

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 8th October, 1894.

Alleged inroads made upon the South foreshore, at Fremantle—Mackie Street Railway Crossing—Cost of Patients attending Coolgardie Hospital—Constitution Act Further Amendment Bill: first reading—Extension of State aid to Assisted Schools—Roads Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Droving Bill: recommitted—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

ALLEGED INROADS MADE UPON SOUTH FORESHORE, FREMANTLE.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier what action the Government intended taking with regard to the inroads being made on the South Fremantle foreshore, in consequence of the construction of the North mole?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government was not aware that inroads made upon the South foreshore at Fremantle were due to the construction of the North mole, for, so far as the professional advice at the disposal of the Government was reliable, the North mole was calculated to protect the South foreshore, rather than to cause inroads upon it.

MACKIE STREET RAILWAY CROSSING.

MR. JAMES, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works whether any, and if so what, provision would be made to prevent the danger at present arising from the unprotected crossing at Mackie Street; whether a crossing keeper would be placed at this crossing; and if so, when?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that it was not at present considered necessary to place a crossing keeper at Mackie Street.

COST OF PATIENTS ATTENDING COOLGARDIE HOSPITAL.

MR. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid upon the table of the House, showing—

1. The cost of the upkeep of the hospital at Coolgardie, from the 1st

September, 1893, to 30th September, 1894.

2. The names of patients who have taken advantage of the hospital during above term.

3. The names of persons who have not paid for hospital attention, and amounts owing by them.

He moved for the return because he had been informed that a considerable number of patients took advantage of this hospital who could well afford to pay for the accommodation and treatment they received, but who did not do so.

Motion put and passed.

CONSTITUTION ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by MR. BURT, and read a first time.

EXTENSION OF STATE AID TO ASSISTED SCHOOLS.

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker—In rising to move the motion of which I have given notice, and which affirms "that, in the opinion of this House, it is undesirable to further extend the system of State aid to Assisted Schools," I am dealing with a matter that has been very prominently before the country—

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No.

MR. SIMPSON: I observe that interruptions have commenced very early. I would suggest, if they were reserved until a little later on, they would, perhaps, be a little more effective. It is significant, too, where they come from, in one instance at any rate. I say, sir, this is a matter that has been prominently before the public mind of this country, and, in order to prove that statement, I challenge opposition, when I say that, with the exception of one single journal in the country, and that a weekly sheet belonging to a particular denomination, every newspaper in this country is in favour of the abolition of the present dual system. That, I should imagine, is somewhat of an indication of the state of public opinion on the question. As members will be aware, the Educational Grant is an annually increasing grant; this year it is greater than it was last year, and, under existing conditions, it will continue to grow, if the present system is perpetuated. In connection with this motion, it is pecu-

liar and almost unintelligible, the action that has recently been taken in certain quarters. There seems to have been a flutter in the dove-cot, sir. Special circulars have been issued and forwarded to members, practically amounting to a call of the House, I believe. I did not receive one myself,—at which members will not be surprised. There has also been a deputation, which waited on the Premier, and I presume that the representations made by that deputation practically put the question before the country in the strongest light it can be put on the part of the supporters of the existing dual system of education. I presume it is fair to assume that. I have no desire to do anything that is unfair in dealing with this question. I have no desire to use the word “intolerance,” or to use the word “bigotry,”—words which are so freely bandied about in certain quarters; I believe there is still force in that pregnant old Shakesperian saying, “Let the galled jade wince.” That deputation, sir, I imagine, stated the case of the Assisted Schools as forcibly as it can be stated; and, in dealing with this question to-night from another standpoint, I do not purpose merely to express my own opinions; I wish to give expression to opinions which have gathered weight and influence throughout the whole of Australia. I wish to use quotations from the utterances of prominent public men, men who have graced the Bench, who have adorned the Bar, and who, perhaps, raised the traditions of political life in Australia to as high a platform as has been reached in any part of the world. I purpose to refer largely to the report of that Commission of which that great man, George Higinbotham, was the chairman, and which reported on this subject in Victoria. Before doing so, I observe from the daily press that the Premier, on Saturday, in answer to a deputation that waited upon him, made a positive statement as to the policy of the Forrest Ministry in connection with this question. He stated, beyond question—and I have the reporter's notes before me—that the Forrest Ministry intended that the present system of education should exist in Western Australia in perpetuity, if they had the power to keep it so. That is the statement of the Premier, sir.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You had better quote the exact words, I think.

MR. SIMPSON: I will, sir.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think it is only fair you should.

MR. SIMPSON: I should be sorry that in dealing with so grave a public question I should in any way misrepresent any public man's utterance.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think I said anything about perpetuity.

MR. SIMPSON: I will read the hon. gentleman's own words. He said “the views of the Government were contained in the speech he delivered in Bunbury in May last, and, although it was said that the Government changed about, their views now were the same as he expressed them then.” The hon. gentleman then read an extract from his Bunbury speech, as follows:—“In 1871 the present Education Act was passed, and from that time to this it seems to have worked fairly well. I think there might be a little more life instilled into it, and more interest, perhaps, taken in the education of the young. A higher standard might be adopted and more active supervision carried out; but I think no one can say that the system has not worked well. It has given peace and quiet, and we have worked together in harmony. There was never much said in favour of a change until very recently. Well, the present Government are of opinion that the system of State and Assisted Schools should be continued in the colony.” Sir, I can only put one meaning on the word “continued”; I take it that to continue a system is to perpetuate it. The hon. gentleman then goes on to indulge in one of those high-sounding common-places that adorn his speeches:—“I believe in freedom of conscience, and freedom of opinion. I don't believe in coercion. I don't believe in forcing people to do what they consider is unjust to them, just because you have the power to do it. My advice to you, and my advice to the people of this colony is, to leave the principles of the Education Act, as regards the Assisted Schools, alone.” Then the hon. gentleman was good enough to say to the deputation that “the Government would oppose the motion of Mr. Simpson when

"it came on, and carry out the pledge"—mark the word, "pledge"—"they gave to the people of the colony in his speech of May last. The present system was one which they had had in force for nearly a quarter of a century, and it had worked well, and had certainly given peace and harmony to the people. He saw no reason why they should change that system. It had been proved that it worked well; in fact it was quite remarkable until recently the harmony, contentment and one-ness of opinion which seemed to exist in the colony. He regretted very much that only recently this foundation which was established in 1871, and which had been built on continually until the present time, should be sought to be destroyed. He could tell them that he desired to continue on the same lines which had worked well for so many years." I think that is a fairly accurate statement of the Premier's remarks.

THE PREMIER (HON. Sir J. Forrest): Quite so.

MR. SIMPSON: And I think it supports what I said, that the policy of the Forrest Government is to perpetuate the present dual system so far as lies in their power. In their statement of the case put before the Premier by the deputation on behalf of the supporters of the present system, it was stated by one of the speakers, a man who has been closely connected with the educational system of the colony for many years, and a man whose name I know is very dear to the people of this colony—Father Bourke—it was stated that "to do away with the assistance would cause a great injustice to them, because their objections to the State School system of education were based on conscientious objections, which it was impossible to explain to the general public without giving rise to a religious controversy." But the general public have to contribute to support this system of education, though they are to have no explanation of the reason why it should be continued, or why one section of the community cannot avail themselves of the State School system. I ask, have we a right to grant State aid to any denomination or class in the community for the education of their children when they acknowledge they are in a position that

they cannot possibly explain to the public why they are entitled to that aid? That, I take it, is what was said by their distinguished spokesman at this deputation. He goes on to say: "They had conscientious objections that the religious education in the Government Schools was entirely inadequate, and their people were not satisfied with it." And yet, sir, it is a significant fact that just on 14 per cent. of the teachers in our State Schools belong to this denomination whose spiritual leaders said that the religious education in those schools was entirely inadequate. These teachers, I suppose, are competent to impart adequate religious education in their own schools, but if their children go into those pest-houses the State Schools, they become contaminated, because they have to mix up with State children. That is what goes by the name of "conscientious objections." It has often puzzled me, as a matter of scientific or psychological inquiry, where this conscience is situated.

MR. MORAN: You wouldn't be able to find it, because you haven't got a conscience.

MR. SIMPSON: I have made a careful search and endeavoured to discover the whereabouts of this particular kind of conscience referred to; and I am strongly inclined to think it is not to be found at all in the human frame in its nude form, in the privacy of the closet, but that when it makes its appearance in the public street it is generally located in the breeches pocket. The same reverend and distinguished gentleman goes on to say, after referring to the conscientious objections which his people had to availing themselves of the State schools—but which objections could not be explained: "That being so, they had to take their stand upon it, and say that no further concession was possible." I would like to call particular attention to that word "concession." Then he said: "Their conscientious objections were deep, as might be judged from the large amount of monetary liability that had been incurred in support of them." There you have a distinct connection between the conscience and the breeches pocket, between the conscientious objections and the monetary liability. Continuing, the reverend gentleman said: "They had been

"at the expense of thousands of pounds in building and maintaining their schools, simply because they could not accept the Government arrangements in their own schools. If they looked outside this colony they found that their co-religionists were adopting the same course elsewhere. They regarded it as important that they should have the education of their own children, and under the care of teachers in whom they could confide." Of course, sir, that is the key of the whole situation. This particular denomination insist that they shall have the right to select teachers of their own. But the State says, "No; we will train our own teachers, and appoint them to schools that are apart or free from priestly influence." I do not wish to speak with any disrespect of any Church; far be it from me to do so. But I have a public duty to do, and anything I have to say in the discharge of that duty I shall say it very plainly, though I hope not offensively. Before I proceed to quote from the report of the Commission I have referred to, I may point out to the Premier that no distinguished man in Australia who has fought his way to a front rank in political life has ever breathed a word in support of the principle of the dual system of education. [AN HON. MEMBER: Question.] I am afraid the hon. member's information is not so exact as mine on this point. No public man in Australia who has reached any great eminence in public life during the last fifteen years has been a supporter of this dual system. The conclusions arrived at by the Royal Commission in Victoria were distinctly and emphatically adverse to the system. Those conclusions were based upon the necessities of public education and the preponderating mass of evidence received by the Commission. In their report they say: "The mischievous influences of denomination-ism upon public education are represented by the witnesses to be twofold. First, it has a tendency to promote jealousy and distrust, and mutual apprehension, generally unfounded, amongst the parents of different denominations. These feelings do not, we believe, now operate so much amongst the various sects of Protestants as between the whole body of Protestants on the one hand, and of Roman Catholics on the

other. The second and most formidable evil arises from the inability of the central authority to compel such an amalgamation of schools belonging to different denominations as may be required in the interests of good education, and demanded by considerations of economy. It is expressly or impliedly admitted by all the witnesses that denominationism has chiefly contributed to produce an undue increase in the number of public schools, a less efficient system of school instruction, and a wasteful expenditure of public money." In another part of their report, the Commission say: "The only objection suggested by the evidence to the adoption of a scheme such as we have proposed—that is to say, the abolition of all State aid to elementary education except to public schools vested in one central authority—is raised on behalf of the Roman Catholic denomination. It is asserted that this denomination will not accept any scheme of public education by which the selection of teachers of Roman Catholic children is taken away from the Roman Catholic clergy"—which is exactly the position assumed by the same denomination here—"that a separate grant should be given by the State to schools belonging to that denomination"—as we are doing here. "This suggestion," the Commission say, "needs, we think, only a brief consideration to ensure its rejection. A separate grant of public money to any one religious sect, which other sects were not permitted to share, would involve a distinct recognition of that sect by the State"—I ask the attention of members to these words—"and would be a violation of the non-sectarian principles on which the Constitution of this colony is founded. The fact that the grant was bestowed for no other reason than because the sect in question entertained anti-social views on the question of education, would render the distinction more inexcusable and obnoxious, and would give a colour of justice to the exasperation and jealousy with which the other sects would certainly regard it. It may be added that in the opinion of several of the witnesses, in which we concur, the grant of a sum of money to the Roman Catholic denomination separately would certainly lead to a demand

"on the part of the other sects for the extension to them of the same benefit. It would be impossible to resist such a demand, and the consequence would be that denominationalism in its simple and most mischievous form would again become supreme in our system of education." Members, I think, will agree with me that these are just and forcible observations. The position assumed by the Roman Catholic denomination in Victoria at that time was exactly the position assumed by the same denomination in this colony at the present moment. "The Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church" (the report says) "claims, by virtue of his office, the right to have the exclusive control of the education of the young; and, as a consequence, a demand is made that the clergy of this denomination shall have the appointment of the teachers and committees of their schools." The Commission, however, and some of the most influential men in the community who were examined before the Commission, did not hesitate to say that the claims put forward by this particular denomination were indefensible. Yet we find the same claims put forward here. At the deputation that waited on the Premier the other day, one of the speakers, a gentleman distinguished for his intellectual power, and holding a prominent position in the ecclesiastical world, Father Kelly, indulged in some very plain speaking on the question of handing over the education of children to religious bodies. The words he used were somewhat remarkable, and all the more so coming from the representative of a Church that claims the right to have the education of its children entirely in its own hands. He said, as reported, "There had sprung up a spirit of distrust in the Churches of late years, and it was in a measure the fault of some of the Churches themselves. They had not done their duty to the people. They had acted in such a way that the people could not trust in the ministers and the ministrations of religion. They had acted in a mercenary manner." Remarkable words, on a remarkable occasion! An appeal to Cæsar, and a distinct answer from Cæsar. I come again to the report of the Commission already referred to, a report which has had a world-wide circulation, and which is practically the foundation,

the bed rock, on which the educational systems of the other Australian colonies are based. It is said: "Each denomination has a fixed idea that the day school is a nursery or feeder to the Church, and that there is necessarily something wanting in any school which is not ruled directly by each respective congregation. In short, denominationalism is as rampant as ever." Then it goes on to say: "We are of opinion . . . that the policy of discouraging, of gradually diminishing, and of finally abolishing all State aid to primary instruction, except to public schools, or by means of other machinery under the control of the central authority, should be distinctly announced by the Legislature, and resolutely acted upon." That is the position I desire to take up; for I should like to point out, in connection with this motion, that what I am asking this House to affirm is that there shall be no further extension of the present system of State aid to Assisted Schools, not that this grant should be immediately abolished, but that it shall not be further extended, so that those who now secure this grant may not be led to incur liabilities which they may not be able to meet if the grant were to immediately disappear, but that they shall be given to understand that no extension of the present grant will be granted by the Legislature of this country. The Premier, in his reply to the deputation I have referred to, has virtually tacked his name to the statement that so far as he and his Ministry are concerned, this dual system is to remain with us in perpetuity, so far as they have the power to do so. I do not think I am straining the meaning of his words when I say that. I would be sorry to strain or distort them, but, if words have any meaning, coming from him as a public man, they simply have this meaning: that the present Ministry is pledged to continue this annual grant for this object in perpetuity, and that so long as he is in power he will pledge the country to increase the grant as population increases, and these denominational schools are more largely availed of. I think that is the position. If so, what is to become of our State Schools? I do not believe, myself, there is that unity amongst the members of the Government on this question which it has

been suggested there is. I do not believe it exists.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : You don't want to believe it.

MR. SIMPSON : I have reason to believe otherwise, and there is a very strong opinion amongst the public that this feeling of unanimity does not exist. As to outside opinion on the subject, this question was before the country at the last election, and a broad shaft of bright light was thrown upon it.

MR. CONNOR : It nearly threw you out, at any rate.

