

member opposite had said there was very little to discuss in the Speech. Well, he (the Attorney General) was not inclined to disagree with that hon. member, and perhaps the absence of material for discussion was not altogether a misfortune.

AN HON. MEMBER: There was a lot you forgot to put in the Speech.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: At any rate, it was hoped the debate on the Address-in-Reply would be concluded on the Wednesday evening, in order to clear the ground for the federal discussion on Thursday.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he had much pleasure in acceding to the wish of the Attorney General; and, with the leave of the House, would move the adjournment of the debate until the following day.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) pointed out that the hon. member was quite right in merely moving that the debate be adjourned, as the motion to follow that would be that the House at its rising should adjourn until the following day.

Motion—that the debate be adjourned—put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL then moved—"That the House at its rising do adjourn until to-morrow, at half-past four o'clock."

Put and passed.

PAPERS, &c., PRESENTED.

By the SPEAKER: Public Accounts for the financial year ended 30th June, 1896; accompanied by the Auditor General's sixth annual report.

By the ATTORNEY GENERAL: 1. Report by Joint Library Committee of arrangements made for placing the Parliamentary Reporting Staff on a permanent and efficient basis. 2. Annual Report of Collector of Customs, Registrar of Shipping, &c. 3. Copy of Commonwealth Bill, as prepared by the Federal Convention at Adelaide. (Bill ordered to be printed.)

ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

Introduced (upon leave given) by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 4:55 o'clock until next day.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 18th August, 1897.

Question: Intercolonial Free-trade—Question: Replacement of Railway Stock—Commonwealth Bill. Explanation of procedure—Address-in-Reply: second day's debate and conclusion—Adjournment.

THE ACTING-PRESIDENT (Hon. J. W. Hackett) took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—INTERCOLONIAL FREE-TRADE.

HON. F. T. CROWDER, in accordance with notice, asked the Minister of Mines, If the Government were in favour of intercolonial free-trade.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied: Not under present circumstances.

QUESTION—REPLACEMENT OF RAILWAY ROLLING STOCK.

HON. F. T. CROWDER, in accordance with notice, asked the Minister of Mines, What principle was adopted in regard to replacing worn out railway stock, and if it was replaced from revenue or loan moneys.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied: That the system adopted up to the present was that the cost of repairing or rebuilding rolling stock had been defrayed from revenue, and not from loan moneys.

COMMONWEALTH BILL.

EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURE.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom), having laid on the table a copy of the Commonwealth Bill as drafted by the Adelaide Convention, and given notice of a motion in connection with the same, said: I would point out to hon. members that, when this motion is brought forward to-morrow evening, they will have an opportunity then of addressing themselves to the subject of the Federation Bill. All the speeches that are made then will be taken as second-reading speeches, so that hon. members can say what they think fit in

connection with it. I make these remarks so that hon. members may see it will be unnecessary and almost superfluous to make any remarks on federation in discussing the Address-in-Reply. Any remarks beyond the fact of whether we should be represented or not will be better brought on to-morrow, in discussing the motion of which I have given notice. I thought I would make these remarks so that hon. members would be aware of the course intended to be taken.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SECOND DAY'S DEBATE.

HON. E. McLARTY: In rising to resume the debate on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, I feel in rather an unenviable position. The Speech with which His Excellency opened Parliament contains so few subjects that there is little to comment upon. We were told that Parliament was called together principally for the purpose of considering the Bill to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia; and the Minister of Mines has just thrown out a hint that it would be unwise to discuss the matter at the present time, to take up the time of the House, as the Bill will be before the House in a day or two; therefore I do not propose to go into it at any length. I am not convinced of the necessity for federation. I sympathise with the question, and I think it is well that the colony should be represented at the Conference in the early part of next month. I recognise that we have great and unbounded sources of wealth just being developed, and I would prefer to see the working of these matters left in the hands of the people of Western Australia, who well understand the requirements of the country. I fail to see that we have anything to gain by this federation. It appears to me we should have to give up a portion of our revenue, and throw open our ports to be filled with the produce of other countries, and in these circumstances I fail to see what benefit will accrue to this country. As a business man if I happen to hit upon a good thing—it does not often happen—I should be reluctant to call in gentlemen to share the profits unless I was sure I would get an adequate return for the share. That appears to me to be the position of

Western Australia in relation to the other colonies. We have a very good thing in Western Australia and had better keep it to ourselves a little longer. If we have large profits we require them all to develop our resources. Therefore I do not think that this colony should agree to a scheme of federation for some years to come. I will not say any more on that subject at the present time, but pass on to a few other considerations. The proposer and seconder of the Address-in-Reply took a very pessimistic view of things. They spoke of the depression that existed on the goldfields. (HON. J. H. TAYLOR: No, sir.) Well, in the colony generally. Now, sir, I fail to see that any real depression does exist. Possibly in the goldfields towns and other towns things have been somewhat overdone, and there has not been that inflow of foreign capital which hitherto there had been. If we look at the gold returns, and that is a sure basis to go upon, we find that the output of gold is maintained and is rapidly increasing, therefore there is not much on that score to fear. The returns for the past month are very encouraging, and are larger than any previous month since the discovery of gold in Western Australia.

HON. J. H. TAYLOR: No, sir. The returns for the two previous months were the largest.

HON. E. McLARTY: At any rate, the output is now very satisfactory; it has been satisfactory; and we have reason to believe it is increasing. I repeat we have no cause to fear any great depression existing. I hope and believe the present depression is only temporary. Passing on to other industries of the colony which are not less important, I speak of the agricultural outlook, which was never brighter in the history of Western Australia. Agriculture was never more prosperous. The demand for land during the last year was very great indeed. Thousands of acres have been taken up. [AN HON. MEMBER: Hundreds of thousands.] And these lands are not to be used as a sheep walk. The land has been taken up in small holdings, and in the next 12 months there will be a greater increase in the land put under cultivation than in the last three or four years, although land cultivation has been progressing at a good rate during the last few years. This

colony will, I believe, not only meet its requirements during the coming season, but that it will have more than sufficient. Not only will this be the case in bread-stuffs, but in fodder. I speak with some authority on this matter, and I say there has been no depression in agriculture. Fruit will, I believe, soon be within a reasonable price. Again, our timber industry is in a very flourishing condition. Mills are being erected in many parts of the ranges; and the mills already going are so busy with such extensive orders that it is very difficult to obtain timber from them; and the mills will be kept going for years. We have another great industry which has been little heard of yet, but which we shall hear a great deal of in the future; I refer to the coalfields of the Collie, which will prove a valuable asset in the near future. These fields are being opened out, and there is every prospect that they will prove all that can be expected. I was glad that the speech of His Excellency the Governor stated that the finances of the colony are in a satisfactory condition, that the revenue far exceeded the estimate; therefore, I see no reason to take a gloomy aspect of the future.

