. The unreliability of the water supply is a matter for which the Commissioner of Railways cannot be blamed; and perhaps, after all, the recent raising of the railway rates may be justified. But we will not argue that point now. The Commissioner of Railways goes on to say:

The great increase of traffic has caused a shortage of water supply, and has led to very great expense in carrying out the traffic. Although large amounts have been expended in building additional reservoirs, these, up to the present time, have not been filled.

There is no question that Providence has always been kind to the Government, and that report was scarcely dry when there came rain. But is it always going to rain and fill up the dams?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes; so long as this Government is in power.

MR. MORAN: Then I should be sorry to put the present Government out, and bring calamity to the country. I do not believe the Government brought the rainfall—I have not yet reached that stage of adoration. Let us see what the Premier says about the reliability of the rainfall. I will quote a few extracts from a speech delivered in this Assembly two years ago—one of the greatest speeches ever delivered in this Chamber.

MR. SIMPSON: Is it a speech by Mr. C. J. Moran?

MR. MORAN: The gospel according to Moran is not always acceptable in this Assembly, but the gospel according to Forrest is acceptable to a great many. The subject dealt with by the Premier on that occasion was a great one, involving over three millions of money, for a scheme the like of which had never been tackled in the world before. The Premier said:—

No one will probably get up in his place in this House and say that the water question is not the great question that requires solving in regard to the Coolgardie and Yilgarn goldfields. Everyone I think agrees in regard to this.

Now we shall see how reliable these dams are, according to the head of the Govern-

ment, who knows what he is talking about. The Premier said:—

There is no doubt about it—I speak from experience, and there are other experienced men in this House who will support me—that there is in the eastern portion of this colony, and in Central Australia generally, a very small and uncertain rainfall.

The rainfall has been so uncertain in the past that the cost of working the railways has risen, as I have said, from 47 per cent. to 89 per cent., in consequence of the extension of the line to Kalgoorlie. The line has since been extended to Menzies, and now it is proposed to go two hundred miles further. I leave to hon. members to imagine the cost of working the railway if the water has to be hauled from Northam.

MR. A. FORREST: There is plenty of water on the proposed Mount Leonora line.

MR. MORAN: Let us at present centre our thoughts on the Coolgardie to Norseman line. The uncertainty in connection with the Coolgardie water scheme is hanging over our heads and stifling industry. Two years ago we were told by the Premier, on the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, that in three years' time the water would be at Coolgardie. We have railways quite sufficient for the present time, and Parliament has not been asked for the proposed extension. Of the very thing which the Premier said in the speech to which I have referred was the most desirable of all, we hear nothing of in the Governor's Speech. The Coolgardie water scheme at the present time is a nightmare. The Government are not carrying it out, and do not seem inclined to let private enterprise undertake the work.

THE PREMIER: We are carrying it out.

MR. MORAN: The scheme is fizzling out, and will perish by neglect. I will not support any more public works on the goldfields until something definite has been decided as to the Coolgardie water scheme. If the Government do not intend to carry out the scheme, let the scheme be wiped out. If the Government have not the money to carry it out, I believe there is enough private money to do the work. At the present moment what is being done? We all remember the glow of enthusiasm when the speech

was made, and we imagined then that in two years the water would have reached Boorabbin, where it ought now to have been if the work is to be completed in three years from that date. The Premier said:—

The only other question dealt with in the Engineer-in-Chief's report which I intend to refer to is that concerning the time which the works we propose will take to complete. That is a matter which I feel sure will have due consideration. The Engineer-in-Chief deals with it as follows:—"There is, I think, only one more point which I need touch upon, namely "as to the estimate that the work can be completed in three years, concerning which I have "to state as follows."

The Premier went on to state why the scheme should be completed in two years, and concluded by saying that there were no engineering difficulties on the route, and there was no reason why the completion should be delayed more than three years. But there has been absolutely nothing done. We do not even know what the scheme is yet. We do not know what kind of pipes are to be adopted, or where the source of supply is. The Government, it is true, have been clearing a dam at Helena Vale.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Gracious me! We have the foundations in!

MR. MORAN: If it takes two years to get the foundations in, there will not be a water scheme completed in 30 years, at the present rate of progress. It is not a popular thing for me to have to oppose gold-fields works, and this is the first time that I have been found amongst the croakers. But no man can tell me it is a safe and sound policy to extend the gold-fields railways two hundred miles further inland, relying on the uncertain supply of water. The Premier said the whole of the Eastern district is subject to drought for seven years at a time; and added:—"What I wish to say is that there is no certainty." And there is no certainty. No doubt we have had a splendid fall of rain and most of the dams are full; but before next Christmas, with a very hot summer, the Commissioner of Railways may be hauling water from Northam again. The colony was saved a tremendous expenditure a week or two ago through the kindness of Providence. But we must not tempt

Providence too much. Is it not too much to ask Parliament to extend the railways under these conditions? It is unwise and unfair to the colony; and, more, it is unfair to ourselves. The proposal is making a laughing-stock of the House. The Coolgardie water scheme was passed with enthusiasm and got a world-wide reputation: but the scheme has now dwindled down in two years to the employment of a few men at Helena Vale, who find it a difficult matter to get their wages when they earn them.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: That is unfair.

MR. MORAN: I will withdraw that, because I believe the wages have been paid. Does it seem reasonable, with a population of 170,000 people, to sit coldly and calmly by and allow this scheme to hang over their heads? And does it seem fair that the three millions of money voted for the Coolgardie water supply should be utilised for other things under another name? If the Premier says that the Coolgardie water scheme is the one thing necessary, why not construct and carry it out?

THE PREMIER: The tenders are out now for the pipes, and in another month will be in.

MR. MORAN: In the name of conscience, when will the scheme be completed?

THE PREMIER: Very soon.

MR. MORAN: Exactly two years have gone over and nothing has been done, and nothing will be done in another year's time.

THE PREMIER: We have had difficulties to encounter we never expected to meet. You know that very well.

MR. MORAN: That is perfectly true. This big scheme was introduced after most careful consideration; and now, long before it reaches a practical stage, there are difficulties that were never expected. What difficulties will there be before the goldfields are reached?

MR. LEAKE: And what will the cost be?

MR. MORAN: It will take months to fix up the contract and decide where the money can be found. This House is asked to vote money for more railways, and only heaven knows where the water for those railways is to come

from. If heaven does not send water, we do not know where to get it. We remember the tremendous uproar some time ago when there was a block of traffic owing to want of water. On the goldfields there is a big population settled down, amongst whom there are ordinary business men, who expect the same regularity for their own conveyance and for the carriage of their goods on the railways as is enjoyed in the other towns. But what will be the result if these railways are built without due provision for water. Does the Commissioner of Railways expect there will be rain every year? Can the Coolgardie water scheme be carried out in less than three years from now? It cannot; it is impossible. Why cannot we perfect our present railway system, and stop building railways not asked for? We have been a public-works Parliament, but surely we are not going public-works mad! What would be thought of a general who, invading the interior of a country, left himself liable to be cut off? And yet that is what the Railway Department are doing in proposing this railway. If the line be built, the Government will some day be called on to equip a camel expedition to look for a lost engine in the neighbourhood of Mount Leonora or Mount Malcolm. It is pure recklessness, building such railways. It is very hard for me to have to oppose goldfields railways.

THE PREMIER: It is pretty hard on the Government to have goldfields proposals opposed by a goldfields member.