MR. SIMPSON : I would be content at any time to be left out if I won my cause; and, perhaps, if I had been left out I would have been as likely to have done so. I say that the result of the elections in Perth threw a shaft of bright, clear light upon public opinion as regards this question in the metropolis of the country. The free and independent electors in the centre of the intellectual life of the country, said distinctly through the ballot box "We will not have this dual system perpetuated." That verdict came with no uncertain sound from the three metropolitan electorates. East Perth, and Central Perth, and West Perth, each returned a member distinctly in favour of the abolition of the present dual system. I challenge contradiction of that statement.

MR. CONNOR : Quote Fremantle.

MR. SIMPSON : That was distinctly the verdict of the ballot-box in the metropolis of the country. We have heard a great deal of "bigotry" and "intolerance" in connection with this question. A certain number of the participants of this grant are very fond of using those words. I do not know that any member of this House ever heard me, either in public or private life, utter an intolerant or bigoted word; I should be sorry to do it. But I ask this House and I ask the country this question: is it a wise thing, is it a politic thing that we should deliberately perpetuate a system which encourages the growth in our community, the feeling on the part of one section of the community that if their children come in contact with the children attending the State Schools of the colony their religious principles are likely to be contaminated, or to suffer? Is it right, is it expedient, that we should instil this idea of objectionable associations into

the minds of the children of any section of the community? What possible scruple of conscience can there be in allowing these children to mix together in their school days, any more than in after years? When these children grow to manhood they mix together in our workshops, in our counting houses, in our public service, and in all the avenues of life. Is it a wise thing for us, who are engaged in building up the history of this country, to set up these obnoxious barriers between the children of different sections of the community on the very threshold of their young lives, and to perpetuate these invidious distinctions which are bound to have a pernicious influence upon them in later life? Is it wise to draw money out of the pockets of the taxpayers to encourage this invidious growth in the citizen life of this young country? I imagine the Premier will admit, and the Government will admit—I do not think it is disputed by anyone, in Australia at any rate, for the principle has been accepted in all these colonies—that it is the duty of the State to take charge of the education of its children. I think the principle laid down by Macaulay, that as the State has the right to hang, it has a right to educate, is generally accepted in these colonies. We know that the grant for educational purposes in this colony, so far as these Assisted Schools are concerned, is a small one, and I do not think it can be said that the results are very satisfactory, so far as the State Schools are affected by it. We also know that that much-respected and energetic body, the Roman Catholic denomination, take the greater portion (I suppose about 90 per cent.) of it; so that this grant to Assisted Schools practically amounts to an annual and separate grant to one denomination. As to the objection raised by this denomination on the ground of religious convictions, we know that under the amended Act religious teaching is now allowed and enjoined in all our schools. No class of school has any advantage over the other in this respect. The minister of any religious denomination, Protestant or Catholic, has the right to enter any of our public schools to impart religious teaching to the members of their respective flocks. Every encouragement is thus given to every denomination in this respect. It has

been pointed out to me—and the fact may not be generally known—that, in this respect, the Government and Assisted Schools have to work under the Act as it stands, and under the same regulations and the same programme of instruction. At both classes of schools, half an hour is set aside daily—and half an hour only—for religious teaching. That is the case in the Assisted Schools as well as in the Government Schools; the rest of the time must be devoted to secular instruction. These are the conditions necessary in order to entitle a school to participate in the grant, and any infringement of this regulation causes a loss of the grant. That I have officially. I have already pointed out that this motion which I have the honour of submitting for the consideration of this House does not aim at the immediate abolition of this grant. It would inflict no immediate hardship, and it will cause no present disturbance in the operations of those who participate in this grant. What this motion aims at is that there shall be no further extension of the system. This grant, as I have said, is increasing; it is larger this year than it was last year, and, unless it is checked, it will continue to get larger in proportion to the growing number of children in our rapidly increasing population. Therefore, there can be no better time than the present for affirming the principle which I ask this House to affirm by agreeing to the motion now before it. At no future time can the discontinuance of the existing system cause less disturbance than at the present. The system adopted in New South Wales, and which is the system I wish to see in force here, created no serious disturbance in that community. The Premier when dealing with this question is very fond of talking about peace and harmony. There may be harmony, and there may be peace, or he may call it peace. We have read of an instance where they made desolation, and called it peace. A famous general once announced that “order reigns in Warsaw”; and we know that the reason why order reigned in Warsaw was because he had destroyed all his opponents. When the Bill which gave New South Wales its present system of education was introduced, the following statement was made by a distinguished statesman in

that colony: “We think this Bill may “be fairly accepted by all—by every “class, by every sect. It does not matter “whether the child belongs to an Irish, “a Scotch, an English, or an Australian “family. What is aimed at is that he “should be considered as belonging to a “family forming part of the population “of this free and fair country; that we “should secure to him the means of “instruction upon the basis from which “his friends, according to their oppor- “tunities and circumstances, may carry “out any degree of education they think “proper. We think another advantage “of this Bill is that it is not a Bill for “the poor alone. It is not a Bill con- “ceived in any sense of helping only “those who cannot help themselves; but “it is a Bill framed and intended to “bring into existence a system of educa- “tion for all the children of all classes; “so that the child of the poor and the “child of the rich may sit side by side in “their tender years, when they receive “the first rudiments of instruction, and “when there is no occasion for any sec- “tarian distinction.” Our present system provides that the State, in providing for the education of the children of this colony, shall make a “sectarian distinction.” Continuing, the same distinguished statesman said: “We think “this Bill may be received, and ought to “be received, by our Roman Catholic “fellow citizens. Surely the Catholic “religion, with all its sacraments, does “not depend upon some particular form “being taught; and, surely it cannot “be a thing the teaching of which “renders it necessary to separate the “Catholic children from the other child- “ren of the country. They must mix “in after years, and be associated with “each other in all the duties of everyday “life. Let them be workers, traders, men “of competent means; let them go wher- “ever they may, into whatever groove of “society circumstances may direct them— “they must mix with persons entertain- “ing other opinions. And I venture to “say that they ought so to mix; that “they ought to unite in promoting the “general interests of their own country “in preference to any consideration what- “ever. Let us be of whatever faith we “may, born on whatever soil we may, “reared under whatever associations we

"may, let us still remember that we are "above everything else free citizens of a "free commonwealth." I suppose, sir, we shall get from the Premier to-night a distinct pronouncement as to the policy of the Government, or the attitude of the Government, with regard to this question. Although, as I have said, I am opposed to the sudden abolition of the present grant to Assisted Schools, I believe that no Ministry that seeks to perpetuate the existing system will find itself in accord with the public feeling of the country. In dealing with this grant my idea is that in doing so we should have regard to existing interests, and that in this colony we should deal with those who are receiving this grant in the same way as was adopted in New South Wales—let them be given to understand that the grant will disappear in a certain number of years, and that where they have built schools and find themselves unable to carry them on, owing to the withdrawal of this grant, or to the want of other means, the State will lease these school buildings from them, or, if they are willing to accept a fair price, will purchase them. In that colony, as I have indicated, they went on the great principle that the State should educate its children without reference to class or denomination. This House, I think, is composed of members belonging to all known denominations; in fact, to more than all known denominations. I believe some of them do not exactly know to which denomination they belong—they are, so to speak, not branded yet. My point is this: in looking at the question of elementary education, this House, composed as it is of members representing all denominations, should not lay it down as a fixed principle that a certain portion of the public revenue should be set apart, increasing in amount every year, to one particular denomination, for the promulgation of its own particular doctrines. I do not say that in any invidious sense; I do not wish to say anything that would hurt the feelings of any denomination.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Don't apologise too much.

MR. SIMPSON: I am not apologising. The Premier never heard an apology from me yet, for I am careful not to utter anything that requires an apology; and, perhaps, if the hon. gentleman himself

followed the same rule, his manner sometimes would be a little less offensive. We have been told by the Premier that the intention of his Government is to perpetuate the present system, and I suppose we shall be told so again to-night. If we do so we shall deliberately encourage the growth of a system which must strike not only at the efficiency but the vitality of the State Schools. I am perfectly justified, from my own observation and from my reading of history in other countries—I am perfectly justified in saying that one of the two systems must disappear. There is not the shadow of a doubt in my mind about that. Either the State School system will become a reproach and a disgrace to the community, and the denominational system will carry out the work that the State ought to do itself, or else the other system must disappear. I believe, if we take all things into consideration, and if I read the signs of the times rightly, the writing on the wall distinctly points to the fact that the State School system will eventually wipe out of existence the rival system. That is my firm belief. I believe that the inherent virtue of the State School system, and the acceptance it receives from all thoughtful sections of the community, point to that consummation. I think our great care as a Legislature should be to see that our State School system is not trammelled or encumbered by any rival agency, assisted out of State funds, to clog its usefulness and to detract from its success. As I shall have an opportunity before the debate closes of replying to any arguments that may be put forward in opposition to this motion, I will not detain the House further at this stage. I have endeavoured to place the issue before members in as moderate language as I can command, and I hope I have not urged my views with any unnecessary warmth. I have endeavoured to abstain from giving utterance to any sentiment that might appear to savour of intolerance—I will not say of bigotry, for I think it is impossible for me to be a bigot. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. RANDELL: I think the motion which the hon. member has placed before the House is a very moderate one, and I think it is one that should receive the

careful consideration of hon. members; I also hope it may secure their adhesion. If, perhaps, the hon. member had moved that we should do away with State aid to Assisted Schools altogether, his resolution would probably have been met with a decided negative from a considerable number of members, and I think he has adopted a wise course in moving as he has done, that it is undesirable to "further extend" the present system. If I remember rightly, a resolution to the same effect was moved in another place last session, and carried; or, at any rate, if not carried, received a very large amount of support,—that, whilst there was no wish to destroy a system which had prevailed for the last twenty years, yet that it was desirable, in the interests of the country, that as soon as possible this dual system should cease. I hold that opinion very strongly myself, and I have given expression to it at various times and in several places. As the hon. member has said, I believe that, to a very large extent, I, who now represent Perth in this House, owe my return to the fact that I spoke out honestly and fairly on this same question, and that I carried with me the general body of the ratepayers or electors of the city. The hon. member, in moving his resolution, made use of one expression which I think is an important one, and one that should not be lost sight of, namely, that the State system of education ought to be a system adapted for the "free citizens of a free commonwealth." Our present State School system is one which, without injury to the conscience of anyone, may be availed of to the utmost by any religious body. It does not tamper with the religious convictions of anyone; and I think it is a very serious question for the country when we find one section of the community wishing to erect barriers between itself and other sections of the community, and to keep itself as much apart from them as possible in the matter of educating their children. In after life, in the ordinary transactions of trade and commerce, in the workshop and in the counting-house, and in all the avenues of business, we mix together on a common ground, and I think it would be beneficial to the commonwealth at large if our children, in their younger days, mixed together on a common ground in the

schools of the country. It is urged that they are unable to do so on conscientious grounds. I hope I have as great a regard for the supremacy of conscience as any member of this House, or any member of the community. It has always been a fundamental principle of mine. From my childhood, I may say, I have been reared and educated to remember that conscience is supreme everywhere. But I confess that, in this particular instance, I am unable to appreciate the objection of one section of the community to avail itself of our State School system on that ground. I fail to see that conscience has anything whatever to do with it. We all know, from the events that took place in 1871, when the present system of elementary education was adopted, what were the real grounds for the change that then took place. The Premier's words to the deputation that waited upon him a few days ago, about the existence of peace and harmony in the community, were as applicable to the state of things that existed in the community up to that date as they were now. Except that there was some agitation on the part of the Catholic priesthood to secure for themselves a portion of the Education Vote, peace and harmony prevailed, and I believe that the system at that time in force recommended itself to the community generally, and certainly in the larger centres of population the standard of education was equal to what it is at the present moment,—or at any rate to what it was twelve months ago, when an effort was made to enlarge the curriculum, and to induce teachers to better qualify themselves for their profession by offering them certificates of efficiency. Of course we know that the comparatively low standard of attainments that has prevailed among the teachers in this colony has been in many cases due to the fact that the salaries in many parts of the colony are so small that they offer no inducement to really good men to enter the profession. As the hon. member for Geraldton has said, it is generally recognised, in these Australian colonies at any rate, that it is the duty of the State to educate its children. I believe no one questions that statement at the present moment. I believe we are all agreed that it is part of the duty of the State to educate the rising generation. That being

the case, surely it is the duty of the State to try and secure the best possible schools it can throughout the whole country, and to offer every inducement to secure an efficient staff of teachers, by enabling them to earn a fair and reasonable salary. But what do we find? We find the State actually subsidising other schools to compete with its own schools. These Assisted Schools are established for the most part in the large centres of population, where they are more likely to thrive. Those who establish them carefully leave small country places alone; in very few instances do we find them establishing schools in places where the population is small. They leave the State to provide for the wants of these localities; and, in this way, the cost of the State School system is considerably enhanced. It has been stated that the education provided by the Assisted Schools has given general satisfaction. I admit that the education imparted in them—especially in the girls' schools—has been at least equal to that imparted in the Government Schools. I believe it has been claimed that it is superior, but I know that contention cannot be maintained on anything like fair grounds. It can only be justified by taking the average results of Assisted Schools, which, as I said, are mainly confined to the larger centres of population, and comparing those results with the average results of State Schools which are not confined to these centres of population but scattered also over the rural districts of the colony, where the population is small, and the attendance meagre and less regular than at the schools in the larger centres of population, and the attainments of the children consequently lower. However, I am quite willing to admit that the work done in these Assisted Schools is good; but the logical conclusion of the argument that they do the work cheaper and better than the State Schools is simply an argument that we should hand over to the promoters of these Assisted Schools our whole system of education. But I do not admit the justice of the argument, and I am quite sure we are not prepared to carry it out to its logical conclusion, and hand over our education system to that particular denomination which, with its splendid organisation, is able to take such advan-

tage of the present State aid system. I noticed that an argument used by one of the gentlemen belonging to that denomination, who attended the deputation that waited upon the Premier the other day on this question, was that the agitation against the Assisted Schools did not come from the public or the parents of children; and, in support of that statement, allusion was made to the fact that a Government School had recently been established at West Perth or Leederville, where there were two denominational schools, but that none of the children attending those schools had been removed to the State School. It was stated that although the memorial in favour of establishing the State School had been signed by the parents of over 100 children, only 19 pupils attended the school altogether. I happen to be in possession of the facts or circumstances which make it quite plain why there should be such a small attendance at this particular school, and that few or no children have been removed from the denominational schools in the neighbourhood. I believe that pressure, and very great pressure, has been brought to bear upon the parents of these children, and influences brought to work which they have been unable to withstand. They have been personally visited by those who are interested in the denominational schools, and strongly pressed not to take their children away and send them to the State School. I also know that every opposition was offered in certain quarters to the establishment of that school, from the very first. I mention these facts, because they throw a pretty strong light upon the causes which have militated against the attendance at this particular school. But I know that a good teacher has been appointed to the school, and I am quite satisfied that very shortly he will establish a reputation there, and that the school will receive the support it deserves, and which it would have received already but for the pressure and influences I have referred to. The Premier on one occasion stated that it was the duty of the Government to see that schools were established throughout the colony. I am very sorry to say that in the past this has not been considered a very urgent duty by former Governments, nor, indeed, by the present one,

until very recently. A short time ago, I know it was very difficult to obtain money from public funds for the erection of schools. I say that, as a member of the late Central Board.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : We never refused the Central Board anything since we have been in office.