HON. J. H. TAYLOR: May I say two words in explanation? The hon. member, who has just resumed his seat, has accused me of making a pessimistic speech. In the first place, I made no pessimistic remarks, and in the second place there is no greater optimist than myself in the House. Still I do not believe in sitting still and doing nothing. I did make reference to the depression, but I said that it was only a thin veil over a blue sky, but it would soon be removed and that then our prosperity would be greater than ever before.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I may say I do not propose to speak at length about the federation movement. I have made up my mind how I am going to vote on the question, and hope I shall not be found alone. I am going to vote against it. My reasons are—but perhaps I had better not give them now, but defer them until to-morrow, and I hope then to be able to bring conviction to the minds of some hon. members that we shall lose by federation, and that it will be the worst thing that could happen to this colony to join in the movement. I happened to be

in New South Wales at the time the election for representatives was being held, and I had an opportunity of hearing the speeches and views, and how the delegates proposed to deal with the revenue and the land. They only want our revenue and our land. Cautious, cunning New Zealand stands out of it and says, "I will have none of it;" Queensland says "I will have none of it," and Western Australia says "I will have none of it" also. The federation movement will fizzle out. Tasmania believes in it. That is a vast hotel, and anything that will bring strangers receives the support of Tasmania. Victoria is the home of federation. I remember seeing the account of a politician who had gone over to New South Wales, and he expressed the feeling that was rife in Victoria at the time. This gentleman said, "You people in New South Wales are half-hearted about federation; in Victoria we are all for it." Of course they are, they are always for everything. For 16 or 20 years they have barricaded and built barriers around their colony, and endeavoured to create a few industries, and they prevented the other colonies sending goods there. Retaliation set in. South Australia, New Zealand and Queensland put up barriers, and New South Wales was the only port that was open to them. When they found this state of affairs they at once said: "We want intercolonial free-trade," and that is what they are aiming at. The proposal is to have intercolonial freetrade, and protection against the outside world. From what I know of New South Wales, it will never put up with protection against the outside world. With Victoria it is federation or starvation—one of the two. They have expended their money in such a way that the colony has been brought almost to the verge of bankruptcy. People have left the colony, and now they want them to return, and the only way to get them is to go in for federation. We are to hand our revenue to them, and they are to hand us back what they do not want. There will be very little that they do not want. Look at the tone of commercial morality in Victoria. Instead of butter, they sent us margarine, till it was detected. They then sent us butter short weight. Complaint was made, and they said they

would send it full weight as soon as the short weight supply was finished. That is an illustration of the tone of commercial morality that prevails in Victoria. Are these the sort of persons to whom this colony, just emerging from its infancy, is prepared to hand over its revenues? I would be doing injustice to this colony if I assented to such a proposition. I am going to oppose federation tooth and nail, because I think it would be ruinous to us. I am also going to oppose any members leaving this colony to attend the Sydney Convention. We have no intention of going in for federation, and I don't think we should make provision for members going to Sydney to take part in the proceedings when federation is not likely to take place. Another thing, I think that the Government, after so long a recess, might have been prepared with some Bills showing what was proposed to be done. There is urgent necessity for a great deal of legislation which ought not to be put off for the sake of sending members to attend the Convention. A Bill should be introduced for dealing with the Civil Service. The present system is most unsatisfactory. I do not know what the *modus operandi* is for making appointments to the Civil Service, but it seems to depend mostly on the superintendent's digestive organs as to who should get an appointment. No qualification whatever is necessary, no examination, no test. When the present block of Government work is over we shall be flooded with a number of civil servants who will swell the ranks of the unemployed, and we shall have trouble in dealing with them. This question ought to be dealt with very exhaustively. The appointments should be handed over to a board such as they have in the other colonies, and Ministerial patronage should be abolished. If there were such a board I doubt if we would have had what I find is almost unequalled in the history of any of the colonies—namely, a Government astronomer whom we have never seen, at any rate I do not know that we have ever seen him. I would like to know where the gentleman is. Twelve months ago he was appointed and he is careering all over the place. I certainly think it is a matter about which we should have some information. I do not know who his Minister is, but I must ask at some

future time the nature of his appointment and why he was appointed.

AN HON. MEMBER: He is under the Minister of Education.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I also deplore the fact that in a rising colony like this, while we expend money on an observatory and mint, we cannot find sufficient money to found a university. It is a blot on the colony to say that we have to send our children out of the colony to receive a finishing education. I do not know that the cost would be very great. The time has certainly come when a university should be established in our midst. Another subject is the consolidation of the criminal law. I know of no colony or any part of the world where the criminal law is in such an unsatisfactory state as it is here. I am satisfied that persons receive sentences in the country that are absolutely illegal. I know of one instance where a person was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for an offence which should only have had one year. Our statute differs from the English statute, yet our books contain the English statute. Our Act was framed on the English Act, but the English Act has been amended 15 or 16 times since then, and ours has not been amended. I have had a great deal of experience in criminal law, and I would be very cautious in saying what Acts were in force in this colony. The criminal Acts ought to be consolidated, and I do not know that it is a very difficult task. The Government have so many officials in the Crown Law department that they ought to find time to do it. Another subject which the public seem to be crying out about is that of the Food Adulteration Act. It is a simple and very necessary Act. I think this is the only colony in which there is no such Act. We have a Public Health Act in which dead meat is dealt with, but we allow villainous milk to be sold and no attempt is made to prosecute. There should be a Government Analyst and a Food Adulteration Act, so that we could deal with liquid as well as with solid food. Another matter about which I hope something will be done is the old men's depot. The structure is unsightly in its present state, and from information given to me I hear that the place is most unsuitable for the old men. In the winter after 12 o'clock the place is cold and

cheerless, and I have the authority of the medical officer for saying that it is a most unsuitable place for old men. It is certainly no ornament to the harbour, and as we have abundant land on the hills and in healthy localities, the old men and women should be better housed than they are at present. One hon. member congratulated the departments on the way in which the Government work had been carried on. I regret to say that I cannot agree with him. There is one department that certainly requires re-organisation, if not annihilation, and that is the Public Works Department. I have seen how the work has been carried out in the harbour because I happen to live on the other side of it. There is a certain company known as the Swan River Shipping Company: they brought a steamer in pieces from London and put it together at the back of their premises. No objection can be made to that. The Government then got a grab dredge and employed a whole army of people, and scooped a great big channel for the purpose of launching the boat. They took the mud up and put it in a barge, and then took the barge and carried it a hundred yards and upset it again into another barge. The stuff was pumped up and pumped into a vacant place, which I think is responsible for half the typhoid in Perth. There was some correspondence about it, and the cost was about double what the newspaper writers thought it was. I never saw such a waste of money in my life. If the Swan River Company are entitled to Government help, I suppose I am entitled to it. That is only one instance. Later on I shall be able to bring forward other instances of a similar character. It is most discreditable to the department to have work carried on in such a perfunctory manner. During the recess I understand that a lease was granted to a company for the purpose of carrying on ore reduction works at North Fremantle—Rocky Bay. I thoroughly understand the patriotism of gentlemen who are going to expend their money in reducing ore, and giving an impetus to the gold industry, but the result will be this. The works, if erected at all, will be erected right in the centre of a thriving and prosperous locality. Within an area of two or three miles not a horse, goat, fowl, or any vegetable will live. [An Hon.

MEMBER: Oh!] I did not say "any other vegetable," but "any vegetable." If these works are erected there, you will find an outcry will be raised by the residents, who will say: "Oh, we want these works removed." The Government, of course, in reply will say: "We don't care about that. You took the land and you took the responsibility, and if you find the works are a nuisance you can go to the Court." But we will see that these residents will continue their complaints, whereupon there will be a little Commission to inquire into the matter. If it were explained to them at the start that works of such a character were to be erected there, then they would be taking the land at their own risk; otherwise they would have a case. I think under the circumstances it was unwise to grant that lease on the land in question. The gravest reflection I have to make—and I make it because I feel that the Government will admit the justice of my remarks—is this. It is nearly nine months since this House sat. I know of no more disastrous precedent than to allow the country to be governed by a Cabinet without Parliament being called together for such an extensive period. I do not think that in any other colony such a thing would be tolerated. One result is that large sums of money are expended without legislative sanction, and excess bills have to be brought in. The result is that deputations come up from Fremantle begging money—I mention Fremantle particularly because it is the chief offender. I should like to know what money has been voted to Fremantle since the last recess. How much have they asked, and how much have they received? We have had to increase the trains lately, whether in consequence of deputations coming up I do not know, but every time I pass the Government Offices, about four o'clock, there is always a deputation asking for a new tap, or a town pump, or something of that kind. They are asking for everything, and they are getting it. Money should not be given away without legislative sanction, except for pressing purposes. These matters should be debated in Parliament. Do you think the people of Fremantle would have got half the money they have got, if they had had to ask Parliament for it? Why, they would have been ashamed to make so many requests. I speak of Fremantle as