MR. MORAN: I made the remark in order to prevent the Premier making it. It is hard to differ from your friends, but it is harder to see the country sink under unnecessary works. We were told there would be a flow of water at Coolgardie in three years; but, as I have said, the contract has not been let, and nothing has been done as yet. The dam at the Helena is a necessary work, for which I should vote if never a drop of water went to Coolgardie. I am prepared to witness the total extinction of the Coolgardie water scheme by this House, because the enthusiasm has gone out and enormous difficulties are cropping up.

THE PREMIER: Difficulties are not cropping up at all. They have all been overcome.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They have not begun yet.

MR. MORAN: Well, we shall see. Now I come to the Coolgardie and Norseman railway line particularly. In the absence of rain, 120 miles of railway beyond Coolgardie would have to be supplied by haulage from Northam. And I remember one summer when Northam looked very "dicky," too. If the hot weather had lasted for two months longer, water would have had to be hauled from Guildford.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The supply has never been so bad as this year.

MR. MORAN: Imagine hauling all the traffic to Northam and getting all the water supply from that place! All the revenue of that and other lines would go, with another hundred per cent.; and such a state of things the country is not prepared to stand. I am not going to tell the House that I received an urgent wire from Kalgoorlie the other day, stating that the heart of Kalgoorlie was bleeding for poor Esperance. I believe that the heart of Kalgoorlie is still bleeding. Two years ago I introduced a motion in this House, and said I thought it a proper thing, in the development of the goldfields, that some railway communication should be given between Esperance and Norseman. What I said then was correct, and I repeat it now. The proper policy would be to give the Norseman goldfield connection with Esperance by a narrow-gauge railway line built by private enterprise. To put the thing in its brutal, naked truth, I believe the fact that Fremantle would be damaged by connecting Esperance with Norseman is a big and important consideration. The country is not justified in building a railway right from Esperance to the goldfields at the present time. Vested interests must be considered. But supposing we had no Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, or Southern Cross?

HON. H. W. VENN: Then we would have no railways.

MR. MORAN: Quite true. But supposing we had only the Norseman goldfield, would the Government start to build a railway from Guildford to Northam, and through the barren stretch of country beyond? What would the Government do under such circumstances?

A MEMBER: Go to the nearest port, of course.

MR. MORAN: The Premier regards Norseman as a payable goldfield and one deserving a railway; and if there had been no other considerations the railway would, under the circumstances I have sketched, have gone from Esperance. Why not adopt the policy at the present moment? It is admitted that there are private corporations ready and willing to build a light line from Esperance to the fields. I would not allow a private company to build a full-gauge railway, if I thought that railway would interfere with large vested interests. Nor would I consult the wishes of Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie, but would first have regard to the wishes of the Norseman people. If the Norseman people said they would be satisfied with a narrow-gauge line, then I, as a legislator, would say we were bound to give them such a line. I would give no concessions or land grants, but would give the Government the right of purchase, say at six months' notice. If private enterprise be not believed in, then there is only one alternative. Although I am against building railway lines into the interior of this country, as they can only be worked under the greatest difficulties and the water supply is precarious, I would be willing to vote to construct a line of railway on the ordinary gauge, a contour line, over 50 miles of the sandplain, from Esperance towards Norseman. I would tell the Minister, in building this kind of line, not to mind the grades, so long as they do not go above 1 in 40. No one can object to these 50 miles of line being laid. I am told there are no engineering difficulties at all in the way, but I do not know the country. Such a line would suit the people for a year or two, and in a year or two the railway could be extended to Norseman, and by-and-by it could go right on to Coolgardie. If the inevitable has to come, it must come; but I do not see why this railway should be constructed, because the goldfields are fairly well served by railways already. Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie have no reason to grumble, if the Minister will not tamper with the tariff. It is asking the colony too much to construct these proposed railways. The Norseman goldfield has a natural port, and it is no

menace to Fremantle to open up a legitimate coastal trade between that port and the interior of the country. I feel perfectly certain that the Premier must often think he is on the wrong track, and that the proper thing to do is to make a railway from Esperance to Norseman. We are told by the agricultural members in the House that in five or six years the production of cereals will have outgrown our consumption. By the time the line is extended from Norseman to Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, the country will have overtaken the demand, and the import trade that is going to ruin Fremantle will have been killed. If the line is constructed from Esperance, that will give Fremantle time to complete its harbour works; and the import trade will be killed by the increased production within Western Australia. I would suggest to the Government that they should build the line over this 50 miles of sandy plain; it could subsequently be sent on to Norseman and, if need be, continued to the eastern goldfields. At present it is suggested to adopt an unnatural route for the railway and to adopt an unnatural way of getting the money to construct it. To extend the present railway service when the supply of water is very precarious is folly and very unwise, and I for one will not support the policy shadowed forth in paragraph 25 of His Excellency's Speech. That may be great cruelty on the Government, but I do not think they will feel it much. I fancy they will not die of broken hearts, if the Coolgardie-Norseman line is knocked out, and I feel perfectly certain that Esperance will not die of a broken heart if that railway is knocked out. If the Government said they are going to stop railway extension, save and except this, that we will vote a small sum of money to bridge over that 50 miles of country which I have spoken about, I believe the House and the country would support it. The Government could never be accused of extravagance in this matter then. I do not say that the Government can be accused of anything that is not honourable in regard to the proposed lines, but I say I think they are a little bit susceptible to influence. This session I am going to move that the Coolgardie water scheme be handed over to private enterprise to construct, if the Government are not pre-

pared to raise the money at once and go on with the work.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: We are going on with it.

MR. MORAN: That is all right, but we are going to hear something more about it. This scheme is being allowed to be frozen out, it is being forgotten, it is damaging the credit of the country. Mining companies are saying, "We do not believe we are going to get that water scheme; why are the Government hanging fire?" These companies are going to a great deal of unnecessary trouble. They are between his satanic majesty and the deep blue sea. This water scheme is killing the colony's credit.

THE PREMIER: We are going ahead with the works as quickly as we can.

MR. MORAN: But it is like Napoleon going to Moscow. And if the railway goes from Coolgardie to Norseman we shall find our Moscow, unless a good providence comes to our assistance every three months with a good fall of rain. I am glad to see that the Government intend to bring in a Bill to amend the tariff. I am not going to hurt the agricultural industry; I am rather a warm friend of that industry, and I am not going to do anything sensational in cutting down duties; but I think the tariff can be rearranged, and I think it is the duty of the country to rearrange it. I believe the good old question—the meat question—will crop up again. I know meat is very dear at the present time, and I know the locking up of the Kimberley district placed 2d. a lb. on meat. We have 30s. to pay on imported meat, and when the meat came from the Kimberley district we could get it for 10d. a pound: but hon. members voted to shut up that district, which meant putting 2d. per pound on meat. The Government with the assistance of the Opposition did this.

THE PREMIER: The House did it.

MR. MORAN: I say the shutting up of that district was one of the most scandalous jobs ever perpetrated. We have a party howling out for protection, and yet we find that party willing to turn round and cut the throat of its brother. I am sorry to say that this job was perpetrated with the assistance of the Govern-

ment, and the Opposition, and the leading members on both sides of the House, and the country has had to pay for it during the last six months. I repeat that it will remain as one of the most scandalous jobs ever perpetrated by the politicians of the country; and the Premier took a hand in it, and so did the leader of the Opposition. I say that the Premier should have stood out.

THE PREMIER: How could I?