MR. RANDELL : I know we had to wait month after month, and year after year, before we could get the schools we applied for, and desired to see established, in different parts of the colony.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : I know I never refused them.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) : Not under Responsible Government, I think.

MR. RANDELL : Yes, under Responsible Government. It is only within the last twelve months or so that the subject has been taken up in earnest by the Minister, and schools are now being established where they ought to have been established long since.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : They were never asked for before.

MR. RANDELL : I know the Central Board could not get the funds when they asked—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : That was under the old form of Government, not this one.

MR. RANDELL : Otherwise we would have seen a different state of things from what we see now. I am in accord with the principle enunciated lately by the Ministry that they will establish schools wherever there is a need for their being established. I think, if we do that, we shall go a great way towards bringing about the cessation of this State aid to Assisted Schools. I hold that opinion very strongly, and I think it is a view of the question that will be supported by this House,—that the Government should plant schools wherever they are needed. Assisted Schools are defended on religious or sectarian grounds. I think the primary duty of every man is to the State, as a citizen. Afterwards he can consider the interests of his own Church, but not before. The first duty of every citizen is to promote the best interests of the State; the interests of his Church should stand second in his estimation. As I said at the commencement, I think the motion

now before us is a very moderate motion, and I hope it will commend itself to members. In common with the hon. member who brought it forward, I should be sorry, seeing that the present system has been established now for some 23 years, to see this aid to Assisted Schools taken away suddenly,—certainly not without compensation. But if the denomination chiefly interested were willing to lease their school buildings, or to sell them to the State, I should be quite willing that the State, at whatever sacrifice, should accept the position. It was not my intention to have spoken at any great length on this subject, nor would I have said so much as I have done but for what I saw stated in the newspaper report of the deputation that waited upon the Premier a few days ago. It was then stated that “peace and harmony” prevailed in the community. We know that may always prevail, whenever one side has been willing to give way, and to refrain from asserting its rights; and that has been the case to a large extent in connection with this education question. But has there been, and is there such peace and contentment with the present state of things as we are sometimes led to suppose? Underneath the surface I believe not. I know there have been complaints as to the undue competition with Government Schools in different parts of the country, and that in some of the smaller towns these schools are nearly ruined by the establishment in their midst of these rival schools assisted by the State. I think it is false policy, and a policy that is not good to the country, to allow the present dual system to continue, or, at any rate, to allow it to extend; and I take it that behind this motion there is an intention that the system shall gradually cease by some means or the other—by honourable means, of course. I think one of the best means for bringing about this consummation would be to see that good and efficient teachers are appointed to our State Schools, and that the equipments of the schools should be improved, so as to ensure the children attending them receiving a good sound education. Of course I am aware that these denominational schools exist in England. But a different state of things exists there altogether. They started with the denominational system there.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) : I suppose they are not "free citizens of a free commonwealth" in England.

MR. RANDELL : In this respect they have not always been free citizens. It was more than a parent dared, especially in the rural districts, to send his child to another school, in England. He was obliged, under the risk of incurring the penalty of being deprived of his means of livelihood, and of being ostracised, and suffering other penalties of which probably the hon. member knows nothing about, to send his children to the parish school.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) : How long ago is that?

MR. RANDELL : Even up to the present moment that state of things prevails in the country districts in England. I have read of it in newspapers of recent date. There is one of these schools in every parish, controlled by the clergyman of the parish, who has the supreme management, and no one would think of interfering with him. This state of things prevailed for a long, long term of years, all over England, until an attempt was made to remedy it by the establishment of what are called British schools, in the towns, and excellent schools they are, very much superior, as a rule, to the other schools. If members have read a very excellent article recently written on the subject by Mr. J. G. Fitch, a high authority on the question of education, and published in the *Nineteenth Century*, they will have seen the case put very fully and very fairly. And what do we find there? We find that in the very stronghold of denominationalism, the Board Schools are gradually winning their way, and it is only a question of time—and it will not be long hence—when the denominational system will be wiped out in England, and Board Schools established in every part of the country. They are now recognising the principle which in Australia has been recognised for a long time, that it is the duty of the State to educate its children, and to adopt the best means for accomplishing that end. I would be the last to say anything ungenerous, or unkind, or to endeavour to induce members to do anything that is unfair or unjust towards these Assisted Schools. I recognise, to some extent

at any rate, what is called the sacrifices that have been made by their supporters; but I am not quite willing to concede that these sacrifices are made altogether in the interests of education. They are made for other purposes. I admire the self-denial of those who make these sacrifices; I also admire the splendid organisation which enables them to accomplish educational work that cannot be so effectually accomplished without such means by other portions of the community, not even by the Church of England. We have not the available staff of unpaid teachers who have dedicated their lives to working in this field of labour. But what has been the practical result? Although, nominally, the present system is one of assisting all schools, irrespective of creed or denomination, it virtually resolves itself into one of State aid to one particular denomination, for carrying on its own system of education. It is so by the force of circumstances. Recognising that fact, it becomes our duty, as politicians, and it becomes the duty of the Ministry of the day, to look the question fairly in the face, and say whether this system shall be continued, or whether we should endeavour, as speedily as possible—but as honourably as possible—to bring it to an end. I believe it is an imperative duty cast upon us to take this matter into our most earnest consideration. A resolution passed by this House the other day affirmed that it is desirable that direct State aid to religion should cease. I hope the House will also accept this resolution, and affirm that State aid in another form, to any religious denomination, through these Assisted Schools, shall likewise cease. I say so in the best interests of the community. I say so on the grounds of patriotism; on the ground that we are all members of one and the same nation, and citizens of the same great commonwealth. Although we may hold different views on religious subjects, that does not make us one whit less fellow citizens of that great Empire of which we are proud to form a part. I am afraid I have spoken in a very desultory manner on this important question. It was not my intention to have addressed the House at such length; but the resolution commends itself to me as being a very

moderate one, and I thought it was my duty to say a few words. I am afraid I have been led a little outside the particular subject now before us, but I hope I have not uttered anything that can be considered to be offensive to anyone. I only wished to make known the sentiments I, myself, hold with regard to this question, and the convictions which have been forced upon me by a long and intimate acquaintance with the practical working of the educational system of the colony. I have endeavoured to give utterance to these convictions without hurting the feelings of anyone; and I think it is the duty of all of us to give an honest expression to our opinions upon this very important question.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am sure we must have all listened with attention and interest to the hon. member, the leader of the Opposition, in the observations he has made on this subject. I also think that not one word of what he has uttered could in any way give offence to any of the members of this House. He has dealt with the matter, from his point of view, in a fair and reasonable way. I must, however, say that I take exception to the suggestion that the question now before us is in any way a new one in this House. Ever since the introduction of Responsible Government we have had debates upon the question, and we have arrived at decisions concerning it. Therefore, the attitude of the present Government towards the question should not have come with surprise, even upon the hon. member for Geraldton, though the hon. member would lead one to suppose that the Government had expressed no opinion on the subject, or made any declaration of their policy with regard to it until I addressed the electors at Bunbury in May last. But the hon. member knows very well, without my telling him, that the present Government had expressed their views in this House on this question on more than one occasion; and the attitude which they observe towards it at the present moment is not in any way new, and should not come upon the hon. member in any way as a surprise. The hon. member, himself, has moved a similar motion before in this House, though any one listening to him this evening would imagine that it was some new idea that

had flashed upon his mind, or that it was the first time he had ever given expression to his sentiments on the subject. But we know very well it is an old subject with him. He has fought two elections over it, and he was very nearly defeated upon it on the last occasion. In fact ever since he has entered political life it has been his shibboleth.

MR. SIMPSON: A very good one, too.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not know whether the hon. member intends to continue in his crusade against the present system of education. Although he has not said so to-night, we all know that his idea is that the system of education in this colony should be free, secular, and compulsory.

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

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That is the hon. member's view, nevertheless. The view the Government take of this matter is that we have to deal with the question as it exists in this country. We have not to commence a new system; we have to deal with a system introduced in 1871, founded upon the English Act, and which has remained in force and worked fairly well on the whole from that time up to this, and, I believe, given satisfaction to the majority of the people of the colony. I do not mean to say that it has worked altogether satisfactorily; I believe it can be improved in the way I stated at Bunbury, by giving more vitality to it, by adding to its efficiency, and making the standard higher. But it has served us fairly well during the last twenty-three years; and, so far as I am concerned, I am not prepared to revolutionise a system that has given a fair amount of satisfaction during the whole of that time. There is one point I would like to emphasise, and that is this: I cannot admit for a moment that the system of Assisted Schools is intended for the Roman Catholic denomination only. It is open to all denominations to avail themselves of the system. The fact remains that the Roman Catholic Church has been the one that has taken the greatest advantage of the system. But there is not one word in our Education Act of 1871 which in any way limits the operation of the system of Assisted Schools to the Roman Catholics, or to any other creed or denomination.

It is open to all to take advantage of it, and to some extent—not to any large extent, I admit—it has been taken advantage of by the Anglican Church. If it has not been taken advantage of more largely by other denominations it is no fault of the Act. I am of opinion, as I have stated before, that the Assisted Schools should not be allowed to unduly interfere with our so-called Government Schools. If I were Minister of Education, I would not allow an Assisted School to be established in a place where it would injure the Government School, or where I thought there was no room for both; but I certainly would allow it where there was room for both schools. I believe that has been the principle which has been generally adopted by the present Minister of Education; and I believe it has been the principle adopted ever since the Act has been in force. I remember, myself, having been in the Executive Council, years ago, when applications were made for the establishment of Assisted Schools, and when those applications were not supported by the Central Board of Education, and the Government refused to sanction their establishment. I remember many instances of that kind, and I do not know of one instance in which the Government of that day, or of this, has established an Assisted School in a place where its establishment has not been recommended by the Central Board of Education. I can say that, from my own experience. I am of opinion, sir, that these Assisted Schools are Government Schools, and not private schools. They are entirely under the control of the State. They are not allowed to use any books, or to carry out any course of instruction other than what is approved by the Minister under the by-laws or regulations framed under the Act. There is no religion allowed to be taught in any of these Assisted Schools except during the hour set apart for that purpose, and approved by the Minister. Therefore, I say these Assisted Schools may be regarded as Government Schools, rather than private or denominational schools. These are my views with regard to these schools. I say they are not denominational schools in the sense that some members who have spoken would lead us to believe. They are State Schools in the sense that they are under the con-

trol of the State. Religion cannot be taught in these schools any more than in other State Schools, except with the approval of the Minister, and under the same regulations. Then, again, on the score of economy—though I don't know that this is a matter that should altogether influence us in the consideration of this question; it would not influence me unless I thought I was on the wrong road—but, even on the score of economy, there is certainly a great deal to be said in favour of this Assisted School system. The hon. member who brought forward the motion has not said it, but I may point out a few facts of which, perhaps, members are not aware. I have here some figures—

MR. SIMPSON: Who prepared them for you?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I prepared them myself: I find that in 1893 (that is last year) the average attendance at what are called Government Schools was 3,088—I must admit it is a rather poor attendance, but there it is—and that the cost to the colony was £10,444. In the Assisted Schools the average attendance was 1,537, and the cost to the colony was £1,962. It appears, therefore, from these figures—and I must say I was surprised when I came to look into the matter to-day—that about one-third of the average number of children attending the schools in this colony attend these Assisted Schools, and that the cost to the State is about one-fifth. This, mind you, does not take into consideration the cost of what I may call the permanent establishment, which I may say is common to both classes of schools, and which amounted last year to £1,568.

MR. RANDELL: What about the fees?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am not looking at the fees: I don't know where they all go to. But it appears from these statistics that it costs the colony £10,444 to educate 3,088 children in the Government Schools, and only £1,962 to educate 1,537 children to the same standard of attainments in the Assisted Schools. In other words, if all these children were taught in the Assisted Schools, the cost to the State would be about one-third. Instead of being £12,000 it would have been £4,000. In addition to that,

the Government have to build their own schools out of public funds, whereas the Assisted School buildings are not a charge upon the public funds. In the Loan Act of 1893 there was a sum of £20,000 for the erection of schools, and in the Estimates now before the House there is a further sum of £9,000 for the same purpose. In other words, the State has incurred, or proposes to incur, an expenditure of £29,000 out of public funds for the erection of new schools, which would be all saved under the Assisted School system. I think these statistics deserve some consideration. It may interest members to know the average number of children that are attending the two classes of schools in the principal towns of the colony. The following figures deal with the state of affairs during last year:—In Perth there were five Assisted Schools belonging to the Roman Catholics, with an average attendance of 526 scholars (which included 53 orphans); two Assisted Schools under the Church of England, with 106 scholars (including 25 orphans)—total 632. On the other hand, we had three Government Schools in Perth, with an average attendance of 462 scholars. At Fremantle, including Beaconsfield, there were five Government Schools, with a total of 460 scholars, as against four Assisted Schools, with 316 scholars. At Albany 163 children attended the Government Schools, and 160 attended the Assisted Schools. At Bunbury the numbers were—128 at the Government Schools, and 56 at the Assisted Schools. At Geraldton 97 attended the Government Schools, and 94 attended the Assisted Schools, the numbers being about equal. At Guildford 84 children attended the Government Schools, and 60 the Assisted Schools. At Newcastle the number attending the Government Schools was 36, as compared with 49 attending the Assisted Schools. At Northam 73 children attended the Government Schools, and 53 attended the Assisted Schools; and at Northampton 16 pupils attended the Government School, while 55 attended the Assisted Schools. There is a considerable discrepancy at Northampton.

MR. SIMPSON: Yes, and a lovely State schoolmaster you sent there.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I believe he was rather old-fashioned. At York 119 children attended the

Government Schools, and 62 the Assisted Schools in that town. It will be seen from these figures that in the largest towns of the colony, which I have enumerated, the total number of children attending the Government Schools at the end of last year was 1,638, and 1,537 attending the Assisted Schools. There were also 1,453 children who were educated in Government Schools, at places where there were no Assisted Schools.

MR. RANDELL: And in most cases they cost from £4 to £5 per head, and in some cases more.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes, I must say, in fairness, that the children educated in State Schools, where there are no Assisted Schools, cost considerably more, on the average. I was so informed by the Secretary to-day. I think anyone who looks at these figures must come to the conclusion that it is not the children of one denomination alone who are being educated in the Assisted Schools, when we find that the number educated in these schools and in the Government Schools are almost equal, in the ten principal towns of the colony. When we know the proportion of Roman Catholics in the colony to the whole population, it cannot be said for a moment that it is only Roman Catholic children who are being educated in these Assisted Schools. The opinion I have formed is that a good many other children must attend these schools, or these figures would not come out as they do; and I think that is a matter that should not be lost sight of. In addition to the figures I have quoted, of course a large number of children attend private schools? These private schools are established in every town of importance, and are attended mainly by children belonging to the wealthier classes of the community; so that it must not be supposed that the figures I have quoted represent all the children that are being educated in the colony.

MR. RANDELL: There are about twenty private schools in Perth.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): They are neither Assisted nor Government Schools, but are supported by private persons. There is another point I should like to refer to. It is not a new opinion I have formed, but one I have given expression to on more than one

occasion : while I agree with what the hon. member for Perth has said with regard to the desirability of encouraging the rising generation of all creeds and classes to grow up together in friendly intercourse in their young days, and to continue the same friendly relations in after life as they grow older, still I do not think we want—I know I don't want—to encourage anything in the shape of what I call proselytising. I do not want to offer any encouragement to any class of people to proselytise or to win away others from one religion to another. If one denomination desires to preserve its identity, and to bring up its children in its own particular faith, or its own particular tenets, I have no objection to its doing so.