the chief offender, but other places have also asked for money. Deputations come, and Ministers are asked to grant money which they have no right to grant. I make no charge against anyone with reference to the money that has been expended, and so far as this Government is concerned, I do not know that these remarks are necessary, but after this Ministry goes out of office, the next Ministry, or the Ministry after that, will be composed of I won't say what kind of members, but these gentlemen, following the precedent thus set, may wait for nine or ten months without calling Parliament together and may be expending the public money, and then have to come to Parliament for an Excess Bill, and Parliament will be bound to grant it to them because they will say "The best Government we ever had acted in this way." They will cite this as a precedent, and it is a most dangerous precedent to allow Parliament to be out of session for nine months in the year. There has been some reason, perhaps, in this instance for the delay. But are we so unskilled in affairs of State that we cannot run our own business because the Premier is absent? I think we might have done the work. Hundreds of things might have been done quite as well in the Premier's absence as in his presence. Suppose we met in June, as was the original proposal. Even in that case I think six months is too long to elapse between the sessions. The precedent set by the Government is one which, if followed out, must ruin the country, and I feel that it is my duty to speak on the matter, and I hope that all hon. members will accord me their support. I am sure the Government are anxious to listen to reasonable requests, such as this is, of the House, and I hope the Government will in future see their way clear to calling the Parliament together at an earlier period, and not allow nine months to interpose between the sessions.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I am sure the old members of the House will be glad to welcome the new members. I listened to their utterances in speaking on the Address-in-Reply, and was much pleased with their remarks in reference to the importance of agriculture. Both of the hon. gentlemen who spoke admitted the importance of the agricul-

tural, as also of the pastoral, industry, and linked the prosperity of these industries with that of the goldfields. I was pleased to find that such was the case; and when we know that the prosperity of the agricultural industry can only be continued by protection for some further length of time, I hope we shall not have any opposition from them on that head. When we take into consideration the enormous number now embarked in agriculture who came here with the view of embarking in the gold industry only, and finding that unprofitable have turned their attention to the soil, we must recognise how indissolubly linked the two industries are. An inquiry at the Survey Office would show that an enormous area of country has been taken up lately. It would be most unfair to these people if the duties were withdrawn as soon as they embarked in agriculture. It would be most discouraging. I trust that hon. members will bear in mind how important it is to continue these duties for some time longer, for it is the only way in which to secure the encouragement of this most important industry. With respect to the Commonwealth Bill I very much object to federation being brought about at the present moment. I think that a great amount of time and money has been wasted, and I do not see why we should be put to any further expense by sending delegates to the Conference. I would be in favour of throwing the Bill out altogether, inasmuch as we cannot accept it in the form in which it has been offered. It would be most unfavourable to the interests of this colony. That is my own view of the matter. I am sure the satisfactory financial position of the colony is a source of gratification to us all. I shall not say anything more at present, but hope that the session will bring about a considerable amount of good, and that we shall all work well together.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I feel that I am unable longer to retain my seat, after the very amusing remarks made by the Hon. R. S. Haynes. At first they caused me some little excitement, but after thinking the matter over I came to the conclusion that the hon. gentleman was in his usual funny vein, and was endeavouring to provide amusement for those around him. Before proceeding to deal with the

Governor's Speech I should like to say a few words on two other matters. I think it is a matter of which we in this colony have every reason to be proud, that Her Majesty the Queen should have seen fit to confer such a high honour as she has done on our Premier. It is an honour which is conferred not only on him but on this colony, and it must be a matter of great satisfaction to every person in this colony to know that the Premier has received the same honour that every other Premier throughout the British dependencies has received. Another matter I would like to refer to is this, and that is to testify, at all events for my part, to the very able manner in which the business of the country has been conducted by the Hon. the Minister for Mines, the Acting-Premier. On every side I have heard encomiums passed on him for the manner in which he has carried out his duties. They are very arduous, and require a large amount of tact in dealing not only with the general business of the country, but with those deputations that have been referred to so clearly and lucidly by the Hon. R. S. Haynes. To receive a deputation is not an easy thing, and to say "No" is not a pleasing task, but to say it properly and in such a way as not to give offence requires a good deal of tact, especially when the Minister is faced by a representative deputation of some importance. I think that the colony is to be congratulated on its financial condition as set forth in His Excellency's speech, especially as we know there has been a certain amount of depression existing in some parts of this colony, even though the Hon. E. McLarty may not be of that opinion. We know that a depression has existed, and we further know that it is only of a temporary nature, and will soon pass away as the Hon. J. H. Taylor told us, and will lead to something considerably better than we have ever hitherto seen in this colony. I think I quite agree with the Hon. R. S. Haynes when he said that Parliament should have been called together at an earlier stage. I am at a loss to understand why it was not. I can see no reason, and no reason has been advanced by the Government, to show why Parliament was not called together before. It was not on account of the absence of the Premier, because the members of the Government are perfectly

well able, as they have shown, to conduct the business of the country when Parliament is sitting. There are many matters of domestic legislation of urgent necessity which could have been dealt with, and I say most emphatically that the time placed at the disposal of Parliament for the consideration of the federation scheme is by no means sufficient. The time is too short. The subject cannot be discussed in the time. It is all very well for hon. members to come down here and say that the members of the Government and the members of the Federal Convention have settled on the amendments to be placed before the House.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It is not proposed to prevent anyone else from proposing amendments.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: But that is not sufficient. It is one of the most important questions that has ever been brought before this Parliament, because the results will be so far-reaching. I should like to say a few words on that. Two hon. members have stated most definitely that they will vote against federation. I think they are wrong to treat the matter in so light a way. Neither do I agree with the Hon. R. S. Haynes in the remarks he made about the great colony of Victoria. I do not think they were altogether in good taste. We can only come to the conclusion that that colony has done him some injury. I am also driven to the conclusion that the constituency I represent has done him some injury too. However that may be, this is a great question, and requires the most careful consideration at the hands of the Parliament of this country. If we are of the opinion—and I think most of us are of the opinion—that this is not the time to enter into federation, still the time may come when it will be advisable. Under these circumstances, therefore, I think it is desirable that we should have a share in framing that constitution of which we may afterwards form a part. There are many great questions to be considered, and we shall have an opportunity of discussing them when the Minister of Mines moves that the House go into committee to consider the Federal Bill. I do not think I will say more than express my great pleasure in seeing the vast strides made in the development, not only of the gold industry, but the

other industries of the colony. It is pleasing to note that the gold return is increasing daily. This month the output, I believe, will far surpass that of any previous month since we have been producing gold, and no doubt that increase will continue in a very great degree. The agricultural industry is also progressing, and if we can depend upon the report which has been given by the Minister of Lands, and there is no reason why we should not do so, it seems that wonderful strides have been made. History is repeating itself. Wherever gold has been discovered, after the first rush the people have settled on the land. That is being exemplified in this case. The thousands of acres which have been taken up is an evidence of this. I regret very much to have learned that the pastoral industry in the North has suffered to a considerable extent in consequence of the drought. At one time the pastoralists formed one of the backbones of the colony. I regret to see, and all of us regret to see, the way in which this industry has suffered, and anything the Government can do to assist the pastoralists to carry on would be endorsed by Parliament, I am sure. I will not say more except to again congratulate the colony on the very good financial position in which it stands to-day. Long may it continue in that position. Seeing the prosperous time the colony has had during the last five or six years, it would be a great misfortune if it were to go back. The outlook is bright all over the colony, and there is no reason for despondency. The Hon. E. McLarty accused the goldfields members of pessimism; I did not gather that from their speeches, rather otherwise. They were rather optimistic than otherwise. I was pleased to hear the remarks that fell from the Hon. H. G. Parsons, when he said that he felt sure that the hon. members representing the goldfield constituencies would work not only in the interest of their own constituencies, but for the colony as a whole. I reciprocate that, and say for myself, and I am sure hon. members generally will say the same, that we will all join with the goldfields members in working for the benefit of the colony.