MR. MORAN: I want to make brief mention of a small paragraph that is contained in the Governor's Speech. No one has referred to it yet. It says that a Bill is to be introduced to give preferential tariff rates to British-made goods. That is Imperial federation. I am not known to go round on the Queen's birthday and shout out loyal sentiments; but I am going to think a long time before I oppose such a Bill as this. We are proud of belonging to the British Empire, and I think, although it may be hard to shut out the goods of the German people, who were the first to come to our harbour at Fremantle, still we must remember that in trouble we have to depend on the mother country. What this paragraph means is to shut out practically speaking, Uncle Sam's goods, unless that Anglo-American alliance comes off. "Made in Germany" and "made in Japan" sort of business, I believe, should be dealt with, with great determination. No reference is made to that happy little state of affairs which occurred in the colony over the Goldfields Act during the recess. As the law stands, the lawyers are fattening, and the prospectors are starving. A new order of things is coming over the state of the country. The prospectors are discovering deep alluvial, and it must be recognised that special legislation must be passed to deal with it. This matter inflicted a great hardship on a certain member of the House, and got him into disgrace and trouble with his constituents some time ago. I hope when this measure comes forward it will be dealt with, without raising any of the feelings which then existed. I hope that all is forgotten, and that all ill-feeling towards anyone on that occasion is left behind. The sooner that trouble is forgotten, the better it

will be for the colony. It is the duty of the House to place the law in such a position that such trouble cannot occur again. The Address-in-Reply does not contain much beyond the public works policy and the Bill which I have just mentioned. The only other Bill for which I wait with some interest is the Electoral Bill, and if we have any more close divisions we may want an amending Electoral Bill before long; therefore, I hope it will be brought forward as quickly as possible. I may say, in a bantering sort of way, that if the Government intend to make the Coolgardie-Norseman line a question of want of confidence, I am going to get sweet with my constituents once again. I have troubled the House rather long, but the matter I want to conclude with is this. There is no possible chance to demonstrate to the House that it is not safe to have three millions hanging over the colony for the Coolgardie water scheme.

THE PREMIER: That is too much; two and a half millions.

MR. MORAN: I will not come down one figure. To make the scheme serviceable, you will have to reticulate, or you will have to pay the municipalities to reticulate, and three millions is the lowest amount that it can be done for. The Norseman line will cost £300,000 odd.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: No.

MR. MORAN: With the rolling stock, I say it will cost that amount.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: We shall use the present rolling stock.

MR. MORAN: But you say that the present rolling stock is getting out of order. I say that it will take £300,000 for this new railway line. I think also that we are going to have a "white elephant" in the Cue railway line. I was rather amused the other night when some hon. member was talking about this line, and showing that the population of the Murchison was 5,000, and the railway cost £500,000, which was £100 for each person. I repeat that the Murchison railway is going to be a "white elephant," and the Eastern railway will have to make up for it. A daily service will not pay on the Murchison line. The population of the Murchison to-day is only 5,000, and they have four

representatives in Parliament—four goldfields men, too. The population of the district I represent is 20,000, and these people have only one member; but they ought to have twenty. When we have a redistribution of seats, I want to ask the Murchison members to meet together and agree that there shall be one member for each 5,000 people. The Murchison would then have one representative, and the other three representatives would be given to my electorate. I will oppose, as far as I can, the Coolgardie-to-Norseman railway scheme. In reference to the Mount Leonora line, I feel inclined to oppose that also, unless the Minister proves to me that there is an unlimited supply of water at the end of that line, or he may have to send out a prospecting party to look for an engine, one of these days. That reminds me of the theory of the Irishman who, when he saw a railway engine right in the interior of the country, thought it was a steamboat looking for water. The Government have lost the water supply, and they intend now to send out to Mount Leonora to look for water. Be careful that your fresh water is really fresh water. I heard from a Government official yesterday that during the late heavy rain the Bulong tank emptied itself as soon as it filled. These tanks are proving a failure, except where they are sunk in rocky country.

THE PREMIER: The Widgemooltha tank is filled and running over.

MR. MORAN: So is every tank on the road; but wait till the summer. On the grounds I have given I shall oppose the extension of the railway system. I do not think we have quite lost confidence in the Government yet, unless they endeavour to force through the House a railway policy which has been rejected in the other place, and was nearly rejected here.

MR. VOSPER (North-east Coolgardie): I would not trespass on the attention of the House at this stage but for certain explanations which I wish to give with reference to what has transpired during the debate. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) made a statement the other night in the House to the effect that the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) was the

self-elected leader of the goldfields party in this House last session. I wish to state that at a meeting of the goldfields party, consisting of the majority of the representatives of the goldfields, the member for Central Murchison was unanimously elected to the position of leader of the party. I state this in order to correct the statement made to the effect that he had arrogated to himself a position to which he was not entitled. I regret that an allusion was made by the leader of the Opposition to the conduct of certain members for the goldfields in connection with the debate on the food duties, and that he should have stigmatised their conduct as "treachery." I must say, also, however, that I think there was sufficient provocation for the use of such an epithet, and that there have been occasions since the opening of the present Parliament which render its use appropriate. I was a witness to all the proceedings in connection with the meetings that took place before the debate on the food duties last session. First of all there was a meeting in the smoking-room of the Assembly of members who were decidedly opposed to the continuance of the food duties. The member for Albany was present, and a large number of other members attended. Some of those present asserted that they were ready to vote against the continuance of the food duties, but that they were not prepared to take any step which would jeopardise the existence of the Government. I do not think that anyone on the Opposition side of the House could have taken exception to the position they assumed, although it appeared anomalous and contradictory; but we, at any rate, gave them credit for acting in a straightforward manner. Another meeting was subsequently held in the Library of the House. An amendment was tabled by the member for North Coolgardie, which was afterwards submitted to the member for Albany in lieu of the one which he had prepared. The member for Albany accepted the substituted motion, and moved it in the House. In the interval which took place between the holding of the meeting in the Library and the moving of

the amendment in the House, another and a secret meeting was held in the Library, at which seven goldfields members were present. I was making notes in my place in the House at the time for a speech I was about to deliver, and I saw them go in. I cannot, of course, say what occurred, but when the division took place these seven members voted in favour of the Government. It is a fact that the members who met in the Library did not give any intimation to the Opposition of their intention to take the action they subsequently did.

MR. MORGANS: They ought to have done.

MR. VOSPER: I think members on this side of the House have reason to feel very sore on the subject. The conduct pursued by the members in question was not calculated to give a very lofty idea of the character of those who acted in that manner. So far as some were concerned, the fault was one of omission, but this will not apply to all. This is a matter of history, with which I would not have troubled the House had it not been for references which have been made to it in the course of the debate. Now I have something of a far more serious character to bring under the notice of the House. The other night I had the honour of asking the Director of Public Works a few questions with reference to the condition of certain jetties and other public works at Fremantle, and I very much regret he is not in his place, because I believe I have evidence which will go to show that the answers given by him to me—no doubt supplied to him by his officials—were, to a very great extent, unreliable. I asked him if it was true (1) that 200 piles had to be drawn out of the extension of the main jetty at Fremantle, and (2) whether, upon being drawn, many of them were found to have been sunk from two to four feet only in the sand. To which the Director of Public Works replied as follows:—“(1) No; only 60 piles, broken by vessels lying alongside in heavy weather, have been removed. (2) The broken ends of piles were not recovered; and the records show them to have been driven a minimum of eight feet into the solid.” I was afterwards so positively in-

formed that the Director had been misled in the answer that he gave to my question, that I took the trouble to send a man down to Fremantle to institute special inquiries. Although he is not an engineer, this man is a thoroughly reliable person, and he has sent me a report which he says can be confirmed, and which two employees in the Government service also inform me can be confirmed. If the Government see fit to institute an inquiry into this, I shall be glad to supply them with the information I have obtained, and the name of the person who obtained it. In my opinion, the Director of Public Works is, to a certain extent, being misled, and, consequently, is misleading this House; and we can form no just estimate of what is going on in the department so long as this state of things continues. My informant writes as follows:—