MR. RANDELL : So long as they pay for it, and don't ask the State to pay for it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : I do not believe in compelling people to allow their children to mix up with others, and run the risk of being proselytised, if they have a conscientious objection to it. There is another consideration, and it is a matter, perhaps, of more importance than is generally attached to it, and that is that the present system encourages a spirit of emulation and healthy rivalry between the two classes of schools. It is very much the same as with our Churches. I have often thought that, if we were all of one and the same religion, or if in this great empire to which we belong there was only one Church, it would be pretty well a dead Church. It would have very little vitality about it. I believe it is a good thing for us to have these divisions amongst us, and that we should have our different Churches or denominations,—that we should have Church of England people, and Roman Catholic people, and Congregationalists, and Wesleyans, and Presbyterians, and other denominations, because I believe it creates a spirit of healthy emulation amongst the various Churches. I think it is the same with education. I am afraid that if we relied entirely upon the efforts of the State in this direction, we should not have that spirit of emulation and friendly rivalry that now exists, and that we should soon find ourselves falling into a rut, lagging behind, or jogging along very slowly,

with our educational system. I cannot help thinking that there is a good deal to be gained by having this spirit of emulation between the Government Schools and the Assisted Schools. I believe that by having these two systems working together we are doing a good deal to encourage a wholesome spirit of rivalry, one trying to outdo the other in showing a better result, which I think cannot fail to be advantageous. I know that every year when we go to the annual examinations or prize-givings at these schools, we find this spirit of rivalry and competition, and an eager desire to outdo each other, as to which school shall show the most satisfactory results. I know that every year the managers of these Assisted Schools in Perth invite those who hold prominent positions in the community to attend these school gatherings, and give them every opportunity of observing the result of their efforts in this direction. They make quite a gala day of it, and the greatest interest is taken in these annual exhibitions. Do you mean to tell me that if there was none of this spirit of rivalry and emulation, they would take all this trouble? They might, perhaps, as single-minded men, who have devoted their lives to the work; but I think the feeling is a great deal encouraged by this spirit of emulation I have referred to. I think it part of our human nature that we seldom do our very best unless we are put on our mettle. Therefore, in my opinion, this friendly rivalry and emulation between the State Schools, carried on absolutely under the control of the Government, and the other class of schools carried on by private individuals, but still carried on under the control of the Government, really works a great deal of good in the community. One acts upon the other, and I think, myself, it is a very good thing to have a little rivalry.

MR. RANDELL : Does that apply equally to the Ministry and the Opposition?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : I think so. If we had no Opposition we might probably become more careless; but a good vigorous Opposition helps to put us on our mettle. It is the same in every walk of life. The last argument I will use in regard to this question is, that the country has not demanded any change in the present system. The question has been before the country,

in a definite manner, since I made my speech at Bunbury on the 23rd May last, and announced the views of the Government on the subject; but I doubt if any member of this House owes his election solely to the particular views he holds on this question. It may have influenced the election in one or two instances; but I do not believe there is one member in this House who can say he absolutely owes his election to the views he holds on this very important question. It was not made a test question, either in the elections for this House or the other House. The subject was spoken about, certainly, by a few members; but very few, I think, even touched upon it. I say the country, at the late general election, did not declare, at the poll, that any change is necessary in the present system of education. On the contrary, I think we may fairly assume that the people of the colony, taken as a body, are satisfied with the system now in force, and which has been in force during the last twenty-three years. I have now fully explained the reasons which have actuated the Government in this matter. We see no reason whatever for making this change. The people have not demanded it; they have not led us to believe that they are dissatisfied with the existing system. Therefore, I say, we see no good reason why we should alter the present state of affairs, except, as I have said, by trying to improve it, as we intend to do, by putting more life into it, and raising the standard, and doing all we can to give the youth of the colony, whether they attend the Government Schools or Assisted Schools—both being under the control of the State—as good an education as it is possible for us to do, under the circumstances.

MR. CONNOR: I rise with some reluctance to speak on this "perennial question," as it has been described. I am very sorry indeed it should be necessary for me to get up in this House to oppose this motion, because I do not think there was any occasion for introducing it. As the Premier has very truly said, the question has been definitely before the public since May last. The country has been appealed to, and the country has definitely answered, "We do not want any change." That is the verdict of the country, as shown by the

members which the country has returned to this House. Even if the verdict of the country had been a different one, and a majority of members had been returned to this House pledged to oppose the present system, and to insist upon a change in the direction proposed by this motion, it would not have altered the fact that a great injustice would be done to a large section of the community, who have what I may call a vested interest in the present system of education, if the present system were interfered with. When it is borne in mind that that section of the community which avails itself of the benefits which the present system confers, represents one-fourth, or very nearly one-third, of the population, and contributes to the public Treasury of the colony nearly one-third of the revenue paid into it, let us ask ourselves what would be the result if this grant were wiped away? The result would be this: nearly one-third of the population of the colony would be unable to avail themselves of the benefits of the system of education offered by the State, while at the same time they would be compelled to contribute nearly one-third of the revenue expended by the State in providing the rest of the community with education for their children. They would have to tax themselves to pay for that which they could not themselves enjoy, and they would have to further tax themselves to provide education for their own children; because I do not mind stating here, that conscientiously the members of our Church cannot and will not—[MR. RANDELL: That's it; "will not"]—avail themselves of any system under which they would be debarred from teaching their children in the way they have been brought up themselves. That is my primary object in getting up to speak on this subject. I am sorry I should have to speak at all. I am not here to represent the Church I belong to, but to express my own independent opinion as a member of the House; and I have no wish to introduce any spirit of bigotry into the debate, although I am afraid other members may insist on doing so, as was done on a former occasion, when another motion was brought forward by the same hon. member. I wish, first of all, to compliment the Premier upon not allowing

himself to be led away in this matter, by some members of the House, to forget the promise he made when he announced the policy of the Government, in his speech at Bunbury, when he publicly stated that the present Ministry are distinctly in favour of the present system of education. I am pleased to be able to compliment the hon. gentleman upon his—I won't say pluck, but his consistency, in maintaining the same attitude towards this question to-night as he did at Bunbury in May last. As I have said, this is not the first time the hon. member for Geraldton has brought this matter before the House. Last session he gave us some statistics which he tried to make use of, unfairly I think, against that section of the community which this motion is intended to strike at. He made reference to the inmates of our gaols, and our asylums I think; and said that, practically, all the gaols and asylums in this colony were filled with Roman Catholics.

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker—I challenge the hon. member, or any man in the country, to produce any proof that such a statement ever fell from my lips.

MR. CONNOR: Later on I shall show that the hon. member said so in this House. It was only last night that I read it in *Hansard*. I think, sir, that is a very bad spirit to introduce into this debate; it is not calculated to produce peace and harmony in any community, and the hon. member knows it is a gross libel upon that section of the community against which it was directed. I think it is rather late in the day, and very bad form to say the least of it, to attempt to introduce bigotry and hatred, and distinction of class or creed, into discussions of this kind. There can be no doubt that the object at the bottom of this resolution is to introduce into this colony the system of free, secular, and compulsory education. I think the hon. member has been a little inconsistent in this matter. Last year, when the Elementary Education Act was amended, the hon. member moved an amendment in one clause, providing that any minister might enter any Assisted School, as well as the Government Schools, to teach religion. That seems rather inconsistent. If his object is to introduce the free, secular, and compulsory system, why not

say so? But seeing that the country will not have it, he brings in this motion in order to strike at the Assisted Schools. It shows it is only a question of expediency with him. It is not a question of principle at all. The hon. member is actuated by a spirit which should not be introduced into this House, and which I will not call by its proper name. I think it is about time the hon. member finished with this question, and not make a "perennial" question of it, stirring up strife and bad feeling to no purpose. I think he ought to be satisfied when it is provided that any minister of religion may go to any school and teach religion to the children of his own denomination. The hon. member said something about all the newspapers, except one, being in favour of his motion. I know it so happens that those who are at the head of these newspapers are all on one side, and that, therefore, there is not much chance of justice being shown to the other side except from one poor unfortunate little paper, which has been stigmatised here to-night by both of the members who have spoken in support of this motion.

MR. RANDELL: I never made allusion to any paper.

MR. CONNOR: As the Premier said last session—"The country has never in any way signified its wish that the law of the land, which has existed over twenty years as regards these Assisted Schools, should be interfered with." Now I come to the crucial question of the cost and the result of the present system. If we take the cost to the country of the Assisted Schools as compared with the Government Schools, and if we take the results as given to us by the Inspector, in proportion to the cost, I do not think any member of this House will dispute that the comparison is altogether in favour of the Assisted Schools, and that on the score of economy there is no reason whatever why the present system should not be perpetuated. The cost of the Assisted Schools, so far as the country is concerned, is not more than one-fourth the cost of the State Schools, while the educational results, if not better, are equally as good. Why then should we disturb the present system? If we can get the very same article, of equal quality, at a less price, surely it would be a foolish thing on our part to re-

fuse it. If the Government—and it seems to be the opinion of everyone that it is the duty of the Government or the State to educate its children—if they can get them educated as well in one class of school for one-fourth what they can get them educated in another class of school, surely to goodness it would be bad statesmanship on the part of the Government to do away with the schools that give them equally good results at one-fourth the cost. One great argument put forward by those who are opposed to this dual system is that the Assisted Schools compete with the Government Schools. It seems to me, as the Premier has pointed out, that is a good argument in favour of the system. Competition, we know, is the soul of trade; and I do not see what objection there can be to it in this school business. Then as to the efficiency of the teachers; I think members will agree with me that the teachers in the Roman Catholic Schools are quite as efficient as those in the State Schools. Take the Christian Brothers, for example, or the nuns of the various orders that devote themselves to teaching. We know they are ladies and gentlemen who are well educated, well trained, well bred, and who devote their lives entirely to the work of training and educating the young. I do not think anyone will venture to say that the teachers in our Government Schools, no matter what their qualifications may be, are any better qualified for their work than the teachers in the Catholic Schools. I have referred to the Christian Brothers, and I should like here to draw a comparison between the way the members of this order are treated by the Government in the old country, where we generally look for our good examples, and the way they have been treated by the Government here. I notice by this morning's paper that Mr. John Morley, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, has allowed the Christian Brothers to use their own books in Irish schools receiving State aid; whereas the Minister of Education has denied them the same privilege in this colony, and told them if they used their books in the schools here they would not get the grant. I mention this to show the distinction between the action of Mr. John Morley and the action of our own Minister of Education, who has told the Christian Brothers that they must give

up their books or do without State aid at all, whereas in Ireland they are allowed to use them.

MR. RANDALL: I am inclined to think that statement of the case is a little warped.

MR. CONNOR: I do not think I am wrong, sir. That is what I have been informed; and, if it is so, all I can say is it casts a serious reflection upon the liberality of this country. We are supposed to live in a free country, and if our conscience forbids us to accept State aid, if attended with conditions that violate our conscience, why should we be bound to contribute our quota towards the support of a system which we cannot accept ourselves? I would warn the hon. member for Geraldton that, possibly, the time may not be far distant when the people who support these Assisted Schools will claim what is their just due, as a matter of right, and that is one-fourth or one-third (or something between the two) of this education grant, instead of what they are now receiving. Until they receive this proportion, I maintain they are labouring under an injustice. Therefore, I think the hon. member's motion is in the wrong direction altogether. I am referring now to their just claims, as forming one-third or one-fourth (whatever it may be) of the population of the colony, and contributing in that proportion to the revenue of the colony. Personally, except as a matter of principle, I do not think the grant is worth all this fuss that is made about it, and, if I had my way, I think I would be inclined to chuck it up. But there is a principle involved, and I defy any member to say it is not a just principle. The hon. member has alluded to New South Wales. I do not think his travels have extended much beyond New South Wales and Western Australia; but I may inform the House that I was informed by some of the leading politicians in New South Wales that their views were in favour of the old system of education in force in that colony rather than the present one. I know that in New Zealand the cry is that they are paying too much for their education system, and that the results are not so good as when they had the Assisted School system as we have it here. It is hardly necessary for me to say I shall

vote against this motion. I hope the hon. member will have better sense than to knock his head against this particular fad again; it is about the only fad which, perhaps, he has, and the sooner he drops it the better. That is my advice to him.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have listened with some attention to the speech of the hon. member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor), in which he warned this House that the day is not far distant when the religious body to which he belongs will claim their full third of the money now voted for educational purposes.

MR. CONNOR: I didn't say that; I said they might do so.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If that is the argument intended to be used in this House to induce us to vote against this motion, all I can say is, if anything were wanted to confirm my intention to support the motion, that argument would supply it. If this vote is to increase from year to year, and if the claim of this body is to be one of right, based upon the number of the population, then it is time we should set our faces steadfastly against it, and once and for all to sweep it from the statute book. Some very strange things have been uttered to-night, or things which appear strange to me. I thought verily I had escaped from this contest when I came to this colony. I have been mixed up with it for something like 30 years elsewhere. I have attended these denominational schools, and I have been present at nearly all the discussions that took place on this question in another colony, and I lived in Victoria to see the day when the highest system of State education that exists in the world was placed on the statute book of that colony. (Dissent.) I challenge this House, or any member in it, to produce an example of a higher standard of State School education than is provided under the Victorian system of free, secular, and compulsory education. If, then, it be merely a question of efficiency, and the system is to be judged by that test, the system adopted in Victoria fulfils the required condition. But what is the question now before us, when we come really to face it? It comes distinctly to this: a certain section of the community, reference to which has been so frequently heard, and heard again to-night, will not — I say *will* not—[MR. CONNOR: They

simply do not] accept the provision which the State makes for the education of its children. Why will they not?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): They do accept it, as the Act provides.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member for East Kimberley says they do not, and we know that in many places they will not. If this be not true, why is there a necessity for the two kinds of schools to-day?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Because the law of the land permits it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: "Because the law of the land permits it." The law of the land permits two classes of schools to exist: are they the same, or do they differ? If they are the same, what kind of reason for objection is there to this motion? If they differ, what is the basis of the difference? The basis of the difference, as members know full well, is not education, but religion. The principle which lies at the bottom of the whole question is not the question of education, but the question of religion; and it is for the members of this House to say whether they are going to mix themselves with the interminable difficulty of sectarian systems, or whether they decline to do so. There is a duty resting upon the State to educate its children, but there is no duty resting upon the State, as such, to give religious instruction to its children. Religious instruction should come from the parents of the children, and from religious teachers who possess the spiritual qualification to impart it. It is no part of the State's duty to teach religion; and, if the State undertakes the education of its children, it is sufficient that it should educate them to the extent of their secular requirements. Of course, I am prepared to admit — and, more than that, I emphasise it in the fullest possible way — that no child is properly educated who is not religiously educated, and that the child who is merely educated in the common standards of education is likely, if evil disposed and without religious training, to become a more dangerous man than the uneducated child. While admitting that, I say it is not the duty of the State, as the State, to give its children a religious education; the State