HON. D. MCKAY: There is no occasion for the colony to join in the federation, although the delegates attend the

Convention at Sydney. I regret very much that more consideration has not been given to pastoralists in the North. No reference was made to this matter in the Governor's Speech. Although temporary relief has been afforded, everyone knows that the squatters in the North have suffered severely, and unless the Government comes to their help in reducing their rents, they are bound to go to the wall.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Before saying anything on the Governor's Speech, permit me to thank hon. members who so cordially welcomed the representatives of the goldfields in the House. They may rely on it that we shall do all we possibly can to promote the interests, not only of the goldfields, but the colony at large. In reference to the Governor's Speech, I wish to add a protest on behalf of my constituents to the protest that has already been made in reference to the delay in calling Parliament together. The goldfields, more than any other part of the country, feel the result of this procrastination, because they are labouring more than any part of the colony under disadvantages. The result now is, so far as we can judge, that it is proposed to hold a session of a fortnight and adjourn for a couple of months, and during that time all the subjects which we wish to bring before you must be hung up. There was not the least necessity for this delay. As other hon. members have said, the business of the other colonies has been carried on in a perfectly satisfactory manner in the absence of the Premier, and it is difficult to understand why any trouble should have been found in conducting the business of this Parliament in exactly the same manner as in the other colonies. The same procrastination or postponement has been the fate of the Mining Commission. The Royal Commission for the amendment of the Mining Act is one of those things which is part of the country's policy. It is of great importance, and it was understood before the Premier left the colony that definite arrangements had been made for the appointment of the Commission, so that about the present date it was thought the Commission would have been in a position to lay its recommendations before Parliament. Nothing has been done in the matter, and even at the present date

no information is vouchsafed to us as to the Commission or its duties. This is a matter that has caused my constituents extreme anxiety, and I trust before the House rises eventually, at the expiration of the fortnight, that some steps will have been taken to remove our anxiety in that respect. Another topic on which we are most anxious, and the country is most anxious, to receive some information, is that of the loan. We have been told in the Governor's Speech that the finances of the colony are in a satisfactory condition, and that no money is owing to any financial institution in the colony. Of course that may be a fact; it may be true, and probably is true, as it is stated in the Governor's Speech that the Government "are not indebted to any of the financial institutions of the colony." If that is the case money must be owing to financial institutions outside the colony. Advances must have been got from outside.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: None whatever.

HON. D. MCKAY: I am glad to hear the statement of the Minister. In any case, the balance of money available must be an extremely small one to carry on the works authorised in the last Parliament. It seems almost inevitable that unless some arrangements are made for securing the money the works will have to be put off for an indefinite time. One would have thought that something beyond the statement that so much money was in hand would have been vouchsafed to the House. One hon. member, without exactly considering the relation of the output of gold with the money expended in making that output, has stated that the country is prosperous, because the gold output has increased. While under some circumstances that may be the case, it might under other circumstances be far from the case. As far as the country's prosperity is concerned no one can have a higher opinion of the actual prosperity of the country and its future prosperity than I have myself, but when you deal with the question from an economic point of view, you have to bear in mind that the gold-output merely represents the proceeds of something. It often happens that more money is spent in securing an output than the amount of the output itself. The cost of producing the gold is undoubtedly

swelled each month—some hon. members do not believe it—but the cost is largely and unnecessarily enhanced by the cost of the necessities of life to the extent of the very high duties levied on them at the port of entry. Though, no doubt, the agricultural industry should, to a certain extent, be considered, still I do not think they should be considered entirely without some consideration being given to the effect of the duties on the gold-producing industry of the colony, because, although people go on producing gold at a loss—assuming that it is produced at a loss—they will not go on producing it at a loss for ever; they will only do so for a certain time. I trust hon. members who have so very strongly expressed their opinion that the duties on food should not be reduced, will take these matters into their consideration and modify the opinions they have expressed. As to the Federal Constitution Act, I find it an extremely difficult thing to form any just opinion, in the two or three days at our disposal, of the effect it will have on the colony, but the chief point on which I personally require a little light is the object with which we are going to discuss the Bill to-morrow. Some hon. members propose to throw the measure out altogether. I should like to know whether we are going to discuss it with a view of amending it so that in the course of four or five years, if it was thought desirable, we could join in, or is it intended to try and lick it into shape so as to render it possible for this colony to go into the federation at once? I have tried to make up my mind which is the proper course to adopt, but in the time at our disposal I have found it almost impossible.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I take this opportunity of saying a few words on His Excellency's Speech. It seems we are called specially together, or chiefly, for the purpose of considering the Bill to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia. I think, myself, and a great number do so also, that the idea of a federated Australia is a grand one, and one I think nearly all of us hope will eventuate some day, but undoubtedly at the present time, it seems to me, and from what I can gain of public opinion generally, that it is a very premature matter. At the present time federation is a sub-

ject for the best minds and leading politicians to speak upon. I fail to observe any great enthusiasm on the part of the people of the colonies, as a whole, on the matter. That is the conclusion I have come to from what I have observed and read. It is a very difficult question to deal with, and the difficulties must be apparent to all of us from the fact that the leading minds in the colonies, at least many of them, are very much opposed in their ideas as to what form this constitution should take. So far as this colony is concerned I cannot see at the present time that we could join in that federation without losing far more than even the most ardent supporter of federation in the colony could wish, in the joining. The only two questions I think on which the colonists would be at one upon—I have only just had time to glance through the Bill—are the questions of defence and quarantine. I doubt whether at the present time it would be worth while to have a federation for these purposes. So far as I can understand the subject, the Bill before the House at the present time is the Bill drafted at the Convention recently held in Adelaide, and it is a Bill arrived at by mutual gives and takes at the time. The Bill has subsequently been submitted to the Parliaments of the other colonies, and now it has come before us. The other Parliaments do not seem to be able to agree to the Bill as adopted by their representatives at the Convention. Great alterations have been made in New South Wales, in Victoria, and in South Australia. What is the great drawback to federation, or to federation of the type which we ultimately wish to see? It is that each colony, and no doubt this colony is the same, is blessed with a selfishness and a desire to do the best for its own colony. Victoria, as the Hon. R. S. Haynes said, would be the greatest gainer by joining the federation. It is a very great question, and I approach it with every respect; but it is premature, at least I, in my humble opinion, think so, for us to join at the present time—indeed it is premature for Australia to federate at all at the present time. I doubt very much whether in about a quarter of a century it will be time enough to have a Bill prepared which will be acceptable to the colonists as a whole. So far as I am

personally concerned, I hope the time will be far earlier. We cannot think of joining at the present time. To-morrow night we are to consider the Bill, and I feel sure hon. members will consider it seriously, and give their best attention to the great subject. So far as the Convention that it is proposed should take place shortly is concerned, I do think that this colony should be represented, although I think it is inexpedient for the colony to join in the federation at the present time. We should be represented so that the colony can take a hand in moulding a constitution which hereafter we may join. I will support, so far as I can, the sending of delegates from this colony to the Convention. If we do not join this federation at the present time, at any rate this conference will have a great educational effect on the movement, and will do, amongst the general public, a large amount of good, and hasten the time when a constitution will be framed which will be acceptable, and will be fair, and just to all. I do not propose to say more on that subject at the present juncture, but I shall do what I can when the Bill is in committee. As to the other matters in His Excellency's Speech, it is gratifying to all of us to find the finances in such a satisfactory state. Some time ago there were rumours about as to the financial position of the colony. I felt myself at the time that the rumours were without foundation, and I am pleased with the references to the finances in the speech. It is equally gratifying that the gold output of the colony is increasing, and I am sure it will go on increasing. It is quite as satisfactory, if not more so, to find that the agricultural interests of this colony are advancing. It is extremely gratifying to listen to hon. members like the Hon. E. McLarty, when dealing with questions of this kind, because he is a gentleman whose opinions can be relied upon on such subjects. I have had a little experience in agriculture, and I can only say that in the province I represent wonderful strides have been made in agricultural matters during the last 12 months, especially since the purchase of the Great Southern Railway. Settlement has taken place about such places as Broomehill, Wagin and Katanning, and it is settlement which is likely to remain in those localities, and that being so, the prospects of the South-Eastern Province