In the Lower House the other night the Director of Public Works, replying to Mr. Vosper, said "that only 60 piles had been drawn from the jetty, and that they had been broken by vessels lying alongside in heavy weather; that the broken ends were not recovered, but the records showed that they had been driven a minimum of 8ft. into the solid bottom and not only from 2ft. to 4ft. into sand, as was suggested by the question." Some one, I cannot say who, has placed Mr. Piesse in an awkward position, as the above statement is incorrect in every particular, and the man who is responsible for it is deserving of the severest censure. In the first place, while I cannot at this present moment say just how many piles have been drawn, I am credibly informed that a written order has been issued by the department for 200 piles to replace those which have been taken out. Secondly, I have seen over 20 spring piles which have been drawn, and only three or four of them were broken in the manner described by the Minister. Only three out of that lot were shod with iron (as they all should have been), and the shoe on one of these was fastened in such a manner as to make an impossibility to drive it into the solid bottom, because it was not on the centre or in a line with the pile—a gross piece of carelessness, which an inspector who understood his business would never have allowed to pass unchallenged. Two others were broken, but at the lower end, the breakage being evidently caused by driving on the hard bottom. The marks in them all, without exception, showed that they had not been driven into the sand more than 4ft., and as the majority of them were not pointed with iron it was simply impossible to drive them into the solid bottom, and they were drawn, not, as had been stated, because they were broken, but because they would not stand up straight. Naturally, the question suggested itself, If the outer piles were only driven in 4ft., how about

those on the inside, where they are out of sight?

These are statements of a serious character. I do not intend to cast any reflections on the Minister for what he said, but I think it is of the utmost importance that he should be sure of the trustworthiness of his officials, so that the information furnished to him can be relied upon as being correct. Either these statements are true or false, but they are sufficiently serious to call for some inquiry. I am ready to give the name of the writer of this letter if required. He will give sufficient information to enable us to discover whether the statements made are true or false. I think an inquiry should be made into the circumstances. I took the trouble to send a man down at my own expense, quite apart from the civil service, so that the report should be independent. It appears to me that a *prima facie* case has been made out to prove that the Director has been deceived. My informant adds that the statements made in this House by the member for the Murray (Mr. George) about the quantities removed and the probable cost were probably correct, and that the statements made by the Commissioner were incorrect. It is said in Fremantle that it will cost 10s. per yard to remove some of the sand. It is very important, indeed, that this matter should be investigated. It seems to be patent to everyone that if officials are to be allowed to mislead Ministers in this way we shall not be able to rely on anything we hear from the Public Works Department, or from any other department.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The work was done by contract.

MR. VOSPER: Yes, we know that there was a contract; but if these things are allowed to happen under the contract system, an enquiry should be made into it, and the responsible officers should be censured for supplying information which is incorrect.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The services of David Johnston, the inspector, have been dispensed with.

MR. VOSPER: The House was informed by the Director the other day, in answer to my question, that an inspection had been made by David Johnston,

as if he were a perfectly trustworthy person. It would give a great deal of point to the arguments in this House that the Government are not in a position to carry out the supervision of the large works they are proposing to construct, if it could be shown that they are not carrying out the supervision of these comparatively unimportant works in a proper manner. I think that, after all, perhaps, we shall have to closely scrutinise the Water Supply Department, as we have already done that of the Public Works Department. Reference has been made to the Bulong tank. When the heavy rains took place Bulong was practically drowned out; the tank got its full supply of water. After three days there was only about three inches of water left in it, and the tank is now absolutely empty. My informant tells me that the country is so boggy there that it is very difficult to get to the tank at all, and when one manages to get there he finds it is about the driest place in the whole district.

THE PREMIER: It is easy to find fault.

MR. VOSPER: And it is easy to remedy some faults that have been found.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: I deny the truth of the hon. member's statement, and I will cause an inquiry to be made.

MR. VOSPER: Other complaints have been made against the Public Works Department. I have received a letter with reference to the sinking of a well at Mulgabbie. On the 7th March last there were several hundred men at that locality; now there is not a single man on the spot. At the time when the place was inhabited the department were requested to sink a well there. The department considered the matter from the 7th March last till now, when they have commenced to sink a well which is no longer wanted, since there is no living soul left to use the water. The men on the goldfields are working further and further afield in their search for the precious metal, and it should be the business of the department to supply them with water and to sink a well as soon as possible after the requirements of a district have been made known. It is no use sinking a well when the people have left the place and it is no longer required. After

all, the denials given by the Director of Public Works are not worthy of the credence that was given to them. The accusations have been practically substantiated, and are worthy of notice at the hands of the department. I ask that a special inquiry should be made into the manner in which the Fremantle harbour works have been constructed, because there has been considerable waste of public money in connection with the works.

At 6.30 p.m. the SPEAKER left the chair.

At 7.30 the SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

MR. CONOLLY (Dundas): Last night having witnessed one of the most important divisions which this House has ever taken, with reference to the reappropriation proposals in the Governor's Speech, it may possibly have occurred to some hon. members that I did not express my opinions on that question; neither did I vote. This course was, in a great measure, practically forced upon me, owing to the very difficult position in which I have been placed by the ordinary course of matters relative to the interests of my district. Still, with reference to this reappropriation question, I may say that I also have certain opinions. It is not, in my opinion, a question of the reappropriation of certain moneys alone, but rather the reasons and causes which have led to the necessity for reappropriation, which we have to consider. I do not think the Parliament of this colony, in reappropriating money, would be departing, in any very great or injurious degree, from the precedent which has been laid down by Governments in other colonies, provided it did not injure or retard other works; but, it seems to me that, if the Government of this colony had admitted, encouraged, and used private enterprise in carrying out more of their public works, this reappropriation would not, in all probability, have been required. Many of the works which the Government at the present moment propose to carry out with the money which they desire to reappropriate could, with benefit and advantage to the colony, and without any danger, have been left to pri-

vate enterprise. One of the most important public works of this colony, the Coolgardie water scheme, a scheme involving an enormous expenditure, would have come under this category, and might with safety have been successfully, beneficially, and advantageously carried out by private enterprise. In fact, I understand that at the present moment the Government could place this work under the control of private enterprise, on very fair and advantageous terms, and with a reasonable assurance that it would be brought to a successful issue.

THE PREMIER: Where are the offers?

MR. CONOLLY: The Press of this colony has, for some time past, published letters from various people offering to undertake this work.

THE PREMIER: Not to carry it out as a private venture.

MR. CONOLLY: Well, I do not think the Government have given them the opportunity or the least chance of doing so.

MR. LEAKE: They have always been against it.

MR. CONOLLY: With reference to public works in general, and more especially to the railway policy which the Government have announced in the Speech, it would be needless, I think, for me to refer immediately to a question which has such a vital bearing on the interests of the people I represent as that of the Coolgardie-Norseman line. Hon. gentlemen of this Assembly are well aware of the attitude I have adopted throughout my political career with reference to this question; and, it is unnecessary for me to say that the course which the Government have taken has placed me in a most difficult and almost unjust situation, with reference to the people whom I represent. It has placed me in such a position in regard to this question that, while providing one portion of my constituency with a railway the necessity for which has long been felt as absolutely essential to their welfare and prosperity, I am by that very action asked to do a most vital injury to another portion of my electorate, by supporting a measure which, in ordinary circumstances, would reflect but slightly to my credit, and can surely not reflect much credit on the Government who have placed me in such an unfortunate position.