does not possess the power or the qualification to do so. It cannot qualify its teachers in religion, because the qualification is not within their reach. It cannot make men religious, and it cannot insist upon having religious teachers in its schools. When once the State proposes to deal with the question of religion it deals with something which is, unfortunately, beyond its influence and control. I have been surprised—not because it is new, for we have heard it before—but I have been a little surprised to hear the Premier of this colony quoting the sectarian differences of Churches as an essential condition of the success and vitality of the Churches, and arguing from that premiss that the same kind of rivalry is useful and advantageous in connection with our educational system. As to the result of the dissensions between the various branches of the Christian Churches, I should like to quote no less an authority than the late Hon. George Higinbotham.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marnion): Where does he come in as an authority?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: These interjections simply show that those who make them are not acquainted with Australian history. The greatest man who ever stood on Australian soil, without any exception, was the Hon. George Higinbotham. True, he was not associated with any religious denomination, and he was a man who was considered by sectarian Churches as being outside the pale of those Churches, yet no man in his private life was more distinctly religious than George Higinbotham, or who was more strongly imbued with the moral principles of righteousness; and no Judge ever sat on the bench whose decisions were more distinctly revered. If hon. members did not know anything about George Higinbotham before, they do now. I will now come to the point I was coming to, and it is this: George Higinbotham, on a certain occasion, made use of this expression: "Christianity has been in the world for 18 centuries, but the religion of Christ has yet to be tried." I will repeat it, for I would like the House to grasp what is involved in it: "Christianity has been in the world for 18 centuries, but the religion

of Christ has yet to be tried." And why? Because the religion of Christ has been split up by sectarian differences, and never had a fair chance in the world yet. And yet that is the very argument gravely put before this House, by the Premier of this colony, in support of the present dual system of education. These little petty rivalries and competition between Christian Churches, these little sectarian differences—which, after all, simply resolve themselves into this, that one half of humanity, in attempting its religious development, is fighting against the other half—this petty spirit of rivalry and competition between Christian Churches, is the argument deliberately put forward by the Premier in support of the educational system of the colony. I say it has caused me some little surprise. Then we come to the question of cost. The Premier has practically admitted that the Assisted Schools confine their operations to the large centres of population; and we all know how much easier it is and how much less expensive, comparatively, to work a school where the population is large, and the number of children attending school is necessarily larger than in the rural districts. On the other hand the State Schools are scattered about the country, in places where the attendance is small, and the cost to the State of maintaining these schools must necessarily be larger. But, lying behind this, how comes it that education in the Assisted School is so much cheaper? Now, all honour and all praise, I say, to the devoted men and women who conscientiously devote their lives to the education of the children that come under their control. No one in this House respects more than I do the energy, the conscientiousness, the integrity, the righteousness, and the standard of education set up by this devoted band of men and women. But the question we have to consider now is this: is it possible for the State, who has to depend upon such paid teachers as it can obtain, to compete in its educational system, so far as the question of cost is concerned, with (for instance) the Christian Brothers, who are supported and maintained altogether apart from any funds derived from the school system? Or is it possible for us to compete with schools conducted by nuns, who are

sustained from funds received from other sources entirely? If persons choose to withdraw themselves, as they do, from their secular callings, and devote themselves to educational work, we say all praise to them; but what has the State to do with the question? Do these people do it—let those who have advocated this course answer—do they do it in the cause of education, or do they do it in the cause of religion?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Both.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then if they do it in the interest of both, why should they not be just as willing to give their assistance in other schools where religious instruction is not obtained?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Because their services would not be accepted.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I know something about this subject. We have seen it before, in other places. Members know as well as I do that what is at the bottom of it all is the question of religion, and not of education. Were it not for the conscientious objection—and I respect their consciences; were it not for the religious phase of the question—and I respect every man who honours his religion; were it not for these considerations the opposition to the abolition of this dual system of education would fall to the ground. But, if we are to carry it to its logical conclusion, where is it to end? Suppose I chose to secrete myself from the rest of the community, and start some sect or system of my own, be it Mormonism or Shakerism, or any other "ism,"—is it sufficient for me to say that I have a conscientious objection to accept the education provided by the State, to entitle me to receive separate State aid to support me in teaching the tenets of my own particular religion? It simply comes to that,—we have to sustain schools for the specific purpose of perpetuating a difference in religious faith. That is very good, so far as it goes; for a man who has religious convictions is justified in holding those convictions, and we must respect him for refusing to alter his convictions, except for sufficient reasons. But, when you introduce religion into questions of State policy, when you bring your religion into the political arena, you degrade your religion directly. Most of the

evils (some more than others) that have come into this world, right down from the time of the introduction of Christianity into the world up to the present date, have arisen from the mingling of Church and State. I must vote for this motion before the House. It is not exactly what I would have liked to see; it does not go far enough. As I have said, I believe the State should give every child an education, and that education should be absolutely free to every child. If it is free, necessarily it must be compulsory; and these two things are reversible, if it is compulsory it must be free. And, because all persons should be in a position to be able to accept it without violating their religious convictions, it must necessarily be secular. If there are persons in this country or any other country who desire to specifically teach their own religious views, they are perfectly free to do so, but not to ask this House or any other House to assist them in doing it. As soon as the State mixes itself up with these religious questions, it destroys its own ends, and injures the very cause it proposes to help.

MR. RICHARDSON: I do not know that there is any reason why members should give a silent vote on this question, if it is only just a few words to set forth the reasons why we intend to vote for or against it. I take particular note of the tenour of the motion, and I find that the crux of it is contained in the two words "further extend,"—that is, whether the present system should be further extended. Whether the motion goes far enough is a matter of opinion, and I cannot enter into that question at present. The motion as it stands affirms that "it is undesirable to further extend the system of State aid to Assisted Schools"; therefore, I take it that anyone who votes against the motion votes for what is tantamount to saying that it shall be further extended. I see no getting out of that. If we cannot affirm that it is not desirable to further extend the present system, we simply mean to affirm that it is desirable to further extend it. I think it is well for the House to consider that point seriously, not only as it affects the present, but also the future, for we are not dealing alone with the present, but the further extension of the present system. Whatever opinions we

may entertain about interfering with vested interests, and however undesirable we may deem it to treat any section of the community unfairly, or withdrawing what they have been accustomed to rely upon, it is quite another question to say that this assistance shall go on increasing. In my opinion it should not be further increased. That is my view, and for this reason,—not as the hon. member for Nannine has very justly observed, that it is a wrong principle to introduce the religious question into the matter, but on other grounds altogether, more on what the Commissioner of Railways would call commercial principles. I look upon this assistance to denominational schools in the light of affording protection to a class of schools which cannot be regarded as otherwise than inimical to the success of our State Schools. Whatever opinions we may have on this question, I think that as legislators, and in the interests of the State, we are bound to consider the condition and status of the State Schools, and it appears to me that at present these schools are getting a little the worst of it. With reference to the Premier's speech on the question, although he makes able speeches on political points and generally holds sound views, yet, when it comes to questions of theology, I am afraid he gets a little adrift. He expressed the opinion that the rivalries, and jealousies, and the schisms that have entered into the Churches is a healthy spirit, and that it is a good thing to introduce it into our educational system, as well as into religion. I imagine that contention is somewhat contrary to what we are taught in a certain book, and the injunction of the great Apostle to "mark them who cause divisions amongst you, and have no company with them." The Premier also told us he was not prepared to revolutionise the present system, which he says is open to all who choose to avail themselves of it; and he further emphasised that remark by stating that the Assisted Schools are not denominational, and that no religion is necessarily taught in them. If that is so, what is the object of them? What are they established for? Why do they exist at all? If no religion can be taught in these schools—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Except at a certain hour, I said.

MR. RICHARDSON: If religion can only be taught in them at a certain hour, like any other school, and if they are not denominational, I am at a loss to understand why there should be any preference on the part of any section of the community for these Assisted Schools any more than for the State Schools. But is the Premier in a position to answer that there is no such thing as religion taught in these schools except at a certain hour of the day? If he is, well and good. The hon. gentleman also deprecates the idea of proselytising; he says he does not wish to see any attempts made to proselytise people. Will he also undertake to say that there is no such thing as proselytising in these Assisted Schools?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): No, there isn't. The hon. member cannot produce a single instance of it.

MR. SIMPSON: He asked the Premier, not you.

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, I asked the Premier if he could give us that assurance. I think we all, as sensible men, must recognise the importance of education in any civilised country, and especially in young countries. I do not hold with those who say we can educate our children too much, or that education in itself is a bad thing for any child. We all must recognise that to educate its children is one of the most important things a State can do; and anyone who says it is not a reproductive work cannot have given the subject much thought. Will anyone venture to assert that the triumphs of science, and skill, and invention, the triumphs of steam and electricity, and the triumphs of civilisation generally, are not due to education; or that knowledge is not power? I do not suppose anybody would be so bold as to dispute it, or to deny that to educate its young is among the paramount duties of any civilised State. The next step to that is to secure the greatest state of efficiency in our State Schools, and the question for us to consider is how that can be best accomplished. I maintain emphatically that no one dare get up and state that the best way to accomplish it is to keep up a dual system, one in opposition to the other. Looking at the question in a disinterested way, without reference to any religious element, looking the thing

straight in the face, we must be forced to the conclusion that it is not in the interests of our State Schools that the present dual system should be extended. I think that is the broadest ground we can put it on, free from all sectarian considerations, and that is the ground I wish to take my stand upon in voting for this motion—that it is not in the interest of our State Schools that the dual system should be maintained, and that we should subsidise other schools to compete against our own State Schools. For that reason I have much pleasure in supporting the resolution.

MR. WOOD: The motion of the hon. member for Geraldton is of peculiar and particular interest to those members who represent the three electorates of Perth, because at the recent election the whole contest, I may say, turned upon the education question, and the discontinuance of the present system of State aid to Assisted Schools. I, myself, was returned to this House pledged to vote against this grant, and I am here to-night to redeem that pledge. I do so on the ground that I consider it an injustice to place this burden upon the general body of taxpayers. I submit that the State has no right to subsidise education outside its own schools. It owes no duty to any particular section of the community to subsidise the schools of that particular section in opposition to its own institutions. I do not for a moment say that the Assisted Schools are not doing good work; I think it would be discreditable to those connected with them were it otherwise. But the work is in one direction only, and that a very limited one. The present Education Act was passed 23 years ago, when the circumstances of the colony were very different from what they are now, and it was framed in the interests of one section of the community only. It is a matter of surprise to me that our public men have let it rest so long, because to my mind the dual system has been in force twenty years longer than it should have been. It has been supported by a majority of the community who had no sympathy whatever with the system. But, with the introduction of Responsible Government and free institutions, I hope the abolition of the grant is within measurable distance, and within the range of practical politics. The

amount placed on the Estimates for 1894-5, for these Assisted Schools, is £4,000, and out of that sum not more than £1,000 will be contributed by those who reap the direct benefit of the grant; the balance will have to be provided by taxpayers who have no sympathy with such a narrow system. I do not want to say anything to-night to add fuel to this debate; nor is this the time to suggest what particular system should be pursued in our State Schools, because that does not come within the scope of this motion, which deals with a direct subject in a direct manner. [MR. MORAN: Give us a bit of argument.] Argument is of no use with the hon. member. I shall cordially support the motion, as I consider the time has arrived for doing away with a system that to a majority of the community is obnoxious in itself, vicious in principle, unjust and one-sided, because it is in the interests of the few against the interests of the many.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): It is not my intention to say very much on this question, because I have come to the conclusion (as one hon. member has just said) that argument is of no use, when members have made up their minds, right or wrong, to support a proposition such as that now before us. That is my opinion; no argument that I could use would alter a single vote within this Chamber, and therefore it is not my intention to waste any rhetorical powers I may possess upon minds that I know are not open to argument, and whom nothing could swerve from the path they set themselves to walk in when they entered this chamber this evening. It appears to me that in dealing with the motion now before us, members who have spoken have gone a little bit astray. I admit there is an excuse for it, because the motion itself is one which it is difficult to deal with without also dealing with the larger question involved. The motion simply affirms the undesirability of further extending the existing system; it is not intended, at this stage at all events, to wipe away the system, though of course members in dealing with it have dealt with the whole question, and those who have attacked it have aimed some sledge-hammer strokes at the Act itself. It

seems to me, putting it in very few words, that what the hon. member who brought forward this motion should have done, if he is in earnest, was to have moved an amendment in the Education Act. Had he done that, there would at any rate have been some sense and some point in his motion, because the proposed amendment would have indicated to members and the country what the hon. member really aimed at. But the hon. member had not the courage to do that. He therefore simply suggests that the principle of assisting a certain class of schools should not be further extended. Of course the hon. member knows perfectly well—no one better than he does, or, if he does not know, I shall tell him—that so long as the present Act remains in force in its present form no resolution of this House could prevent the Government from continuing that meed of assistance to these schools which that Act provides shall be given them. He knows perfectly well that no resolution of this House would capsize an Act of Parliament; and, why has he not the courage of his convictions (if he has any), and attack the Act itself, and ask for an amendment of it? I will tell him why. Because he knows he has not the slightest chance of getting a majority to support him. He knows very well that the majority of members returned to this House have been returned almost pledged to their constituents that there shall be no material alteration made in the existing Act. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: No.] I say the majority are pledged.

MR. MONGER: No; not pledged either way. Don't try to bind us down.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): My hon. friend the member for Geraldton—honourable in most things but one or two—says that almost all the newspapers of the colony have given their support to the principle which he has enunciated here this evening. Possibly it may be so. I am not surprised at that, because I think that, as a general rule, when one of them sounds the trumpet, the rest follow, as a matter of course. That has been the result of my observation. It is so in this particular instance. One particular journal has sounded the trumpet, and the others have followed as a matter of course.

MR. A. FORREST: Which one is that?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): He knows; and the hon. member knows very well. Had it not been for a certain hon. gentleman in another place, who happens to be connected with a certain newspaper in this colony, this question would never have come to the front as it has; and that hon. gentleman has been seconded in his efforts in this direction by the mover of this resolution. But I do not think the country has much to thank them for. I am perfectly sure this Assembly has nothing to thank them for, because they have stirred up a question which, if persisted in, will bring nothing but discord and strife amongst a community where peace and harmony have prevailed for the last three-and-twenty years. The hon. member for Geraldton, in the course of his remarks, referred to Father Bourke, and, after paying him some specious compliments, indulged in some rather ironical and satirical remarks about "conscientious motives," and suggested that some people's consciences were to be found in their breeches' pocket. When I heard that remark, I wondered where the hon. member's own conscience—if he has one, which I doubt—is located. It strikes me, if we came to make a search for it, we should be more likely to find it in the neighbourhood of his breeches' pocket than in any part of his internal economy. The hon. member also succeeded in bringing in another reference; it was done very nicely, very politely, very suavely, as the hon. member generally does these things. He referred to what he called "priestly influence," and would have us believe that there is something very subtle, if not very sinister, about this kind of influence. He knew very well he was only endeavouring to appeal to whatever little bit of bigoted feeling there might happen to be in the minds of any hon. member listening to him. I believe, myself, the hon. member was unsuccessful in his appeal, and that most of those present are not susceptible to such appeals, and are not to be hoodwinked by such transparent little dodges as that. What, after all, is the true meaning of the expression "priestly influence"? Priestly influences, sir, are those influences that are brought to bear by the

ministers of the various denominations of the Christian Church upon the tender minds of the young, in their efforts to train them up so that they may become good and useful citizens in after life.

MR. SIMPSON: Did you ever have any?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I am afraid the hon. member never had any. My friend, the hon. member for Nanaimo—

MR. SIMPSON: Oh, let him alone!