are much greater now than they were 12 months ago. The class of people who have taken up the land are evidently those who have come to stay, and those whom I have had the pleasure of speaking to say they are perfectly satisfied with the land they have taken up. That must be gratifying to all of us, because in the past our land has been very much decried and run down. Some remarks have been made by hon. members about the depression in the colony. We do not know what depression is in this colony. [AN HON. MEMBER: We don't want to.] No, we do not want to, but they do know what depression is in the other colonies. There it has been brought about by the excessive and wanton waste of public money. I hope, so far as this colony is concerned, and the expenditure of public money is concerned, the Government will go slow from now out. If I have a complaint at all against the present Government, for whom I have the greatest respect, it seems to me they have a pleasurable way of saying "No"; but in almost all the other colonies the Government invariably says "Yes." So far as the Minister of Mines is concerned I was glad to find, on more than one occasion, he had the backbone to say "No." I hope from now out the Government will keep a check on the public purse, and not be afraid to say "No." I join with the other members in welcoming those who have come to this House with a knowledge of the wants of the goldfields, and I am pleased to note that these gentlemen speak in fair terms in respect to the other interests equally as important as the goldfields. Certainly one of the members (Hon. G. Randell) complained that the requirements of the goldfields were not attended to. So far as the Ministry was concerned, the Ministry of the day have promised to do the utmost in their power, within reasonable bounds, for the furtherance of the goldfields. To a large extent the prosperity of the colony depends on the prosperity or non-prosperity of these fields. I do not propose to say anything more at the present time. I have great pleasure in supporting the speech. In committee on the Federation Bill I suppose all of us will have an opportunity, as the Minister states, of bringing forward such amendments as we see meet.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I do not think the people of this colony intend to allow themselves to be used as a material for this federal structure. I know that in the country, people are quiet on the subject of federation, because they are aware that they will have the power later on of expressing their sentiments, and of disagreeing with any conditions that their representatives may have agreed to at the federal meetings, provided these are not in keeping with their wishes. I think this very fact should be sufficient for those who are opposing the movement, and should cause them to withdraw their opposition, and allow our representatives to go to Sydney and help in framing this federal structure. The time may come—there is not the slightest doubt about it—when we may want to join the federation, and we should feel very small indeed if we were told that we had taken no part in framing the federal constitution, and that we had laughed at the very idea. The Hon. R. S. Haynes speaks of it as if it were a matter not to be considered by Western Australia in the future. He looks upon it as a question we should never deal with. I think that in the hearts of all of us, even supposing we are opposed to federation at the present moment, there is a feeling that the time will come when we shall federate and become a great nation. I am one of those who will support our being represented at the Sydney meeting. I would like to mention the very great improvement that has taken place in agriculture in my district. I notice that many men who went on the goldfields for the purpose of obtaining gold have now gone into agriculture. I have noticed many of them selecting in my district. I would ask those hon. members who represent the goldfields, and who have spoken in such temperate words respecting agriculture, to look at the question of duties as it affects agriculture, for many of their own men have been induced by the protection given to agriculture to go into it. Some of these men go in for agriculture at one season of the year and then work on the goldfields at the other. The goldfields members will, I think, be only too glad to give agriculture every consideration. If they have not looked personally into the matter, I would like to point out to them that

there is nothing in the world so uncertain as the results of the labour of the man who takes up agriculture for his calling. Take the miner first. When he gets an ounce of gold he knows exactly how much he will get for it. He knows what its value is. The tradesman knows pretty well what he will get for his goods. Give a carpenter a piece of wood and he will make a chair or a cart, for which he knows he can get a certain price, as there are certain fixed labour rates, as a rule, by which he will be paid for his labour. But the farmer has not only to do the heavy work attached to agriculture, such as clearing, etc., but he has to face, in addition, the uncertainties of the market. The question is whether he is paid for his work in view of the heavy labour he has to perform. We have been twitted in the past with not having a labour supply. The need did not exist then as it does now. We would have had to cart our wheat 130 to 150 miles in some cases to get to the market. It would have been folly to have embarked in a venture that would have involved so much expense and labour. I would ask you, therefore, to consider whether the agriculturist is not entitled to very great consideration at our hands. The uncertainties he has to face are so great, and he is not even sure when he has cleared his land that he will get any return for it. There is another point I would like hon. members to weigh very carefully before taking any active part in removing the duties, and that is the bearings of agriculture on the colony generally. Taking the other colonies as an example, agriculture has much to do with the permanent prosperity of a colony. I will say no more at present, but will add my congratulations to those that have fallen from other hon. members at the fresh representation that has taken place, and at the addition to our ranks of such desirable members, as I think they promise to be, from the goldfields.

HON. G. RANDELL : I think my friend the Hon. E. McLarty must have misunderstood the remarks which fell from the mover and seconder of the Address-in-Reply. The opinion I formed of the speeches was that they were very optimistic. I was pleased with the cheerful way in which they spoke of the future prospects of the colony. I was also much pleased to hear the expression of their

sentiments with reference to working in unison not only with the agricultural members, but with all members of the House. I would like to refer to one matter before I make any further remarks. I think it has been, and I have thought it a long time, a most unhappy concurrence of circumstances that has prevented the calling together of Parliament before. I understand, however, there have been special reasons why Parliament was not assembled at least a month ago. I do not know whether the reasons given to me are the correct ones or no, or that I am at liberty to mention them. If, however, they are correct, I can understand the difficulty in which the Ministry was placed. I endorse the opinion expressed both here and elsewhere, that the business of the country could have been carried on without the presence of the Premier in the Assembly. While I say that, of course I recognise the great abilities of the Premier, and the desirability of having him here to assist in the discussion of public affairs, but I believe that the result of the delay on the whole has been injurious to this colony. Hon. members have referred to the fact that we should be unable to properly discuss the Commonwealth Bill, in consequence of the arrangements which must be made to enable the delegates to visit Sydney, and to be present at the deliberations of the Convention in the course of a fortnight. It must be remembered, and I presume other hon. members have been as favoured as myself in that respect, that we have had this Bill in our hands for some time. I have read it over three or four times in order to make myself as fully acquainted as possible with its contents. I honestly confess that many portions of the Bill—and I confess it without any discredit to myself—are beyond my comprehension. I cannot see where it would lead us to in many cases. I take it that it requires men who have been accustomed to financial operations, or it requires men who have had a legal training, to understand the whole gist and direction of the Commonwealth Bill. I think, therefore, hon. members should admit that they have had an opportunity of examining the contents of the Bill, and should not have left it to the opening of Parliament to consider the measure and to form their opinions upon

it. I have made up my mind on several points in connection with the Bill, and I am very pleased to say—though I was not quite able to follow the leader of the House in all the amendments he placed before us; he was rather rapid in his utterances, but I shall be able to follow them in print to-morrow—but I am very pleased to say that they were just the amendments that I should have suggested myself, especially that one which is in the forefront of the Bill, and which provides for the colony being made one electorate. I think that, although to some extent I share the opinions of those hon. members who have expressed themselves averse to our sending members to the Convention, yet, at the same time, we are committed to a certain line of conduct. Western Australia took up a certain position at the Convention in Adelaide, and she cannot now refrain from attending again. I must confess, too, that on reading the debates that took place there, I was exceedingly delighted at the apparent thorough understanding of the subject which was shown by some of the speakers. I specially refer to the speeches of the Hon. E. Barton and of Mr. McMillan. Both of these gentlemen seemed to have a thorough grasp and comprehension of the measure in almost all its bearings. There was a little hesitancy, perhaps, about the financial clauses of the Bill, but Mr. McMillan presented some statistics to the Convention which he had had prepared, and which were, to a certain extent, reliable. I think it is impossible for us to avoid sending our delegates to Sydney, and I hope they will be sent, and that they will take part, to the best of their ability, in the deliberations which will take place there. It will be their duty to endeavour to use their influence in such a way, and so to frame the Bill, that in case we don't see our way clear to federating with the other colonies at the present moment, they will, at any rate, make it easier for us to join in the movement at some future time, to the best advantage of the colony. We have among us men who will be fairly representative of the intelligence and ability of the colony. I am not with those who have very strong objections to the mode in which the delegates were elected. If the colony had been divided into constituencies, and you had asked them to select members to represent