The relative situation, position, and interest existing between the Norseman goldfield and the port of Esperance are, of course, well known, not only to members in this House, but to the people of the colony generally. The idea of connecting Norseman, or supplying that goldfield from any other seaport than that of Esperance, involves a measure which, in my opinion, would stand unprecedented in the political, commercial, and industrial records of any colony of Australia. But the Government have placed me in such a position that it is necessary for me either to support the Coolgardie and Norseman line, or make a sacrifice which, as every reasonable, intelligent, and progressive man will admit, is most unnecessary, and which involves injury and injustice to the town of Esperance. I am put in the position that, to benefit one portion of my district I must sacrifice another. I would like to say a few words with reference to the remarks which fell from the lips of the member for North Perth (Mr. Oldham) as to the possible dangers which would arise to Perth and Fremantle from the opening up of the port of Esperance. It has always seemed to me that the people of Perth and Fremantle, in regard to the facilities and advantages which Esperance is in a position to bestow on the district around, have been dangerously disposed to mistake the shadow for the substance. They have feared Esperance, instead of looking into the question and gauging the exact amount of danger or otherwise the opening of that port would be likely to cause to other ports of the colony. These members have always been satisfied with saying that Esperance was going to do the western coast a severe injury. But very few have really probed very deeply into the question, or have calculated exactly the amount of injury that would be done, or the exact danger involved. No doubt members representing Perth and Fremantle hold their opinions most sincerely. I prefer to think that opinions which are held adverse to the district I represent are sincere. The reason those opinions are held is, I think, simply because members do not look into and consider the question of time. Whenever they speak of a railway, either from Coolgardie to Norseman or from Esperance

to Norseman, and the possibilities of its continuation, they speak as if that continuation were going to take place to-morrow, six months hence, or even two years hence. Surely, any thinking person, looking into the possibilities of the continuation of the line, must see that, even had the line been sanctioned last year, or even if it be sanctioned this year, it must be many years before it ultimately connects the port of Esperance with Coolgardie. Indeed, were this question properly handled and properly approached by the Government, it must be seen that the connection between Esperance and Coolgardie could not take place before both Perth and Fremantle, as the capital and main port of the colony, were permanently assured, so as to remove all possible fear of any trade or commercial disadvantages resulting. Supposing, for the purpose of argument, a line were sanctioned this session, surely it would not reach Norseman, taking either Norseman or Esperance as the starting point, for probably another two years. Indeed, we should be very well satisfied if it did so in that time. At Norseman the line would remain for a very considerable time. A fresh bill would have to be passed, the sanction of this House obtained, the money raised, and many other preliminaries gone through. In any case, were the extension sanctioned this year, it would assuredly be six or seven years, at least, before a line connecting Esperance and Coolgardie became a realised fact. Looking into the future of the western portion of the colony, we can see that it is not a matter of very great time ahead before we shall have an intercolonial line connecting South Australia with the port of Fremantle. When that becomes a realised fact, I ask any member in this House what possible danger could Esperance, or any port, be to the port of Fremantle? Fremantle will become not only an important port of this colony, but one of the most important harbours of Australasia. She will be what the Premier has himself described—and I think with some reason—the “Brindisi of Australasia.” But the people of the town of Fremantle are always crying out with fear of the little harbour of Esperance. Yet they tell us that within the next two or three years they expect to have all the

Australian and European trade. They expect the great ocean mail-steamers to call permanently there, as the first port between Europe and Australia. Surely, that will establish and ensure permanence and safety for Fremantle against any possibility of any other port cropping up to injure either Perth or the main harbour. All these things will occur long before we can reasonably expect to see a line constructed connecting Esperance with Coolgardie; and, after all, that is the main danger. A line, the only object of which at the present time is to supply the goldfields, can in no way endanger the interests of the western portion of the colony. I cannot see what serious grounds or reasonable objections the member for North Perth (Mr. Oldham), on behalf of his constituents and for their safety, can possibly raise against the construction of such a line. In my opinion, it is simply a question of time; and if that hon. member and those who think with him will look into the matter they will see that the danger diminishes so much that really it need not be taken notice of [MR. OLDHAM: Hear, hear.] The member for North Perth says “Hear, hear;” and I think he understands my allusion, when I say it is a question of time.

MR. OLDHAM: A very short time.

MR. CONOLLY: We shall have to wait a little longer before we even get the line to Norseman. But surely the view taken by the hon. member and others is most narrow-minded and parochial. The Norseman goldfield is capable of becoming a large and wealthy asset to this colony. It is a goldfield capable of giving employment to hundreds, I might almost say to thousands, of people. It is undoubtedly going to be one of the great mining and industrial centres of the colony. Why, then, should this goldfield be put under a disability when there is no reason to apprehend any danger from the construction of such a line as I advocate?

MR. OLDHAM: Ask the Government that question.

MR. CONOLLY: I would like to ask the hon. member the question. The Government propose to construct a line to Norseman, and I hope they will do so. I merely touch on this question because I am convinced the hon. member for North Perth is mistaken, although I know full

well he is most sincere in his opinions. I feel sure that if he looks into this question, and gauges the time which must elapse between the starting of a line and its completion, he will find that the people of Perth and Fremantle and of the western coast of the colony, need have no fear of any danger from the port of Esperance. They need have no fear that the line which the Government have offered can in any way imperil or endanger their interests now or in the future. As the representative of the Esperance district, and as a politician in this House, my support has always been given, and will always be given, to an Esperance-Norseman line. Still, out of consideration for my Norseman constituents, and under the sense of duty which I feel to those people who have placed their present and future welfare in my care, I feel it would be an injury to them and no benefit to the people of Esperance to refuse the offer which the Government have made to construct a line from Coolgardie to Norseman. It would be an injury to those people, as I have said, and no benefit to the people of Esperance, to refuse that offer, when, in the event of a refusal, there is no possibility of replacing that line with one from Esperance to the Norseman. The question with me is a perfectly plain one, and yet it is a most grievous and difficult one. Owing to the position which the Government have taken up, what is almost a death-blow has been dealt at the town and people who placed me in this House as their representative. I can only express a most sincere hope that the Premier, having adopted a policy against my opinions and on his own responsibility, will carry that policy through successfully, and construct without delay the railway which he has placed before the House. On the ground of mere justice to the people of Norseman, I would solicit from those members who have any fears in reference to this line their assistance in giving to the people the benefits and advantages of a Coolgardie-Norseman line.

MR. WILSON (Canning): I cannot begin my speech in regard to the Address-in-Reply without first referring to the speech made by the Attorney-General in the House last night. I regret that the hon. gentleman is not in his seat to hear the few remarks I am about to make. It

was a matter of great regret to me to listen to what I considered were unseemly and undignified remarks on the part of a Minister of the Crown. I regret them, not because I happen to sit on this side and because I happen to be one of the members of the Opposition, to which the Attorney-General referred, but because I think it is lowering to the dignity of the whole House to indulge in the language which he did.

MR. MORAN: Begin first on your own side.