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): No; I think I must give him a little bit of touching up, too. The hon. member alluded to the amalgamation of schools. Amalgamation is a very nice word, and being a goldfields member, I do not wonder at the hon. member using it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I never used the word.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I beg his pardon, he did; the "amalgamation of schools"—I took his words down. This means, if it means anything, that, assuming an Act were passed to-morrow to amend the present law and to deprive the Assisted Schools of that small meed of assistance which some hon. members begrudge them, those schools would be amalgamated with the State Schools, and that the children attending them would be immediately drafted off to attend the State Schools. If that is the hon. member's idea I can assure him it is a mistaken one, and he knows it too, and the hon. member for Geraldton knows it. That is where the injustice comes in. The hon. member knows perfectly well that if the Government grant to Assisted Schools—I am speaking now more particularly of Roman Catholic Schools—were withdrawn to-morrow, whether the amount of that grant be £4,000 or £10,000, its withdrawal would not have the result of closing a single school. These schools would still be supported by those who now at great sacrifice help to support them. The sacrifice which these people are making, and prepared to make, for conscience sake—I know many here are prepared to sneer at conscience—would still be continued for conscience sake, no matter what the sacrifice might be. But what about the injustice inflicted? Does the hon. member not think it would be an injustice to deprive these

people of the little assistance they have been receiving for so many years, and compel them to support their schools entirely at their own expense, and receive nothing out of the taxes they contribute to the public revenue? Would that be a fair thing to do? The hon. member is very fond of talking of "might" against "right." I ask him what does he think that would be? While the Act is in existence the provisions of it must be carried into effect, and why should not this assistance, which the schools are entitled to under it, be extended? Somebody has asked what is to become of the State Schools if this dual system (as they call it) is to be continued or extended? I ask, what becomes of the State Schools now? And what difference will it make to the State Schools if this motion were carried? I have told him—and he knows it well himself—that hardly a child now attending these Assisted Schools would be sent to a State School; how, then, are those schools going to be benefited if this motion were carried? As I have pointed out, it would increase the sacrifice which the friends and supporters of the Assisted Schools would have to make, but it would not benefit the State Schools, about which the hon. member is so solicitous, one whit. I venture to say that, if the present system were abolished to-morrow, the State Schools throughout the colony would not gain fifty scholars. It has been argued, in a specious kind of way, that the adoption of this resolution would inflict no hardship upon the present schools. It is true it would take away nothing that at present exists, unless a resolution of this House is to override an Act of Parliament; and the only hardship it could do would be to interfere with the establishment of Assisted Schools in the future. Even then this resolution would have no effect, in itself, inasmuch as the law of the land provides that these schools are to be assisted from State funds. The hon. member for Perth (Mr. Randell) says the motion is a very moderate one. I am not prepared to say it might not have been very much less moderate. But the hon. member went on to say that the State system was intended for the "free citizens of a free commonwealth," implying that the present system is not a system for the "free citizens of a free

commonwealth." I ask him, does he not regard our great mother country as a free country? Are the people of Great Britain and Ireland not free people? [AN HON. MEMBER: What about Home Rule?] This has nothing to do with Home Rule. This question does not trouble Home Rulers. The system in force in this colony is founded upon the English system that was brought into force about the time our own Act was brought into force—Forster's Act: and I believe that Act, or something very similar to it, is still in existence, as it is here. Therefore it is nonsense to say it is not a system suitable for a free country, and that argument falls to the ground.

MR. RANDELL: I never used it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Then as to the question of the relative cost of the two classes of schools. I may here point out that although they are referred to as State Schools and Assisted Schools, they are both virtually State Schools. The only distinction is that one costs the State one-half what the other does, and still provides as good a standard of education. That's the distinction. We often hear members within the walls of this House preaching economy, and urging upon the Government to get their work done as cheaply and economically as possible. Some members are never tired of preaching that doctrine. Let us apply it to this question of education. If an article of equal quality in every respect can be supplied for half the money, surely the State should accept it, and it is in the interests of the public that it should do so. I have had a great deal to do with the working of the Education Act in this colony, having been a member of the Central Board from the date of its formation in 1871, and I sat as a member of that Board for over twenty years; therefore I claim to know something about what I am talking about. Now, it is a fact, which no one attempts to deny, that the quality of the education given in the Assisted Schools is at least equal to that given in the State Schools. I believe, myself—and I do not say it because I happen to belong to the religious community which is particularly interested in this question—I believe that in some of the Assisted Schools the education

imparted is much better and of a much higher standard than in some of the State Schools. That is my opinion. No one, as I have said, urges that it is not fully equal to the quality of the education given in our State Schools. That being the case, I should like to know on what ground—certainly not that of economy—it can be said that the State should do away with these Assisted Schools, which provide those who attend them with education equal in all respects to that provided by the State Schools, and at certainly less than one-half the cost—I may say very little over one-third the cost. While the children educated in the Government Schools are costing the State at the average rate of about £3 10s. per head, children attending the Assisted Schools are not costing the State more than an average of about £1 7s. 6d. per head, although they receive an equally good education, to say the least of it, as shown by the reports of the Inspectors. As to my hon. friend, the member for Nannine, we know there is no place in the world like Victoria, in his estimation; and of course their State system of education, like everything else, is the highest and best in the world. The hon. member also favoured us with a quotation from the sayings of a man of considerable notability, and no doubt a great man, who once lived in that colony, but who I believe is now dead and gone. Amongst other things the hon. member told us that this great man held no religious convictions—members will bear that in mind, he was without any religious convictions whatever—and that he was a man who was looked upon as being outside the pale of the Churches. Then the hon. member indulged in some high-flown eulogiums about this great man's moral virtues. For my part, I believe in a man having some religious convictions. As a general rule, the man who has no religious convictions is not overburdened with moral convictions; it is only one in a thousand whom you will find that way built. I think most of us believe in the desirability of imbuing children's minds with religious convictions, in their tender years, and I do not think, on a question of this kind, we are going to be influenced very much by the sentiments of such a man as the hon. member referred to, even though he lived in Victoria. The hon.

member for De Grey referred a great deal to State Schools as contra-distinguished from Assisted Schools. I say it is a mistake to look upon these two classes of schools as being in direct opposition to each other. Both are virtually State Schools. They are both founded under the Education Act of 1871; both are subject to State supervision; the curriculum of education in both is prescribed by the State; and the only distinction is that one costs the State not quite one-half what the other does. Yet the hon. member for West Perth referred to these Assisted Schools as being a burden upon the taxpayers of the colony. I certainly am surprised at the hon. member. Has he ever studied the question at all, or had he given any thought at all to what he was going to say when he made such a statement as that, when all the facts are against him, and all the figures, too? I think I have pretty clearly shown that instead of these schools being a burden upon the general revenue, they relieve the general revenue of many thousands of pounds every year of their existence. I think the Premier showed the hon. member that very plainly this evening, when he pointed out that the Assisted Schools would do the same work for about £4,000 which costs £12,000 to have it done in the State Schools. As I have already said, the average cost per child in the Assisted Schools is about £1 7s. 6d., as compared with about £3 10s. in the State Schools, while the education imparted is fully equal, if not better. [Mr. Wood: No.] The hon. member says "No." I beg to say "Yes," and I refer him to the official returns; and the hon. member made a serious mistake when he made the statement that these schools are a burden upon the country. The hon. member also said that the present dual system had been in operation twenty years longer than it should. I tell the hon. member it is not at all improbable that the present system will continue to exist for another twenty years. That is my opinion; and I think, if it does so, it would be to the benefit of the State from every point of view—economical, moral, social, educational, or any other point of view. I hope, at any rate, it will continue to exist. I have greater faith in the good sense and the spirit of fair play which animates the people of

this colony than to think otherwise. I feel that there is enough good feeling and enough sound sense amongst the majority of members in this House, and an absence of any intolerant feeling of animosity or bigotry, to prevent them from doing a deliberate act of injustice to a large section of the community. I feel sure that their desire is to act honestly and fairly in this matter, without regard to class or creed. I may be allowed to congratulate the House on the tolerant, and I may almost say, kindly tone of this debate, so far as the remarks that fell from most members who have taken part in it are concerned. I think there was only one unkind word uttered in the course of the whole debate, and that was the remark, or the insinuation, made by the hon. member for the De Grey about proselytising. I think that was a most unkind remark. The hon. member insinuated—the intention was there—that in the Assisted Schools (referring to the Roman Catholic Schools) there is an attempt made, or a tendency that way, to proselytise the children of other denominations who may happen to attend these schools. I may say that the utterance of any such opinion would be a libel upon these institutions, because I feel positive that no single instance, during the whole long term of years these schools have been in existence, could be pointed out where any proselytising influences have ever been brought to bear, or attempted, upon children of another faith. I say it was an unkind insinuation to make, and I am very sorry it should have come from the source where it emanated. I say again, sir, I feel sure that in this matter the majority of members of this Assembly will not allow themselves to be carried away by the sophistries of my hon. friend who has brought forward this motion, who seems to have taken upon himself to attack everything in the shape of assistance to religion, who, in the first instance, attacked the Churches and attempted to deprive them of the small meed of aid they receive out of public funds, and who now endeavours to attack one particular Church by depriving it of the small measure of assistance it receives in order to educate its own children in the tenets of its own faith, without infringing upon any other Church's right to do the same thing for its own children, and at

the same time to give them a good sound education, under State control, and according to the State standard, but at half the cost. I feel sure the majority of members will vote against this motion, and will say that so long as the present law exists so long should the Government continue to carry out that law, until such time as the verdict of the country, or the majority of members in this House, think proper to alter the law, when of course those who are now receiving this aid will have to bow their heads to the will of the majority. But until that time arrives, I feel sure that any attempt to deprive these people of the assistance they are entitled to under the law of their country will be unsuccessful.

MR. LEFROY: The proposition of the hon. member for Geraldton is that it is undesirable to further extend the system of State aid to Assisted Schools. It might be imagined from this that these schools are increasing in number very rapidly all over the country; but, as a matter of fact, they are not. I find there are 21 of these schools in existence at the present time, throughout the whole colony, and that their number has not increased during the last two years. Therefore it cannot be said that they are increasing very rapidly; and I do not see any necessity now for this House to deal with their further extension, when, as a matter of fact, they do not seem to be extending, but are at a standstill, so far as their number is concerned. It has always appeared to me, in considering this question of Assisted Schools and of State Schools pure and simple, that the arrangement made under our Elementary Education Act, over 20 years ago, was a very excellent one. It appears to me that the question we have to consider is: are these Assisted Schools efficient? I do not think it is a sectarian question at all, nor is there any reference to sectarianism in this motion, nor in the Education Act under which these schools are established. Sectarianism or denominationalism has nothing whatever to do with the question. The point we have to consider is this: is the present system an efficient one, and does it give satisfaction to the majority of people? It seems to me, judging by results, that, for educational purposes, this Assisted School system is an efficient one; and I will endeavour to prove that it is so. I

find, from the report of the Inspector of Schools, that a greater percentage of "passes" is obtained in these schools than in the Government Schools; and surely that must be taken as indicating that they are working quite as efficiently as the State Schools. Then, again, with regard to the "merit grant," which is another valuable test. Dealing with this subject the Inspector of Schools, in his report for last year, says: "The relative efficiency of the schools in the colony can, perhaps, be best tested by the allocation of the merit grant, as the award depends upon other conditions than that a school has obtained a good percentage. The order and tone of a school, the quality of the passes, the classification of the scholars, the accuracy of the registration, the cleanliness and neatness of the buildings and furniture—so far as these are within the power of the teacher—and the methods of instruction, are all elements in the award." As a matter of fact, I think the amount of the merit grant to Assisted Schools has been something over £60, and to the Government Schools over £70; therefore, so far as merit goes, the Assisted Schools seem almost to have the best of it; and, seeing that in these merit grants the order and tone of the schools are considered, also that the cleanliness and neatness of the building, as well as of the scholars, are taken into account, I think these are great points in favour of the Assisted Schools, because the tone of a school is very important, and I think also that neatness and cleanliness among the children are really an education. Again, there are five bursaries of £10 each, open to girls, and I notice from the latest report that two of the successful candidates came from Assisted Schools, this result being another proof that the Assisted Schools are working well. Under the Education Act it is not an easy thing to start an Assisted School, because, firstly, the building has to be obtained, then the school must be got into working order, with an average attendance of at least 20 scholars, before any grant will be made by the State to that school. Thus the school has to be a visible fact before any grant can be made to it, and, once the school is established with an attendance of 20 scholars, there is every proof that such school is likely

to continue. We know that in many cases the State has established a school in a country district, through the representations made by persons who led the department to expect there would be a certain number of children attending it, but after a building had been erected and a teacher appointed, the attendance of children was so small that the school had to be closed. But when an Assisted School is started at the risk of other persons, there is no such loss to the State in the event of the school not being permanently maintained, the risk being with those who had started the school. Therefore, I think, from all points of view, the Assisted School system is an excellent one. Under the Education Act, no preference can be given to any particular denomination in starting or maintaining Assisted Schools; and although one denomination has taken more advantage of the opportunity than others have done, yet I am not one to attack the system of Assisted Schools merely because one denomination has availed itself of the opportunity more than others. It does not seem to me to be justice or fair play to attack a system simply because one section of the community has taken advantage of it more than another. If the Assisted School system were working badly, if the children attending these schools were not taught sufficiently, if there were irregularities, or if such schools were not under State supervision, then there might be objection; but, as a matter of fact, the Government Inspectors may visit the schools at any time, and there is no religious instruction allowed during the hours specified for secular lessons. Any religious instruction must be given either before or after the ordinary hours, and the children belonging to other denominations are allowed to retire from the religious lessons. I have never heard of religious instruction being given in these schools, excepting during the times set apart for such instruction; and I am sure the inspectors would not allow anything to be done contrary to the Act. I think that, as these schools are under central authority, and it seems to be desired by the opponents of Assisted Schools that they should be under central authority; and as all sects in the colony are equally at liberty to start a school of this kind

wherever they can get twenty children together—[MR. RICHARDSON: Mahometans?]
—yes, even Mahometans can do it under the Act; therefore I say the State has entire charge of the Assisted Schools, and can send its inspectors to supervise them at any time, can maintain order, and arrange what books shall be used. Under these conditions, there is no reason why this system should not be perpetuated. It has worked well in the past; no one has shown that it has worked badly, or that the children are insufficiently taught; and if the standard of education is not good enough, the fault lies with the State and not with the Assisted Schools. The reports of the results show that the fault is not with these schools, and if the standard hitherto insisted on is not considered good enough, we can raise it in the State Schools, and the Assisted Schools will also have to work up to it. But there is no reason for attacking the system on that ground. There are some people who always seem to be wanting a change of system—wanting to knock something down. This system of Assisted Schools is working well, and why should it be altered? From the earliest times, this sort of vandalism has been going on—somebody always wants to be knocking down institutions that are doing well and are satisfying certain portions of the community. Suddenly this movement for knocking down the school system was started in recent years, and, like a snowball, it gathered as it went, until we hear all over the country, and heard lately in nearly all the elections to this House, some desire expressed for a change of system. However, we all understand the position, and there is no necessity for me to labour this question. Seeing as I do the facts before me, and regretting that any question of sect or denomination should be imported into this debate—I have purposely refrained from mentioning any—I think it is a pity that this sort of consideration should have been raised by others. History tells us what this sort of thing may do in a country; and noting what history tells us, we ought to be careful in entering into any question of religious discord at the present time.