this colony at the Convention, I don't think they would have selected better men, and probably almost every one of those selected would have been chosen. I am pleased to say that I found the New South Wales delegates anxious to meet the wishes of the smaller members of the group. I believe they were willing to make sacrifices so as to secure the adhesion of the various States, and I think we should recognise that in a proper way, and not attribute, to New South Wales at any rate, any sinister motive in desiring to federate at the present time. It is a noble ambition, I think, on the part of anyone to try and create a great nation, as will have been done when the Commonwealth Bill, or a Bill of this kind, is accepted. I believe there is a great desire on the part of the larger colonies to serve the interests of the smaller ones to a very large extent, and it is a question for us to consider whether these concessions are of sufficient extent to induce us to give up our liberties and the control, to some extent, of our destinies to the larger populations. I don't conceal from myself the fact that in the federation the smaller colonies federate to a disadvantage. The democratic principle is very largely adopted in the larger colonies, and will make itself felt in whatever constitution is accepted, and when we find that the members from the smaller States are so few in comparison with Victoria and New South Wales, we realise that it is a very serious question with which we have to deal. If it were only a question of quarantine and defence it would not be so serious, but there are a vast number of items embodied in the Bill, and these complicate the matter very considerably. On the whole, I feel that the time has not come to federate at the present moment, as the loss we should suffer would be too great. We should have time given us to work out our own destinies to a greater extent than we have yet done. We have only started, as it were, in the career of prosperity. A great many years ago when we were told that we were not advancing rapidly enough, I said that we could not advance very rapidly as a community, considering the nature of our country and its long distances and the isolated nature of its good lands, and that there was nothing in the world that would give us a start which would lead to rapid

growth like the discovery of gold. Happily that has occurred, and I think that both the Ministry and Parliament have been equal to the occasion. Large public works have been commenced and have been conducted to a successful issue, and I hope that the goldfields members will acknowledge cheerfully and cordially that the Government have done their best. I don't say they have not committed blunders, or that they have not been a little backward in the direction the goldfields members wished them to move, yet there has been a determination on the part of the Ministry to meet the exigencies of the occasion and to give the goldfields the means of transit to and fro by means of our railways. And I think we may congratulate ourselves to-day that a small community such as ours, of only 150,000 people, should have made such progress with its public works. I should like to see that we retain in our hands the entire control over these public works and over those enterprises for a considerable time longer at any rate. I should not like to say 15 years or a quarter of a century. I have more faith in this colony than that. I think we should soon be able to federate on equal terms, and that we should be able to demand admission on terms that would be beneficial to the other colonies as well as to us. I do not think I need say any more at this point. It was the late Lord Beaconsfield, I believe, who said something like this: "It is an excellent thing that on occasions we should hear the voice of truth, and of authority." Persistent attempts have been made in certain quarters of this colony to belittle the colony, and the tendency of these attempts has been to create a depression, which I am free to acknowledge exists to a certain extent in the towns, and therefore it is pleasant to be assured by the only competent authority, namely, from the report of the Acting Premier, that the finances of the colony are in a sound and healthy condition. We have also been assured to-day that not only do we not owe money, but that the Government have not borrowed money from any institutions either here or elsewhere, excepting, I presume, the authorised loans. It is satisfactory to find the Government are able to assure us of the progress made by the other institutions in the colony. I am glad to learn the production of gold

is increasing, although I am rather disappointed that it has not increased even faster than it has. We shall doubtless hear from the goldfields members why the production of gold has not increased faster. Perhaps our expectations were so high in consequence of the many schemes thrown on the London market which have turned out to be "wild cats"—I think that is the expression used. I do not know where the expression comes from, but I daresay it is perfectly understood, at any rate by members from the fields. Let us hope that these are done with, and that the companies now in existence will yield a proper return. I have seen some very reassuring returns from Kalgoorlie published in the *Miner*; in fact I have read little more reassuring to my mind lately than those returns. I am ignorant of goldfield matters and of questions affecting gold production myself, not having taken a share in any companies or invested in any enterprise connected therewith, but I am quite sure that the members will be willing to consider carefully and with a desire to promote the best interests, not only of the capitalist, but of all sections of society, any measures that may be brought before them. We feel that the best interests of this colony are bound up with the success of the mines, leading as it must to the opening of a field for the agriculturist and the horticulturist, and to many other industries. In Perth itself there are a large number of industries which must tend to the advancement of the colony, which must bring population here and keep it here, and will provide purchasers for the products of the farm and the orchard for many years to come. I only trust that the development in agriculture and horticulture will still continue and grow larger every year. With regard to the duties spoken of I would like to say that I do feel that the time has come when some reduction should be made. [AN HON. MEMBER: Not just yet.] Some duties could be reduced with advantage to all concerned. I would give every facility to the farmers for the transport of their goods, but the heavy duties should be reduced. I am not in favour of their being removed, not any of them. They could be continued for revenue purposes to the advantage of all. If we must have railways and waterworks for the develop-

ment of this colony, we must be willing to pay the piper. We should have the satisfaction of knowing that we should be paying our way as we go. I will now bring my remarks to a close with the expression of the hope that we shall all work together in harmony for the advancement of the whole colony, and endeavour to develop our internal resources to the utmost extent of our power.

At 6.30 p.m. the ACTING PRESIDENT left the Chair.

At 7.30 p.m. the ACTING PRESIDENT resumed the Chair.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Sir,—In saying a few words in connection with the remarks made, I desire to express my appreciation as representing the Government in this House of the friendly and sympathetic allusions made to their efforts during the year past. It is a matter of satisfaction to find, that although on some subjects the Government has been criticised, and no doubt reasonably criticised, on the whole the actions of the past have met with the approbation of hon. members, and I take this opportunity of thanking them for their friendly allusions to the Government. I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to the Hon. H. G. Parsons for the able manner in which he proposed the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech. His remarks have stamped him as a man of liberal and wide views, and one who is prepared to treat the subjects in connection with the colony of Western Australia in a fair and comprehensive manner. He is a valuable addition to the debating power of the House. I also thank the Hon. J. H. Taylor for seconding the Address and for the words he used in doing so. We may congratulate ourselves on the way in which the proposing and seconding of the Address was done, and the thanks of the Government are due to the hon. gentlemen who undertook the task. I desire also at the outset to welcome to the Legislative Council of the colony the new members from the goldfields. It is a matter of satisfaction to the Government to find how pleased all parties were at seeing these new members here; it shows that the policy the Government

adopted in the past in extending the representation to large numbers of people who had arrived in the colony and had settled on the goldfields has met with the approbation of hon. members and the public generally. In saying a few words on federation it will be necessary for me to do what I had no intention of doing, and that is to anticipate somewhat a few of the remarks I intended to make to-morrow evening in introducing the motion of which I have given notice. Several speeches have been made to-night which are apparently hostile to federation in a greater or less degree, extending from those who do not desire to see us represented at all, to those who cannot see their way, even if we are represented, to adopt federation. We are, however, hardly at the stage to arrive at any definite understanding or decision upon the question. It is agreed by all that the theory of federation is the correct one, and we have to help us in arriving at that point the precedents of other countries. I may point out that America, Canada and Switzerland and other places which have federated, have federated so advantageously that if they have not gone much ahead of their original ideas, they have not taken any steps to secede from their federation. That proves that federation can be successfully undertaken by a number of States whose interests are fairly similar, and who can be advantageously governed by one power instead of by so many smaller powers. We are agreed to accept that theory, and when we come to the federation of Australia we say it can be done, that this federation will be advantageous to us as it has been to other countries. Then we come to the question, under what conditions can we federate so that it will be advantageous for ourselves while it will be good for the other colonies? It has been contended by one and another that if this federation is carried out on the lines of the Bill before the House, it would be to the detriment of the smaller States. I am not going to argue that point, because I think it is manifest to most of us. We should be neglecting our duty if we are not represented at the Convention which is to be held. We have practically admitted that policy by passing during last session the Federal Enabling Act, which stated that we should be represented at the previous