MR. WILSON: I could not help comparing the present Attorney-General with his predecessor. In Mr. Burt we had a gentleman who always treated the members of the House with due courtesy; and I was grieved that his successor felt himself called upon to make the speech he did. I think hon. members should all endeavour to carry on the debates in a gentlemanly way, and not indulge in remarks which are calculated to lower the dignity of the whole House. With regard to the Address-in-Reply, the first thought that struck me was, that I regretted the Premier could not see his way to do as is done in the other colonies—address a large public meeting in Perth or somewhere else, before the meeting of Parliament, and foreshadow his policy. If that were done, hon. members would have an opportunity and time to consider the approximate proposals of the Government. To start and consider a speech of this length is no small matter, as it contains large works of an expensive character, and there is an important policy laid down here. I trust that my suggestion will be adopted before the next session of Parliament begins. As to the railway policy of the Government, I was struck on reading the daily papers with the remarks of the Commissioner of Railways, when he admitted that the expenditure and cost of running our railways in Western Australia had increased about 30 per cent. on the previous year, or that 20 per cent. more of the earnings had been expended in running the railways than had been the case hitherto. The only explanation he gave for this large increase was the extra cost of water on the goldfields railways. I think the Commissioner of Railways might have gone further, and told us that he had

made some inquiry into the matter—if he had done so; but as he was silent on that point, I presume he has made no inquiry as to the enormous increase in the working expenses of the railway. I think that before the Government adopted the proposals of the General Manager to raise the rates on the railways to recoup the department, they should have taken into their serious consideration the various means which could be adopted to reduce the working expenses. I think that is where the fault lies. Instead of rushing to the railway tariff, and saying we will put 50 per cent. on this, and 50 per cent. on that, the Government should have gone carefully into the ways and means, to see if they could not reduce the cost of running the railways. This inquiry has not been made, as far as we know; but the Government have exercised the privilege of saying that the people of the country shall bear the brunt of the losses. Not only are the rates advanced, but merchants who have contracts on the fields are made to "pay the piper." We who are merchants take contracts for 12 months ahead; and is it fair that a merchant who has a contract for 12 months or six months should have the rates for the railways sprung upon him for 20 or 30 per cent. more than he anticipated? The Government are seeking to impose all sorts of vexatious and petty charges, and I think illegal charges, such as shunting charges from the Fremantle yard down to the jetty alongside the vessel, which only tend to create unrest and vexation, and will do nothing towards recouping the loss the railways are suffering. I think the time is most inopportune, and it is ill-advised, to increase the burdens of the people in any respect. The Premier tells us that we are unpatriotic if we talk of depression, but I am prepared to say we are suffering from depression in Western Australia to-day. The true patriot is the man who is prepared to face the situation, and not the man who closes his eyes and says, "We have no depression; everything is going on swimmingly," which will land us into trouble. I have as great faith in the country as any member; I believe in Western Australia and her resources; and I have backed up my faith in the country during the seven

years I have been here; but I have no faith in the present administration. I do not reflect on the members of the Ministry personally, but the administration is not what I should like to see, in the interests of the country. I should like to touch upon what I think is the cause of the increased expenditure on our railways, and what I think is, to some extent, responsible for their not paying, as the Commissioner of Railways says that some portions do not pay. The Commissioner has put forward the great cost of water as his reason for the falling off in the railway revenue; but I come nearer home, and look at the railways near Fremantle, Perth, and Midland Junction; and I say that I think one serious cause of loss in the railways is the fact that the resolution of the House, to remove the workshops from Fremantle to Midland Junction, which was adopted three years ago, has not been given effect to. I think the Engineer-in-Chief estimated a saving of £15,000 per annum if these workshops were removed. The resolution was adopted some four years ago, and four times £15,000 are £60,000, which amount would be almost sufficient to erect the shops, to say nothing of the money which has already been spent on the site. These workshops should have been situated at Midland Junction years ago, and we should have saved this £15,000 a year and have earned interest on the money which was saved. I should like to remark that a great injustice has been done to the people of Midland Junction. When a Government set forth a policy, they should carry it through. People have been attracted round Midland Junction, land has been sold, and if the Government do not carry the work through, they are doing an injustice to the people there. Those who have gone to live at this place will become weary of waiting, and have to clear out, as the people of Esperance will have to do now. That is not a good policy. I notice that a few remarks fell from the hon. member for the Murray (Mr. George) as to the Fremantle harbour works. I think he, as a practical man, was perfectly right in raising the question of waste in the drilling operations in the harbour works; and I do not think that the reply of the Director of Public Works

was at all satisfactory. To say that it was necessary to use staging for machine drills was, to my mind, absurd. Machine drills are used with good effect on floating pontoons. It makes the work economical, and the machines are easily removed.

MR. GEORGE: The Government want the brains to direct these works, which they have not.

MR. WILSON: To my mind the reply of the Minister was very unsatisfactory. It is no answer to say that the work is being done under the estimate. Estimates can be made to be anything. Public officers, when they are going to carry out work by day labour, take good care that they have an enormous margin to play upon. I am prepared to say this—I am not casting any reflection on the Director of Public Works in this respect, because I do not think he had anything to do with the starting of the works, and I am prepared to stake my reputation on it—that if the Fremantle harbour works had been let in sections, by contract, there would have been an enormous saving. I notice that in paragraph 6 reference is made to a little work, which is, perhaps unimportant, and hardly worth referring to—I mean the Owen's Anchorage railway. Perhaps the Commissioner of Railways will correct me if I am wrong, but I believe that line has been put down at a low cost. But what strikes me is that it was built for the exclusive use of the smelting works.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: It is used for stock.

MR. WILSON: The Speech says:

The railway from Fremantle to Owen's Anchorage is practically completed, and has already proved of much advantage to the Smelting Works Company in the erection of their large works.

That shows the inconsistency of the Ministry. Two years ago, if I remember aright, this very railway was asked for by the combined commercial and shipping interests of the country: only it was demanded when we were suffering from an enormous congestion of traffic at Fremantle. We asked then that this little railway work should be constructed; and, had our request been acceded to, it would have given us enormous relief, but it was de-

nied. And now the Government are taking credit for putting that railway down. Why was not the railway put down two years ago when the people demanded it? I see from His Excellency's Speech that we are to have the Premier's promise with reference to the amendment of the tariff carried out. I shall await the proposals with some interest. I only hope that the amendments proposed by the Government to the tariff will be full and satisfactory in every respect. One thing strikes me as rather peculiar. Nearly the whole of the Ministry are against federation, and yet I suppose they will all support the abolition or reduction of the food duties. With regard to the paragraph proposing to give preferential rates on goods imported from the mother country, the matter will have to be approached with caution. If it is proposed to include all the colonies of the British Empire, and if they are agreeable to reciprocate so that our timbers and other products can be imported into those countries on preferential terms, I shall be inclined to support the proposal; but, until further detail is before the House, I do not intend committing myself to this portion of the Government policy. I wish to mention one of the most important matters touched upon in His Excellency's Speech, and which has already occupied a great deal of the time of the House in the debate on the amendment moved by the hon. member for Albany (Mr. Leake). I refer to the proposed Norseman railway. One member asked why we should make such a fuss about the starting point of the railway, as it was such a small matter whether the line should start from Esperance or Coolgardie; but I am inclined to think it is a great matter, and members should consider it very carefully. The question at issue is whether we are to adopt a policy of centralisation or decentralisation. I do not think we should be justified in pursuing a policy on the ground that it would bring about a temporary prosperity to one portion of the colony to the detriment of the balance of the colony. I am totally opposed to anything that will enforce centralisation—a policy such as they have in New South Wales and Victoria, inevitably I admit in those colo-

nies, inasmuch as they cannot help it. It has been a curse to them. But why should we manufacture such a position here? In Queensland they utilise all their ports. Here we propose to close down a port which is second only to Albany, for fear we should injure Perth or Fremantle. I propose to consider the question, first, from the standpoint of national expediency; secondly, from that of Fremantle; and thirdly, from that of Esperance. First of all, regarding the question from the standpoint of national expediency, we have staring us in the face the enormous distance of the line between Norseman and Fremantle as compared with the distance between Norseman and Esperance. Why should we commit ourselves to carry goods a distance of 430 miles when we need only carry them 100 miles to the sea coast? There are also water difficulties to face which will probably make the Norseman-Coolgardie line a losing one, because the Commissioner of Railways has told us that the railways beyond Northam are losing at the present time. Why should we not utilise that good harbour, which we have recognised by spending a large sum upon it? We have spent something like £60,000 on the port of Esperance. The people there have placed their faith in the Government on account of the money that has been spent there and the promises that have been made to them. Against the argument that we should adopt the Esperance route is advanced the one system of railways. I do not believe in the one system of railways. If nature had so formed the country that the central port was the only one, then the one system of railways would be correct; but when nature has given us several ports we should have several systems of railways, and ultimately they would become one system, because we will have a complete railway from north to south, I hope, before very long. A similar policy has been pursued in Queensland. There you do not find everything centred at Brisbane, but they have utilised the ports of Rockhampton, Townsville, and others to the best advantage. The railways have been carried back, and they pay in that country remarkably well.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Because they have the highest rates in Australia; double those of this colony.