MR. JAMES: I did not intend to address the House on this question, but

on an important matter like this a clear expression of opinion by hon. members is, perhaps, desirable. I am glad to say that, as a rule, on these important matters no one is in doubt as to what my opinion is, and on this subject it has been very clearly expressed. I am glad to think that, as was suggested by the last speaker, I am in this instance a Vandal; but it does not follow that, because an institution has come down to us sanctioned by the enormous expanse of twenty years' duration, it is too venerable to be challenged. It never suggests itself to me that, because an institution has been introduced at some previous period by a minority, for the purposes of that minority, we are never to approach the question of whether that principle is a just one or not. I am weary of reprobating that miserable argument about the matters that were before the country at the time of the general elections, and the policy that was approved or not approved by the electors. It is amusing to see the Premier, time after time, trot out this gay, old, broken-down steed. But whenever he brings forward the question of an Agricultural Bank, or some other novelty that was not submitted to the electors, it does not strike him then to ask himself how many members were pledged at the elections to support or oppose it. If there be any force in the argument, surely the vitality must exist when the argument is applied against him, as well also as when he attempts to apply it against us. We in this House represent the country, and, as the Commissioner of Crown Lands properly said, if the country, speaking through its representatives in this House, declares by a majority that the Education Act should be amended, that declaration of a majority must be taken to be the will of the country; in the same way that a majority here, when they support the Government, are supposed to voice the will of the country. I suppose we can stand to the responsibility of our actions when we go back to our constituents, and none of us need to be cautioned by the Premier on that point. Most of us have had the pleasure of fighting a contested election, but the Premier knows nothing about a contest of that kind, as he has not experienced it yet. Why are we not to disturb the dual

system of education that has existed for 21 years? That is the same old moss-backed argument we have heard so often in defence of a thing because it is old; and if there is any reason in the objection, it simply means that you are never to attempt reforms by disturbing something that is established, that you are never to give way to the clamour of agitation outside this House, until you are forced to make a reform which you can no longer resist. Does it not strike the Premier as peculiar that if two or three men are able to create a discussion throughout the country on this question, that if this movement is going on, as was aptly said, like a snowball gathering size and force as it rolls along day by day, it must be because an increasing number of the population are favouring and supporting it? And, if they are doing so, we know there must be vitality in this movement. If it be not so, can the Commissioner of Crown Lands tell me why it was necessary for a certain body to create a Catholic Association the other day? Does not all this show how absurd it is to talk about the country being satisfied with the present school system? And I am glad to think the country is not satisfied with the system of education which has produced such lamentable results as have been produced so far. We have to ask: Is the reform advisable? Is it just? First of all we may inquire, are there reasons for dissatisfaction? I say there are strong and numerous reasons. If there be none, will the Premier tell us how it is there has been such an enormous increase in our Educational vote? It cannot be caused by the increase of population, because if you look at the records of children attending the Government Schools in the last four or five years, they do not account for the large increase in the vote for this year. The Premier says one reason why we want these Assisted Schools is to infuse some vitality into the Government Schools. Well, have they done that in the past? On the contrary, have they not done unmitigated harm? All these statements are arguments and reasons why we should set our house in order, because the education now provided is so lamentably below what it ought to be. No member in this House can conscientiously say it is satisfactory to find that almost one-half of our children are edu-

cated at the schools of a denomination representing one-fourth of the population. The real question is this: We have agreed, beyond dispute, that the State must educate its own children. That is recognised, I think, beyond question. And it will be very interesting for members to ask themselves this question: Where does the greatest opposition to the State education come from? Does it not come from exactly the same quarter as that which now tries to set itself behind this education grant? Does it not seem absurd for us to subsidise an opposition which has a blighting effect such as this has had? We have had this rivalry and this competition for over twenty years, and what has been the result? Is it satisfactory? On the contrary, has not the effect been to constantly and materially degrade the standard of our public schools? And what right have we to continue a system which has an injurious effect upon the education which we are bound to provide? It is said we should do an outrage and an injury to a minority of the population by abolishing this grant. I take it that if the majority require a certain thing to be done, it must be done; and if we get away from that principle, there is not only an end of all good government, but an end of all kinds of government. If the majority determine that the only schools to be subsidised shall be schools to which all may go, and if the minority cannot accept that by sending their children to those schools, then surely the minority ought to pay for their own separate system, and bow their heads to the wish of the majority. For the purpose of assisting and placating the minority, we continue a system which causes a large amount of displeasure to the great majority. You can't get away from that fact. We ask ourselves, after all: If this be good, what are Assisted Schools required for? Under the regulations of the Act, religious instruction is allowed to be given only at specified times of the day, and not during the hours allotted for secular instruction. Why, then, is it considered necessary, by some persons, that the system of education in these Assisted Schools should be in the hands of teachers who have had a certain religious training, if that religious training is not brought to bear, except for one

half-hour a day? As to the Government inspector catching the teacher if he does it during the school hours, it would require an army of inspectors to do that. Under the existing law, provision is made by which religious instructors can go into the State Schools and give religious lessons during a certain time, the same as can be done in the Assisted Schools. If they simply want to give religious instruction during this half-hour, why cannot that religious instruction be given in the State Schools by the Catholic instructors, at the same time that religious lessons are given to other children in those schools by religious instructors of other denominations? If that provision is sufficient for the other religious bodies, why is it not sufficient for the Roman Catholics? Instead of giving them a money vote for the purpose of saving their consciences, we give them a vote for the purpose of carrying on a fad, almost. If we provide a system of State education which to reasonable persons is sufficient, what right have they to ask us to pay for provisions which enable the Roman Catholics to give religious instruction under special conditions? If that half-hour in Assisted Schools is the only time devoted to religious instruction, it is very peculiar that the Roman Catholics attach so much importance to having religious teachers brought up under particular religious instruction. It is hardly necessary to deal with the question of cost, and I am glad to see the Premier did not deal with it at such length as to show that he regarded it as important.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): It is an important argument, I think.

MR. JAMES: In the annual vote for education, £16,000 is the amount allotted in salaries for the Government Schools, and £4,000 is for the Assisted Schools; but hon. members will bear in mind that out of the vote for Government Schools must come the cost of maintaining and repairing the school buildings, whereas the £4,000 for Assisted Schools goes entirely for teaching purposes, and no part of it for buildings; and, further, whilst every penny that goes to a Catholic School is of use directly for that denomination, every penny that goes to a State School belongs as much to the Catholics as to other bodies. But,

in addition to giving this amount, the State provides all the educational machinery for those parts of the colony where population is scattered, and where education is most expensive, and it is a peculiar fact that Assisted Schools are established only in those parts where they will pay. We have had instances where a Government School has been established, under conditions, and as soon as a certain amount of support has been obtained, an Assisted School is set up by a religious denomination, and not only does it take away some of the children, but it thereby decreases the efficiency of the Government School. If this question of cost is any argument, there is another aspect in which the cost may be considered; for if we are to give way to the demand of those who support Assisted Schools, we must take note of the fact that they are not satisfied with the amount of one-half, or thereabout, which they get now from the State as a grant in aid of the cost of education, and that they have been saying they want as much per head as is paid to the Government Schools. Surely it is somewhat inconsistent for these men, after making this demand for an increase of the grant, to turn round now and support their case against this motion by saying the Assisted Schools should not be interfered with because they do not receive the same proportion of aid as is paid to Government Schools. I do not think we ought to treat the question as one of cost, for I have no doubt that, if you were to give to any particular religious body a monopoly of the education of the country, that body would undertake to do it for nothing. Therefore, if it is to be a question of cost, we may save expense by handing over the whole educational system to some religious body. In the speeches delivered by the deputation the other day, the Very Rev. Father Bourke is reported to have said that no further concession is possible. Concession from whom? It is startling to hear of a religious body talking about making concessions to Parliament and concessions to the Government. And it is said they have already yielded a great deal! They gave way to the recent alteration of the Education Act, and the result of that was that you allowed religious instruction to be given in State Schools as well as Assisted

Schools; but it does not seem to me a very great concession for a religious body to make, in giving way to such a reform as that, although we may bear in mind that the Education Act now in existence was brought forward at a time when this particular body had the supreme power in the country, and that there was no provision made in it for any religious instruction to be given in the schools. I want, as far as possible, to have a system of education that will be a credit to us, and not a system that is now a disgrace. The sister colonies have a system that does them credit, and although it may be costly, the money is readily provided. Those colonies have cast aside the Assisted School system; and when a proposal is made to do the same in this colony, the onus of proving the necessity for such change is not on us who want to keep abreast of modern education, but on those who want to be lagging back and never looking forward. There is quite sufficient need for some alteration in this colony. There is, perhaps, too much prejudice amongst us West Australians, although I am one myself, and a great deal of that prejudice might be removed if we were all brought up together in a common school, and if there were no drawing of a barbed wire round one denomination. I say we never shall have a proper system so long as we have one under which these religious differences are perpetuated. If any religious body want to keep their schools under a separate system, let them make the sacrifice by paying for their own system; but the State has no right to recognise the existence of any separate religious body. We ought to do our utmost to increase the efficiency and the attractiveness of those schools which are carried on by the State; and we have no right to depart from that principle by paying money to soothe the injured consciences of a minority.

MR. COOKWORTHY: According to the arguments used in this debate, the dual system of education has been put on its trial. The question is whether the Assisted Schools should be abolished altogether; and, judging by what has dropped from the hon. member (Mr. James), one would think the only way to promote education would be to abolish the Denominational Schools. The reports of the Government Inspector show that

the Denominational Schools are, if anything, superior to the Government Schools, and I believe they are so. I know a great number of Protestants who send their children to the Roman Catholic Schools, because those parents are dissatisfied with the education given in the Government Schools. I know a great number of people who have attended the Roman Catholic Schools because they were dissatisfied with the education given in the Government Schools. The Education Department is one of the most important in the State, and it is the one that is the worst paid and the least thought of; and before you abolish the Assisted School system, you ought to improve the Government schools, so as to offer the people something better than is offered at present. You cannot say to any religious denomination at present, "We won't grant any aid to your schools because we have something better to give you." I hope there has been an improvement lately, but I say that for many years the teachers in the Government Schools were, many of them, totally unfitted for the positions they held; and as to the moral teaching, I am sure it was far better in the Catholic Schools than in the Government Schools. You may improve the Government Schools; and when you make them superior to the schools of the Catholics, or any other sect, then will be the time to do away with the dual system. But that system has been carried on in England with great success, and nobody in England has proposed to do away with it; while in this country the schools of the different denominations are, if anything, superior to the Government Schools. I should be happy to give my vote for a large increase in the education grant, and for making the Government Schools more efficient; but until they are improved, I think it would be wrong to interfere with the education vote to the Assisted Schools, which have done such good service to the country. I know that the education given in those schools has been considered by many parents to be far superior, and they have sent their children there; and I never heard of a single instance where proselytism was carried on. The reason for doing away with the Denominational Schools does not seem to me to be because they are bad, but simply because the system

does not suit the ideas of certain members. I shall not support the motion.

MR. MORAN: The importance of this subject demands a few words, more especially when candidates at the elections may have given certain pledges or expressed certain opinions upon it. I do not for a moment consider that a speech such as that of the hon. member for East Perth (Mr. James) should be allowed to go by unchallenged, when he wishes to arrogate to himself in this House all that is liberal and progressive in support of the motion. He asks how it is that the Government are constantly looking backward, and always raking up the argument that institutions which have proved serviceable in the past, and are supposed to have the veneration of age, should be allowed to continue? If the hon. member is constantly bringing before this House the idea that we should amend the Constitution Act in the direction of no taxation without representation, that being the oldest principle of the British Constitution, then why does he not attack that principle on account of its age? Surely a lawyer ought to know that the common law of England is very old also, and why does he not attack it? I say the hon. member's argument is not one that should delude the members of this House, to say that because a thing is old or ancient it must be done away with. Although I am amongst the foremost of Liberals, and shall always advocate everything truly democratic and progressive, yet, at the same time, we are surely to learn from what has gone past. If we are going to improve upon the past, let us do so; but surely the very fact of the age of this school system should not be taken as a reason for abolishing it. That argument was simply an attempt to cast obloquy upon a principle which is old. As to the education system and its results in other parts of Australia, I will simply say that I know as much about the State School system in the other colonies as any member of this House. [MR. MONGER: Oh, dear!] If it comes to a question of arguing what has been the result in other parts of the world or in the Eastern colonies, there are some very grave considerations to be borne in mind. No doubt it was laid down as a primary factor in the other colonies that the State would and should

educate its children, and the State in the other colonies has done so; but scarcely a newspaper can be taken up without our seeing reports of acts committed by forgers, defaulters, and other offenders against the law in those colonies. It cannot be said that these numerous offences are due to the want of a school education, for there is no better educated class in the world, in the sense of being taught to read and write, than in the Eastern colonies. And taking the oldest colony of the group, New South Wales, as a sample of that system of education, we know that colony is the most distinguished for larrikinism, and is also the most distinguished for its private schools—I refer more especially to the Catholic Schools of New South Wales, which have produced some of the finest men in the ranks of statesmen and professional men. I will now come to the only arguments brought forward this evening in favour of the motion. It has been stated that it is injudicious to have rival systems of schools competing, to the deterioration of one system. It is also laid down, as a canon in the education of this colony, as in other colonies, that a certain class of building and a certain minimum space per scholar must be provided; therefore, if you have a building which will accommodate 200 children, roughly it will cost twice as much as a building to accommodate 100 children. And, mark you, those who build an Assisted School have to pay the whole cost of their building, without any contribution from the State, for they get not one tittle of assistance from the State towards the building. That being so, is it not a great burden taken off the taxpayers, when the school accommodation for so many thousands of children has been provided by a religious body, thereby relieving the people in the colony from so much taxation? Roughly speaking, £50,000 has been spent by the Catholic denomination of this colony in school buildings, and is not that a big sum? The interest on that sum, if borrowed at 4 per cent., would be £2,000 a year; and that yearly interest would be equal to more than the amount granted annually by the State to these Assisted Schools. Therefore, in making this annual grant to Assisted Schools, the colony as a whole simply pays an amount equal to

the interest on that loan, and it gets the £50,000 as a loan to the State from a religious body for nothing. The new buildings must also be up to the Government standard of requirements, and must have certain appliances and certain ventilation; although, as a matter of fact, the Catholic Schools are not only as good as the Government Schools, but even better. I have heard it stated by the member for the Gascoyne (Mr. R. F. Sholl), many a time, that the State should help those who help themselves, and he has said that if the Government would follow out that principle he would always assist them. Well, here you have an important section of the community aiding themselves, and they are equally as respectable and equally entitled to justice as any other section; and they not only help themselves, but they relieve the State of three-fourths of the cost for educating their children, while asking for only a modest fourth of the amount they expend on these schools. I come to the second argument, and I will challenge contradiction on this also. Looking through the regulations of the Education Boards of the colony, you will find it laid down as an axiom, and it has been long since adopted in the Eastern colonies, that one teacher shall teach so many children, and no more. If that principle holds good, then every child you take away from the Government teachers and place under instruction in an Assisted School, is so much relief to the State, and you thereby relieve the State of the whole cost of providing teachers for the 2,000 children now educated in Assisted Schools. If the mover of this motion is as good as his word, he will answer that argument in a straightforward way. Then there is the administrative work of the Education Department which would be entailed by keeping a larger staff of teachers, if there were no Assisted Schools. I think the other colonies at present have almost over-educated their population, by allowing their zeal for education to outstrip the bounds of prudence; for I maintain that the results of the education system in those colonies have not been such as to warrant this colony in following the example. It is not mere book learning that will teach children to be honest and good citizens. I have known some of the worst villains the world has produced,

who could read and write in many languages. In the name of good common sense, if we can relieve the public pocket of the expense of educating a large proportion of the children in the colony, why not take this opportunity and relieve ourselves of what has been one of the main factors in leading the other colonies into that "Slough of Despond," their present public debt? As to the standard of education, it is laid down by statute; and one portion of the community produces that standard article for £1 per head, while it costs the State £4 a head to produce the same article. Where, then, does the argument come in about the State management being superior to private enterprise? I will now refer to the principal movers and supporters of this motion. The hon. member for Geraldton is a very estimable citizen, no doubt, in his own mind, but I should like to remind him that when he says the whole country demands this change of system, he is not speaking the truth. And, furthermore, I remember the commotion that was caused over his own election, when he was a candidate for Geraldton, and that, on the spur of the moment, another candidate entered the field, a scratch man, almost unknown in a public sense, and he almost beat him (Mr. Simpson) on this very question. Here we have the eloquent, the learned, the well-known man of ability, this politician of many colours, almost knocked out by a scratch candidate.