Convention, and that on returning, the delegates were to submit to the local Parliament the Draft Bill, that Parliament was to deal with that Draft Bill and suggest amendments, and then the delegates were to go back with the amendments, and endeavour to arrive at some understanding which would be, if possible, advantageous to everyone. It would be wise, after having dealt with the Bill and suggested amendments, and arrived at a conclusion amongst ourselves as to what amendments are best for ourselves, and looking to the future, to say: "Here we are in accordance with the Enabling Act, and these are our terms." These are feelings we naturally consider on this question. We would, under these circumstances, be represented to consider these matters, and it would be unwise to stand aloof from the Convention at Sydney, having gone so far as we have gone. It is rather premature now to say we should not do this or not consider that. We should hear first what this Convention demands, and then it will be time for us at the next meeting of Parliament to say whether we should have this or that. Another point is this, that this Federation Convention will be made up of delegates from the larger and smaller States. At the present time the great question is how the smaller States are to be dealt with; but the smaller ones are in the majority. Our Premier, who represented us last year, took a leading part in many of the most salient points, and was very fairly successful; and it would not be right, having induced the other smaller States to follow us, to turn round now at this juncture and not go further. I will not go further with the question of Federation to-night, but I shall be able to make a few remarks to-morrow evening. I hope hon. members will see the advantage of this colony being represented; it binds us to nothing, but allows us to see on what terms we can go into federation. Supposing, for instance, the delegates attended this Convention, and supposing that terms were adopted which would be of a most advantageous kind, there being compensating clauses, it would be very unwise for us to refuse. I do not suppose there will be these compensating clauses. It has been stated that great loss and inconvenience has been caused to the colony owing to the meeting of Parliament having been

delayed so long. I would point out to hon. members that even if harm has been done to a majority of them, they have to thank themselves. It was at their own suggestion that the meeting of Parliament was delayed. Sir John Forrest was distinctly asked by the members of both Houses to go to England and attend the jubilee gatherings, and he made it a condition that if he went away, during his absence no important political matters, and certainly no hostile matters, should be brought forward. That condition was cheerfully entered into, and by none more cheerfully than by the goldfields representatives. [AN HON. MEMBER: That does not affect the Bill.] It was distinctly a condition that no measures of a hostile nature were to be brought forward, no political matters of any magnitude entered into, until the Premier's return. No men were more to the front in this matter than the goldfields members, and if I was inclined to look for motives for this action, I would conclude that these gentlemen thought that the presence of Sir John Forrest would advance their interests in London, and that it would disseminate more capital amongst us and tend to a general improvement of the mining industry as a whole. We were all too pleased when he consented to go under these circumstances. Do you think it would be fair to call Parliament together during his absence, and place in the Address matters of a debatable nature? You can understand why Sir John Forrest made a condition of that kind. It has been pointed out that in the other colonies business has been gone on with in the absence of the Premier. [HON. R. S. HAYNES: The same undertaking was given too.] The circumstances are not parallel. Here the whole of the circumstances were different. There was not what I may call a concurrent Parliament here. There had been a new election and, in addition, there was the advent of a number of new members—a distinctly hostile element to the Government—and it was only fair to a man who had been Premier of the colony for six years to desire to direct the first subjects in a new Parliament. It was only natural. [AN HON. MEMBER: But he has not arrived yet.] The members of the Ministry who did not attend in England, but who remained behind to carry on the Government, found

that it was the desire of the public as well as the desire of hon. members that Parliament should be called together for the consideration of this measure—a measure fraught with particular importance to the whole of Australia. The Ministry saw the necessity for this, and as hon. members had stated that they would not ask that any other matters be taken into consideration until the Premier was here to deal with them, the Ministry endeavoured to meet the wishes of the people.

AN HON. MEMBER: You have not given us enough time.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I am very sorry for that, but when you get the Bill before you I think you will find that it is not such a very difficult Bill. I have to thank the Hon. G. Randell for pointing out to hon. members that if they have not mastered the Bill it is their own fault. They might have got it days ago and read it over three or four times, and I think when the time came they would have just as much grip of it as other hon. members. In these circumstances, the Government endeavoured to meet the public and place before them the position of the colony, and get this Bill into such a position that the delegates could attend the Convention. If it is considered important that the delegates should go, it is obvious that it would be unfair to carry on Parliament with ten of the leading members away. Therefore the Government having considered the position proposed to give hon. members an opportunity of suggesting amendments, after which they propose to go into recess for the short time the delegates are away. The Hon. D. McKay said no reference had been made in the Governor's Speech to the pastoral industry, and I will explain why no reference was made. If reference was made in the Governor's Speech to the pastoral industry and to many other proper matters, if we attempted to deal with these now in the Speech, the debate on the Address-in-Reply would have taken up too much time.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Will they be in the next Speech?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: They will be, and perhaps there are other matters which the hon. member would like to suggest which it would be of

advantage to the Government to put in the next Speech. If he will name them they shall have the most careful consideration. I now come to the financial question. We have heard it spoken of, and on one occasion this evening in a little hostile manner. I am speaking here this evening not only as Minister of Mines and the Minister representing the Government in this House, but as Acting-Premier, and I desire to state for the information of the public that the statement in the Governor's Speech as to the finances is an absolutely truthful statement. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] The amount of money we have at this moment available is set forth there. We owe no money whatever to any institution in Western Australia, nor have we had any money at all from any other institution in any part of the world since the last loan was floated. What money was obtained before that was taken on the authority of Parliament on Treasury bills; therefore I say the statement in the Speech is the absolute truth. There is not one penny owing to any financial institution; that is our true position to-day. What surprises me is the fact that there is a section of the people in the colony who will not or cannot believe that we are not in debt to somebody or some institution. They believe we should owe money to some financial institution, and apparently they mistrust the utterances of the Government on finance. To strengthen what I say I only have to turn to the remarks of the Hon. A. P. Matheson, who seemed to think the Government were evading the question. He referred to the statement in the Speech that the Government owed no money to any institution in Western Australia, and he was proceeding to say, "What about institutions somewhere else?" I desire to state now to all hon. members that it is not the habit of the Government to place statements before the colony with regard to the finances which are not absolutely truthful and reliable, and this statement is one that can be proved up to the hilt from the books of the State. We have heard a great deal about the depression. I do not think there is much depression myself. It is simply this, that matters are not as flourishing as they were. Let us look at the state of affairs a year or 18