MR. WILSON: But they have much more expensive railways to construct.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The Queensland railways cost £7,000 a mile. They charge double rates and higher fares.

MR. WILSON: I think we should be doing a great injustice to the whole country if we neglected the claims of Esperance as the starting point for the Norseman line. It has been said that we should wrong Perth and Fremantle, but this I deny. I advocated Esperance as the starting point of the line at the last general election, and I am prepared to advocate it again in spite of the remarks made by the *Morning Herald*. Now look at the question from the point of view of Fremantle. We are told that the vested interests of the people at Fremantle are at stake, and that Fremantle will be injured if the line is constructed from Esperance. What right has Fremantle to the trade of Norseman? Has she ever had the trade of Norseman? No; she never had the trade of the Norseman goldfield, and she has no right to it as against Esperance. If you give Esperance this railway, you are taking nothing from Fremantle, and, therefore, are causing her no injury. I maintain that this portion of the colony will suffer no injury if the line is commenced from Esperance. It is said that by doing so we shall open a door to South Australia and to the other colonies; but the door has always been open to South Australia. The annual report of the Collector of Customs for 1897 shows that the total value of the imports from South Australia last year was £945,380, that the total value of our exports to South Australia was £313,152, making a combined total of £1,258,532. The total value of our imports from all the other colonies, including South Australia, during the same period, was £3,277,300, and of our exports to the other colonies was £1,980,218, or a combined total of intercolonial import and export trade of £5,257,518. Is it not absurd to say that we shall be opening the door to South Australia, when we

have all along been dealing with her? We do not deal with the other colonies out of sentiment, but because it is to our advantage to do so. Fremantle draws her supplies from the other colonies, and so does Esperance. Shall we refuse to Esperance her right to trade where she likes? I cannot see that any sensible man, looking this matter fairly in the face, can come to any other conclusion than that we must allow Esperance to develop her own portion of the colony and to trade in whichever direction she wishes. I should like to refer to the cause which has led to this large trade with the other colonies. It will disappear as time goes on. The cause of our trade of over five millions per annum with the other colonies is the want of proper harbour facilities in this colony—for which I do not blame the Government—and the fact that our charges for oversea freights are from 30 to 50 per cent. higher than they are in the other colonies. We are obtaining harbour facilities as rapidly as possible; we are having a splendid harbour constructed at Fremantle, which will accommodate almost any of the ships. It accommodates the usual vessels which sail across the seas already; and in a very short time we shall be able to get our oversea freights reduced to the level of the other colonies, with the result that, instead of having goods consigned *via* Adelaide or Melbourne to Fremantle, they will come direct to Fremantle, and will be transhipped by our coastal boats to the other ports of the colony. By starting the line from Esperance we shall not only be assisting Esperance and Norseman, but we shall be legislating for the good of the colony as a whole, and we shall be building up a large shipping trade, which will be a direct benefit to the whole of the country, and will be an injury to none. Now, let me treat the matter from the point of view of Esperance. What is Esperance? I have information obtained from a reliable source—from a seafaring man whose opinion I value very highly—to the effect that the Esperance port is a splendid harbour, and one of the best in the country. Steamers have entered it during the darkest nights readily and easily. Captains visiting that port for the first time have been able to sail right into the har-

bour, and take their vessels in without fear of mishap.

THE PREMIER: It must have been a moonlight night, then.

MR. WILSON: That I cannot say. Looking up the shipping returns, I find that Esperance takes the third place in the colony for the number of vessels entering there, 61 steamers and 6 sailing vessels having entered that port as against 85 and 83 respectively for Fremantle, and 418 steamers and 1 sailing vessel in the case of Albany. Truly that is a good record for Esperance. It shows that we have a good harbour there. The customs returns for the port of Esperance show that it is the third best in the colony from that point of view. It stands fourth on the list for imports and exports, and fifth on the list in the amount of her export of gold. Esperance exported gold to the value of £45,000 in 1897, and also exported wool—I cannot lay my hands on the returns at present, but I think the value was £6,000 or £7,000. I wish to ask hon. members if it is a fair thing to propose to close down a port of this description, which I have proved to be the third port of the colony—to close it down and absolutely ruin it? I think hon. members will admit it is absolutely unfair to do so. And why should we close this port? In order that we may filch from her, for the benefit of Fremantle, the trade she has already got. I believe there is no such glaring instance of injustice in any part of the Australian colonies as that which it is proposed to inflict on Esperance. Further, I should like to claim for the people of Esperance that they have just as much right as we have to existence in this country: that they are the same people as we are, having the same flesh and blood; that the only difference is, they have settled in one portion of the colony and we in another; and why should we perpetrate this gross injustice? Why should we say, as we practically do: "You must move out of that portion of the colony; or, if you remain, you will be ruined, and you remain there at your own risk." We intend to say to them: "You shall have no opportunity; you shall have no railway facilities; your harbour is not developed; we will take care that any trade you have got we will divert to Fremantle, and we will make a railway in

another direction for that purpose." If we adopt the principle of favouring one portion of the colony to the detriment of another, the consequence is sure to come back on us, and we shall suffer as a whole. What will be the result if we support this railway from Esperance ?

THE PREMIER : You do not want to support any railway. Your amendment last night said you wanted to start nothing.

MR. WILSON : In taking the course we have done, the wish of members on this side of the House is to give renewed prosperity to the port of Esperance, and to give to the Norseman goldfield what she has been clamouring for and requires ; and we shall conserve to Esperance the legitimate trade she has always had, while at the same time we shall take nothing from Fremantle, and we cannot possibly injure Perth. Further, we will put Fremantle into this position, that by opening the coastal trade, when the time comes that the colony is ready to carry the railway through to Coolgardie—as clearly it will be carried, wherever it starts from, and ultimately be carried right through to the Murchison—Fremantle will then be in such a position, commercially, that goods will be brought oversea to Fremantle, and probably be sent by sea to Esperance, and on by rail to Coolgardie.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : It will cost you more to send goods by boat.