MR. SIMPSON: Your crowd would have voted for a bit of jarrah.

MR. MORAN: If they had voted for a bit of jarrah, they would have had something to depend upon; but I am afraid very few can depend on the hon. member and his politics. If a scratch candidate, who had only two or three weeks' canvassing, could run the hon. member so closely, it shows that although the "red herring" of religion has been drawn across this track to-night, it is the action of those who are not themselves actuated by the highest motives of toleration. With regard to the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Randell), I need not say much about his opposition, for I do not look on the hon. member for Perth as being identified with modern thought at all. Both himself and his politics belong to the "stone age," or to

what in this colony may be called ancient history. The hon. member talks about his duty to the State—to the State, indeed!—though I believe he opposed the introduction of railways into this colony, and I am not certain whether he did not oppose the introduction of telegraphs.

MR. RANDELL: I rise to contradict the hon. member. He should not make these assertions unless he knew they were founded on fact, which I emphatically deny.

MR. MORAN: Notwithstanding the denial of the hon. member for Perth, I am not prepared to withdraw my words.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member for Yilgarn must withdraw his words. He has made a statement which the hon. member for Perth says is not true; and he must accept the denial, and withdraw the words.

MR. MORAN: Very well, I will withdraw them. The hon. member for East Perth (Mr. James) must not be looked upon as a paragon of political liberality. He said the State should not recognise any religious body which differs from the State system.

MR. JAMES: I said the State has no right to recognise any separate religious body.

MR. MORAN: I took down the hon. member's words. I suppose if the hon. member were in Persia, he would worship the sun; or if he were in China, he would become a Buddhist, that being the State religion there—[AN HON. MEMBER: No, no]—or, if not, it is Confucianism, which is very close, and at any rate the hon. member would adopt the religion of China; or if he were in certain parts of India, where in ancient times the State taught Buddhism and enforced it, he would be a Buddhist; or if in a certain portion of America, say in Salt Lake City, he would no doubt be a Mormon, and take to himself many wives. I hope that, while I am an Australian, I shall always think it to be my first duty to be true to the religious convictions which I hold. Do we ever find the Catholic body in any of these Australian colonies wishing to take away one pennyworth of support from any other religious denomination? I, as a Roman Catholic, if I am not true to my religion, must be untrue to my State. As to the assertion of the hon. member for East Perth

about proselytising in Catholic Schools, and an army of inspectors being required to prevent it, I throw his statement back in his teeth. Let him produce one instance of proselytism in a Catholic School, and not make this general assertion.

MR. JAMES: I never said they did.

MR. MORAN: You said it would take an army of inspectors to detect the teachers in proselytising the children. You left it to be implied. If the fathers and mothers of this denomination say they want to have their children educated in a certain way, are they any worse for that? Will the opponents dare to say the clergy of that denomination are not good citizens? Do we not find their names foremost in every movement? Do we not find the head of that Church always taking the part of the poor and oppressed? And do we not find every Catholic prelate doing the same?

MR. RANDELL: I say, No.

MR. MORAN: Your assertions are not worth much to me. I told you before, I cannot look upon you as belonging to the modern age. Would anyone say Bishop Gibney would sneak about trying to proselytise children? Is he not an honest and noble man? Has he not been striving, for the past thirty-five years, to civilise Western Australia? Yes, he has even ventured his life amongst the blacks in the wild parts of this country. Has he not led a noble example to those who are teaching Christianity? I have spoken feelingly. If the Catholic denomination in this country must stand alone, though I hope they will not, and it is a very unpleasant matter to have this question raised at a time when the colony is involved in large public works; but if the Catholics are a third of the population, they will have a third of the voting power in the elections, and as surely as we have Responsible Government here now, so surely will there be two parties in this colony, and I say, fearlessly, let the Catholics stick to that party which will give them justice, and by working together with one will, as one man, they will be able to get a modicum of that justice of which they do not ask the whole. I hope the Government will be anxious and eager to extend the public schools as far into the country as settlement has gone. I am pleased to see, in the Estimates, amounts for schools on

our farthest goldfields; and I hope that wherever there is a population such as there is in Perth, the Catholics will build their own schools, and so relieve the State to that extent. We in this House who are Roman Catholics have been returned here, not upon this question, for it was not mooted in my election—we have been returned here, not as bigots, but as men of toleration; and whilst I am true to my own religious convictions, I cannot inflict any injury upon others in this country.

MR. LOTON: The principles underlying this motion have been debated from all standpoints. It has been said by the Premier that the question of cost is not very important. Taking that principle, it seems to me that, if it was not very important, there would be no necessity to discuss it. The real importance lies in the item on the Estimates before us. Particular denominations want assistance; therefore it is a money grant. It is put forward that the cost of educating children under the Assisted School system is much less than the cost of educating them in the Government Schools, and that therefore the State suffers by having the dual system. I may point out at once that, when the Education Act was entered upon in 1871, the people who were in favour of the dual system agreed to accept a less contribution from the State than was to be paid to the State Schools; therefore it would be useless to argue that the Assisted Schools cost less than the State Schools, because they cannot cost so much, for it is laid down in the Act that the contribution from the State is to be in the proportion of only one-half. The argument with regard to cost is scarcely a fair one, on this ground, that the Assisted Schools are established only in the larger centres of population, where the cost of maintaining schools is less in proportion than in the outlying districts where similar schools are established by the State. That is one great reason why the Denominational Schools are able to show, by comparison, that the cost of educating children in them is less per head than in the State Schools. As to efficiency in the Assisted Schools, as shown by some hon. members, that is not a fair comparison in connection with the children attending the State Schools, because you are com-

paring the Assisted Schools again in the main centres of population, and you have a higher class of teachers in those centres. On these grounds alone the standard of teaching is naturally higher in the towns, as compared with the standard in the small country schools. I maintain, that, in this comparison, the standard of efficiency is taken from the average attendance in Government Schools throughout the colony, and that it is unfair to compare it with the standard of efficiency taken from the average attendance in Assisted Schools which are in the large centres of population. Of course we ought to expect a higher standard of efficiency in the Assisted Schools, because they do not exist in all the small centres of population. I am not putting this forward as an argument against the Assisted Schools, but only to show that the comparison which has been made is not a fair one, to that extent. With regard to the Assisted Schools, I think great praise is due to them in every way; and, further, there is no doubt that, although the Assisted School system has been taken advantage of mainly by one denomination, and until recently almost solely by one denomination, yet it must be admitted that, even in Perth, there are children of other religious denominations attending the Catholic Schools. There are various reasons for this. Possibly one reason is that these children get a cheaper education at the Assisted Schools, because in the Government Schools a fee is charged; and with regard to the Public Schools, the fees are an asset to the State, but in the case of Assisted Schools the fees do not come into the State coffers. I believe the education given in the Assisted Schools is very efficient. The principle seems to have been laid down in the Australian colonies generally, and in this Assembly, that it is the duty of the State to educate the children or see that they are educated. That education means purely secular education, according to the speeches made to-night. I am sorry the State cannot at present see its way to a sounder education than a purely secular education, for I would like to see every child receive a certain amount of religious training, and we should then have a much better class of children growing up. We are met with this difficulty, that because there are people of

so many different faiths, it is recognised that the State cannot interfere by giving religious teaching, but must leave to the different denominations the duty of providing religious instruction for the young. While the Government provides a certain standard of instruction in schools that are open to all classes and creeds, why should it depart from that system in favour of one or two or more creeds? On what grounds should it do so?

MR. MORAN: It does not do so.

MR. LOTON: I am aware of that; but all denominations cannot take advantage of these State Schools, any more than the State can take advantage of the opportunity of teaching religion in schools. Why should not those people who have particular creeds agree with the other people in having some system of secular education in the schools? One hon. member said, "We will not allow our children to attend the State Schools." Another hon. member said, "We know it is so." I agree with the Catholics that it is desirable to have religious education given to their children, and I should be glad to see all children receiving a religious education. But while we must recognise that the State itself cannot give this religious instruction, therefore it is unreasonable for any particular religious body to expect the State to set aside a special sum for this purpose. If we vote for the motion before the House, we shall pledge ourselves to be in favour of discontinuing the dual system. I should be in favour of that system of education which would allow the State, or the different religious communities, to give religious instruction in the State Schools. With regard to the contribution that is given to the Assisted Schools, before that assistance ceases I say a fair and reasonable notice should be given.

MR. CONNOR: We would not take any notice. We want justice only.

MR. LOTON: I say it would be an injustice to stop the system without due and ample notice. I intend to support the motion.

MR. SIMPSON: I do not purpose trespassing long on the time of the House, in alluding to the lack of argument which has been shown by those opposing the motion. If the motion accomplishes no further purpose, this debate will have a great effect in the country. The Premier,

with that grace which sometimes surrounds his action when members dare to act in an independent manner, alluded to the fact that in a recent contested election I was returned by what he considered a small majority; but I would point out that, in his elections, he was never the result of a majority yet, for he is a sort of political accident in the State, the result of a political coma which exists in the place he represents. One or two other members alluded to matters of that sort. There is that Scotch proverb which suggests that people in doubtful positions should keep their breath to cool their own porridge—it may become serviceable some day. As far as I have seen their political efforts they are not particularly brilliant, and I do not think they are likely to stamp themselves very serviceably on the statute book of the colony. I do not know that the debates in this House have gathered any great weight of intelligence from their contributions, up to the present. As to that political buck-whacker for Yilgarn, who referred so slightly to the hon. member for Perth—one who has given so many years of gratuitous labour to the administration of the Education Act as a member of the Central Board—there is this grave difference between his arguments on this question and those used by the member for Yilgarn, that they are founded upon fact, whereas the member for Yilgarn trusts largely to his imagination for his facts, and on his memory for his jokes. The member for Fremantle and Commissioner of Crown Lands, it was singular to observe, used the words “bigotry” and “intolerance;” these words falling in almost exact sequence from the member for East Kimberley, the member for Yilgarn, and the member for Fremantle. It may occur to some hon. members that there might be a reason for that identity of language. I shall try to discover a reason tomorrow. It was peculiar that these three particular members talked of bigotry and intolerance. So far as I have observed the tone of this House, I have never noticed bigotry or intolerance on any question. Why should we be frightened to express our views on this particular matter? I have in my hands a circular letter which has been addressed to some hon. members of this House. It is dated

“Perth, 4th October, 1894,” and after calling attention to the motion which I had given notice to move in this House, it winds up by saying:—“Knowing your liberal sentiments, and appreciating your desire to deal out even-handed justice to every section of the community, I will esteem it a favour,” &c., and asks him to oppose the motion. That circular received a certain amount of distribution amongst members, though I do not think it went all round to the 33 members of this House, and you may be sure a copy was not addressed to me.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It was not supplied to me.

MR. SIMPSON: I think the Premier was ear-marked on Saturday morning, and there was no necessity, after that, to send it to him. The Commissioner of Crown Lands said I have taken particular action to try and destroy the utility of the Churches. The hon. member's glibness of tongue, which invariably exceeds his power of judgment, contributed to what is a distinct and deliberate and carefully considered misrepresentation. And the gentleman who represents East Kimberley, on behalf of his constituents, spoke on the Education question. Now, fancy the Education question agitating the electors of East Kimberley! It was also announced to-night—and the air has been rather full of threats—that, directly; a demand would be made for an increased vote for Assisted Schools. Then there was another statement, that there would be a great effort made to combine the votes of a certain section with the votes of that party which would give them the most in return—which means that certain electors are to be bound hand and foot to the dictation of one man, and must drop their votes into the ballot box as he tells them—that is what is suggested for controlling the politics of this country! In a recent election there was a letter written to one of the most practical candidates in this country, and he was asked if, in case he was supported by a certain political body, he would vote for doubling the capitation allowance. But, like a man, he said he would not, and that he would not be bound hand and foot by any section of the community to do anything. That happened to a very important man in this country—a man whose political action on

all questions carries very great weight. The question of religion has been alluded to in this debate, but some of the speakers did not distinguish between sectarianism and religion, although there is a marked distinction. As to the weight of argument, we have had very little argument. We have had a statement of the existing facts, and the Premier, on behalf of the administration of the Education Act, pointed out a condition of things that is absolutely a disgrace to the country. The absence of argument by those who opposed the motion needs no comment. I will submit the motion to the House without trespassing more on your time. I will just allude to the rather happy simile used by the hon. member for the Moore, who spoke of the way in which a snowball, rolled along, grows in size, and how at last, when on an inclined plane, it gathers such an impact in rolling that it destroys all in front of it. I would like the Ministry, the Forrest Ministry, to lay the illustration to heart; and I can assure them, though they know the growth of public opinion on this question now, that there is more than a snowball, there is an avalanche accumulating that will obliterate the Forrest Ministry if they do not recognise the fact that the public opinion of this country distinctly says: We will have a system of education that will insist on our children growing up equally, in all degrees; and that no money shall be voted to a system which says that the children of one section of the community will be defiled by mixing with the children of the other citizens of the State.

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

Ayes	11
Noes	14

Majority against ... 3

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Harper	Mr. Burt
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Connor
Mr. James	Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. Keep	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Lotou	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Randell	Mr. Marmion
Mr. Richardson	Mr. Monger
Mr. Simpson	Mr. Mornu
Mr. Traylen	Mr. Paterson
Mr. Wood	Mr. Pearse
Mr. R. F. Sholl (Teller).	Mr. Solomon
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Lefroy (Teller).

Motion negatived.

ROADS ACT. AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

DROVING BILL.

RE-COMMITTED.

Clause 6 (as amended):

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved, as an amendment, that the following words be inserted, after the word "horses" in line 11: "camels, "cattle, or other stock (excepting sheep)."

Put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved, as a further amendment, that the following sub-clause be added to the clause:—

"(2) Any drover neglecting to give "the notice required by this motion shall "be summarily punished before any two "or more justices of the peace, and liable, "on conviction, to a penalty not exceeding "fifty pounds."

Put and passed.

Bill reported with further amendments.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 12:20 o'clock, midnight.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 9th October, 1894.

Excise Officer: appointment of—Perth Water: dredging of—Houses of Parliament: erection of—Roads Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Small Debts Ordinance Amendment Bill: third reading—Busselton Street Closure Bill: second reading: committee—Municipal Institutions Bill: committee—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.