months ago. It was not an ordinary state of affairs: it was one which was heightened by an immense amount of speculation and the expenditure of money. Therefore I say our present position is not a depression, but the normal state of things, and one which we are perfectly capable of maintaining. We are getting down to the good properties on the gold-fields; there are hundreds of them. Numbers of them are paying well and others only require development. The way in which a lot of these properties have been manipulated in the past so as to rob the English investors has made the investors lose faith and become timid. Unfortunately, the speculators in this colony asked the investors in London to put money into properties which were almost valueless—I am speaking the truth—and having been cheated and robbed in many instances they are naturally timid to go into those properties which are good. I look to the time, which I trust is approaching, when the mines will establish themselves by their own good results with the payment of dividends, which is the best recommendation of all. Then we shall have confidence restored and money will be invested in a legitimate way, with a capital more in keeping with the value of the mines. These are matters which will right themselves, and so it is possible that what appears to be depression will lead to a lasting good in the future, and I only hope that will be so, and that we shall have no more "wild cats." There were some people in Victoria talking about these "wild cats" in Western Australia, and the conversation turned on rabbits, and one man said that rabbits would not live in Western Australia, and on being asked why, he replied, "Because there are so many wild cats there." The Hon. A. P. Matheson referred to the duties being the cause of the high cost of living. I must join issue as to the remark of the hon. member on that. I do not think the duties have anything to do with it. If the hon. gentleman made the remark in all seriousness, then he could have given the matter very little consideration. If the hon. member looks into the question he will arrive at a very different conclusion. I am referring to the hon. member rather frequently because he seemed to have so many faults to find, and I wish to show him he is not

correct. He said nothing has been done about the Mining Commission. It is not so long ago that the Government decided that a Mining Commission should be appointed, and since then I have been taking active steps to bring the Commission into life. When I tell the hon. member that I had to communicate with every warden in the colony to try and get representative labouring men to act on the Commission, he will see that it has taken a considerable time. The Government proposed that the Commission should be representative of leaseholders, capitalists, mercantile men, labouring men and prospectors. There are to be 14 representatives on the Commission in all. Everything has now been arranged, all the names are now in, and the Commission will be signed to-morrow or the next day, and gazetted on Friday. The Hon. H. G. Parsons, in his speech the other day, referred to the question of security of tenure and to the labour conditions. It will be very pleasing to him to know that all these matters will be taken into consideration by the Mining Commission. It is to be a practical Mining Commission, not made up of only members of Parliament, but of men who thoroughly understand the business in all its branches. The mining manager, the capitalist, the working miner, the mercantile man and the prospector, will be represented. There is nothing to stop the public or Parliament from having a thorough Parliamentary Mining Commission. Hon. members can, if they choose, appoint a select committee to consider the report when it comes up from the Mining Commission. The fact of there being a practical Commission need not prevent a political one from being formed. I think this will meet the wish of all parties. The Government want to get the opinions and the advice of all those who are actually engaged in working the industry; not those who have a theory about it or those who would vote on a Mining Commission to please some sections of the people, but of those who know about gold-mining, and who have the pluck, I was going to say, or the confidence to say what they want and vote for it. Then we shall have a practical mining report, and Parliament can please itself by adopting it or by introducing its principles in an amending Mining Bill or perhaps in a

new Bill. Another matter is that of public batteries. There has been a good deal of correspondence in the Press about public batteries on the goldfields, and statements had been made that Sir John Forrest, in his speech at Bunbury, referred to them in a different manner from that in which I had referred to them. I do not know how the right hon. gentleman referred to them, but I am of opinion that he referred to them in the same way I did. The matter originated in a request made by myself, as Minister of Mines, that £20,000 should be set aside for the purpose of having six or eight ton batteries placed in that portion of the colony where good reefs had been found, but which were so far removed from crushing plant of any kind that the owners could not determine if the reefs contained payable gold. It would be of advantage to the colony if 20 tons or so of this stuff could be crushed to test its value. If the returns were good, then the owners could erect a battery for themselves and form a company. That was my idea. If Sir John Forrest advocates the erection of public batteries in every quarter, it would be the ruin of any Government to do it without the express permission of Parliament. That is what that right honourable gentleman was credited with having advocated. A 20-head battery costs about £20,000. Every centre would consider itself equally entitled with every other to one, and it would amount to a very large expense indeed. I am not going to say whether it would pay or not, or whether it would be a proper policy. That is one of the questions which will be considered by the Mining Commission, but the day the Government attempt to deal with public batteries on their own responsibility will be a bad day for them. I have been told by some that unless the Government do establish these batteries at certain places these particular localities will go down. You will see the difficulty in which the Government are placed, and we therefore hail the approach of this Commission to enable us to arrive at some satisfactory conclusion, and to find out how far we can proceed with a policy so far-reaching in its effects. The Hon. J. H. Taylor, in his admirable speech, said there had been some difficulty about the carriage of ore, and that the probability

was that for some months to come people would cease to ship ore for smelting purposes, and that the returns would be reduced accordingly. He said it seemed a small thing to the Railway Department whether it could carry ore at a price that would pay or not, but it was a very great thing from the point of view of the production of gold. I had no idea that carriage of ore had assumed the large dimensions pointed out by the hon. member in his speech. If it is a fact that the owners of ore have desisted from forwarding their ore on this account, a comparatively small matter in relation to the far-reaching results of having gold returns, then it requires looking after carefully. I shall make it my business to look into this matter very carefully, for the reasons must be very strong and the grounds very good to justify us in putting obstacles in the way of the working of the goldfields. All will admit that the future of the colony depends in a very great degree on the successful working of the goldfields. It is plainly our duty then to put every encouragement in the way of the development of the goldfields. I hope the deliberations of the House will be carried out as satisfactorily in the future as they have been in the past. With the exception of a few weeks last session there never has been a party in this House. And it is both wise and proper that in a House like this, designed for certain purposes there should be an absence of party. The Assembly represents the people of this country, and it is they, as a rule, who introduce legislation. It is for us to stay hasty legislation and to see that the measures placed before the House have that careful consideration which they should have. It would, therefore, be an unfortunate day for the colony if the Upper House, which should approach every question dispassionately and without prejudice, were to break up into parties. I trust, therefore, that the deliberations of this House, and the consideration it gives to the measures that are brought before it will be as unprejudiced in the future as they have been in the past. [AN HON. MEMBER: Give us proper time to deliberate.] You should have as much time to deliberate as you can possibly wish. I have endeavoured in the past to please hon. members in every way. I have only to

say, in conclusion, how much I appreciate the kind remarks that fell from the Hon. A. B. Kidson in connection with myself. The time that Sir John Forrest has been away has been a very busy period. There has been a great deal of work to do, and the difficulty has been considerably enhanced by having both the Mines Department and the Premier's Department to look after; but it is satisfactory to learn that satisfaction has been given to the country, and in acknowledging the hon. member's kind remarks, I may say that I deeply appreciate them, and I trust I may long continue to deserve them. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I wish to make a personal explanation with reference to the remarks that fell from the Minister of Mines. I refer to my statement about the revenue. Of course the Governor's Speech very carefully stated that the Government were not indebted to any of the financial institutions of the colony, but it left open the assumption that they might be indebted to financial institutions outside the colony. I quite unreservedly accept the hon. Minister's explanation.

Motion (for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply) put and passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn till 7-30 to-morrow evening. I would like to explain that 4-30 p.m. would, in the natural sequence of things, be the time for our meeting; but I understand that it is the desire of the City Council to show their appreciation of Sir John Forrest's recent services in England by giving him a reception to-morrow afternoon, and therefore they have asked hon. members of this House to be present.

Motion put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at 8-15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 18th August, 1897.

Business Days and Hours—Precedence of Government Business—Sessional Committees Appointed—Motion: Government House Ball Room Expenditure—Personal Explanation—Motion: Address-in-Reply; second day's debate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

BUSINESS DAYS AND HOURS.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY GENERAL, the following sessional order was made:—That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 4-30 p.m., and shall sit until 6-30 p.m., if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7-30 p.m. onwards.

PRECEDENCE OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY GENERAL, the following sessional order was made:—That on Tuesdays and Thursdays Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

On motions by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, the following committees were appointed as standing committees for the session:—

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Burt, and the Chairman of Committees, with leave to sit during any adjournment, and with authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Burt, and Mr. Harper; also (on amendment moved by Mr. JAMES) Mr. Simpson and Mr. Illingworth; with leave to sit during any adjournment, and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Piesse and the Chairman of Com-