MR. WILSON : I think I know something about the cost of shipment, possibly better than the hon. gentleman, having had some experience in conveying goods from one portion of the world to another. I hope that the House, when this matter comes to the final decision, will set aside all considerations of self-interest, all requirements of the different electorates of hon. members ; and that, leaving local politics out of the question, we shall have regard to the good of the country from a national standpoint, and consider the advancement of the whole of the colony ; because, if we are going to say that we will legislate for this section of the country against another section, we are bound to bring disaster on the colony as a whole. As regards the member for Dundas (Mr. Conolly), I cannot help expressing my sympathy for him, as a man who has invested his all in that

district, who has fought a hard battle, an uphill game, in this House since he entered it, and who has received very little consideration at the hands of the Ministry, although he has consistently voted with them since he entered the House. I cannot help feeling sympathy for the hon. member ; and I trust, at the same time, that he will mend his ways, and try and stand up for his rights, rather than go cap-in-hand to the Government, soliciting favours from them. With regard to the question of reappropriation, that matter was settled last night, and, unfortunately, we (the Opposition) did not win. I did not speak on that matter. The amendment had my sympathy, and I voted for it. I do not believe in this reappropriation policy, because, as the Premier admitted last night, it simply means further borrowing, and is another name for a further loan. If you take money away from a vote for a certain work to carry out another work, you pledge yourselves to complete the second work, and you have already pledged yourselves to complete the first work ; so that it simply means you are pledging yourselves to another loan. I do not believe in that policy at the present time. The Premier has stated, over and over again, that he would not be found advocating any further loan until the moneys already voted had been expended. In *Hansard* it is recorded, and the passage was quoted last night, so that I need not repeat it, that the Premier said that he would not be found advocating any further loan until the borrowing authorisations had been expended. Yet we find he is now doing exactly the opposite from that which he stated, some seven or eight months ago, he would not do. The right hon. gentleman said he would not advocate loans except for works that were payable, or that would pay ; yet now he is practically advocating a further loan. It is a reappropriation in the first instance, but it must be a loan afterwards, to build railways on the goldfields ; while we know that the Commissioner of Railways has told us that the lines on the goldfields were not paying, and there is very little probability of their paying.

THE PREMIER : You are catching at a straw, to serve your own purpose, by

any arguments twisted and turned to suit your views.

MR. WILSON: The Commissioner of Railways informed the House that on the Yilgarn railway the revenue for April last was £34,584, and the working expenses incurred in earning this revenue amounted to 122.11 per cent.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I was dealing with one month, but I also gave the results of ten months' working. Why not quote the ten months?

MR. WILSON: One month is a proof of what will happen. If you are losing 10 per cent. on goldfields railways this month, how are you going to make it up next month?

THE PREMIER: Take the ten months at once.

MR. WILSON: Passing from that, I for one strongly object to this reappropriation policy. I do not think it is a fair thing to do. The subject has been well threshed out by discussion, and I think it would be better to go for a loan, and state the works which the Premier intends to expend the money on. The Perth sewerage, I am proud to learn, is to be carried out at last. We in Perth have waited for four solid years for this work to be done.

MR. MORAN: Where is the money coming from for that?

MR. WILSON: Last session we reappropriated some £70,000 odd from the sewerage vote for a dry dock at Fremantle, and we have not got the dry dock yet.

THE PREMIER: For the Fremantle harbour works.

MR. WILSON: If you did not take it for the dock, you took it for the harbour works, and how are you going to repay that money? In conclusion, I should like to say this brings us all back to the old question of constructing public works by private enterprise. It is asked: What would you do under the circumstances? I will tell you straight out, and tell the country, what I would do. I would abandon the Coolgardie water scheme as quickly as possible, and let private enterprise carry it out. That course would relieve our borrowing powers, to be used for carrying out other necessary works.

THE PREMIER: But you would not have the works.

MR. WILSON: We would have the works, too. No country on the face of the earth has had the advantages that Western Australia has had, to have large public works carried out by private enterprise on advantageous terms. I know, or rather I have heard, of offer after offer having been made to the Government; that people were prepared to make offers not only to construct water-works, but railways and other national undertakings. I do not go so far as to say that the Government should call in private enterprise to carry on our railways; for, as we have adopted a national policy, we should go on constructing railways as national works from public loans, and we should let these other works be carried out by private enterprise, if that can be done, and I am quite sure it can. If the Ministry would adopt that plan, there would be trouble, of course, as I am quite aware; there would be legal quibbles arising, and all the rest of it; and possibly there would be some amount of abuse. Still, the country would have the benefit of that system of constructing public works, and we would develop our country and increase the population more in ten years by that means than the Government will be able to do in twenty years, as they are going on now. The Government cannot develop this large country with its handful of population, if they are going to do all those works themselves. The sooner they abandon that policy and allow private capital to come in and assist them on fair and equitable terms, the better it will be for all of us. If such a course had been taken three or four years ago, when we had the chance and opportunity, we should not have suffered from the depression from which we are undoubtedly suffering to-day.

MR. SIMPSON (Geraldton) rose to speak.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot speak again.

MR. SIMPSON: I have only spoken on the amendment.

THE SPEAKER: Yes; but the hon. member seconded the amendment.

MR. SIMPSON: Without a speech; only *pro forma*.

THE SPEAKER: But afterwards the hon. member spoke on the amendment. An hon. member who proposes or seconds an amendment cannot speak again.

Question—that the Address-in-Reply be agreed to—put, and passed without dissent.

THE SPEAKER: I think it will be convenient, perhaps, if we present the Address-in-Reply as soon as the House assembles on Tuesday afternoon. I will communicate with the Governor, and I have no doubt he will then be ready to receive us.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Perth Park By-laws; also Report of Royal Commission on Mining, with Appendices.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: Correspondence *re* Accident to Miner at Peak Hill. Ordered to lie on the table.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8.50 p.m. until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th July, 1898.

Address-in-Reply: Presentation—Papers presented—Question: Sale of Goldfields Land to a limited depth—Question: Widening of Beaufort-street Bridge, Perth—Question: William-street Railway Crossing, Perth—Question: Perth Water Supply and Revenue therefrom—Question: Bonded Store for Kalgoorlie—Question: Paris Exhibition and Representation of the Colony—Question: Perth Coroner and the Murder and Suicide at Subiaco—Public Education Bill; second reading—Fire Brigades Bill; second reading (moved)—Jury Bill; second reading—Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill; first reading—Return ordered: Bridgetown Railway, Supervision etc.—Motions: Withdrawal and Postponement—Business Procedure and Suspension of Standing Orders—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: PRESENTATION.

At 4.40 o'clock MR. SPEAKER, accompanied by members of the Assembly, proceeded to Government House to present the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Opening Speech; and, having returned,

MR. SPEAKER reported that he had, with members of the Assembly, waited upon His Excellency, and presented the Address of the Legislative Assembly; and that His Excellency had been pleased to reply as follows:—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

I thank you for your Address-in-Reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament, and am glad to be assured of your continued loyalty and devotion to the Person and Throne of our Most Gracious Sovereign.

I receive with satisfaction your assurance that your most careful consideration will be given to all matters that may be submitted to you, so that your labours may result in the permanent advancement and prosperity of the colony.

Government House, Perth, 5th July, 1898.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: (1) Report on Gaols and Prisoners of the Colony, 1897; (2) Report on Rottnest Prison, 1897; (3) Map showing the Railway System of the Colony, also the Extensions proposed in the Governor's Speech; (4) Return showing Issue, etc., of Treasury Bills, as ordered on motion of Mr. Illingworth.

By the ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Papers *re* Imprisonment of Barrett and Delaney, as ordered on motion by Mr. Vosper.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION: SALE OF GOLDFIELDS LAND TO A LIMITED DEPTH.

MR. MITCHELL asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands:—(1) Whether his attention had been directed to the inconvenience that was likely to arise from a notice published in the *Government Gazette* of 14th January last, which provided that no land shall be sold within a goldfield and a mining district to a depth exceeding 20 feet. (2) Whether he was aware that in scores of instances in these districts water was not found at that