

wedge in anywhere. As to the licensing laws, they are chaotic; they are out of date. We have a great movement in the eastern colonies, and indeed throughout the English-speaking world, in connection with the liquor licensing question; and I do think the Government can do a great deal to lessen the evil of excessive drinking, by providing that all liquor sold shall be pure; by insisting, as far as possible, that the system of drinking in back parlors shall be abolished; by preventing the attractions or temptations to drinking that exist now; and, above all, by insisting that when a licensed house becomes a mere drinking-shop, the licence shall be forfeited. As to the practice of granting renewals in ordinary course, I do not suppose there has been an instance of a renewal being refused by the licensing magistrates here, unless there had been an outcry against the house. I should like to see the system so altered that, before granting a renewal, the onus of proving the applicant's fitness, and other conditions, should be thrown upon him in a stricter degree, so that the application for a renewal should not be granted as a matter of form. I heartily congratulate the Government on the proposal for the deep drainage of Perth. I do not quite follow the reasoning of the hon. member for Nannine, when he tells us that the healthiness of a seaport affects the whole colony, while that of the capital does not. If the people arriving in a colony, or others settled in it, have to come to an unhealthy centre in connection with business matters, as people now come to Perth, the risk to health affects the people all round, and is a risk that should be dealt with seriously. I hope this deep-sewerage scheme will not be characterised by those delays which too frequently characterise the Government works. So far as finance is concerned, my ideas are old-fashioned, and I always have a grave doubt when I see a large amount of money being spent, for I feel then that the day of reckoning must come, and I always listen to those who are inclined to preach the lesson of caution. Although we are anxious to push the colony ahead in a bold and progressive manner, I cannot forget that there is only a thin line of demarcation between boldness and recklessness. Let us en-

deavor to keep this in view in dealing with large and increasing expenditure, and I hope we shall be careful to avoid the temptations and disasters which have beset the sister colonies.

On the motion of Mr. HASSELL, the debate was adjourned until the next day.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.57 o'clock, p.m., until next day.

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### Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 16TH JULY, 1896.

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*Motion: Correspondence re Abolition of Aborigines Protection Board—Motion: Return re values and duties on imports—Address-in-Reply: debate resumed—Message requesting appropriation of £2,500,000 for water supply to goldfields—Coolgardie Water Supply Bill; first reading—Adjournment.*

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The Speaker took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### MOTION—CORRESPONDENCE RE ABOLITION OF ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD.

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, moved—"That there be laid upon the table of the House all further correspondence relating to the amendment of the Constitution Act, and the abolition of the Aborigines Protection Board."

Agreed to.

# MOTION—RETURN RE VALUES AND DUTIES ON IMPORTS.

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, moved—"That a return be laid upon the table, showing in full detail the values and duties collected on the following imports for year ending 30th June, 1896:—Ammunition and explosives, cattle and sheep for slaughter, bacon, biscuits, bran, butter, candles, cement, chaff, cheese, corn, eggs, flour, fruit, hams, hay, honey, jams, jellies and preserves, meats, preserved milk, onions, pollard, potatoes, tongues, preserved vegetables."

Agreed to.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### THE DEBATE RESUMED.

MR. HASSELL: Sir, I had not intended to speak on this motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply; but, having altered my mind, I will say a few words. The second paragraph in His Excellency's Speech refers to Federation, and I am glad the Government have seen fit to take action in regard to it. The third paragraph deals with the proposed increase of representation to the goldfields; and, while I am glad the Government have thought fit to move in the matter, I do hope that the increase of representation will be made in such a way, that, while increasing the number of members for the goldfields, there will not also be a large increase in the representation of the towns of Perth and Fremantle; because, if the Government propose to increase the number of members for Perth and Fremantle, they will simply be increasing the representation to the goldfields with one hand, and taking it away with the other. The next paragraph refers to the great scheme of water supply for the goldfields. I may say now that I am not at all in favor of it. I do not wish to express a decided opinion, however, until the information promised by the Premier is laid before the House on Tuesday next. Paragraph 5 refers to the extension of railways, and I am in favor of railways being constructed to all important centres of the goldfields; but I am not altogether in favor of those agricultural railways that are going to be brought forward unless I can see there will be something in them that will repay the

colony for the expenditure on their construction and the cost for interest. I am sorry indeed, as I said last year, that there is no indication in this Speech of an intention to construct a railway from Esperance to Norseman. I think the time has come when the people on those fields have a great claim to a railway; and I think that if we were justified in making a railway to Yilgarn some years ago, there is ten times more justification at the present day for making a railway connecting Norseman with Esperance Bay. I am sorry to see no mention of the proposed purchase of the Great Southern Railway and the company's land adjacent to it. I said last year that I should be glad to be here to vote for the purchase of that railway, and I hope still to be here and have an opportunity of voting for the acquirement of the railway and the company's land. The 6th paragraph relates particularly to an intended reduction of Customs duties, and I am glad the Government are going to take action in that direction. I think they might also remove many of the restrictions which now check the importation of fruit into this colony. I am well aware that the great claim for keeping the restrictions on imports of this kind is the fear that insect pests may be brought into the colony with the fruit; but, considering that in the north-west and also in the district I represent up to Esperance Bay there is not a fruit tree for hundreds of miles, it does seem to me hard that fruit cannot be imported for the use of people in those districts, and that these restrictions are made for the sake of a few orchardists—I say a few, for so far as I can learn there is not any chance of their being able, within a few years, to supply the fruit requirements of this colony. [THE PREMIER: Oh, yes, there is.] I cannot agree with the Premier on that point, and it is to be regretted that the Government should think it necessary to have these restrictions for the sake of a few orchardists. Fruit is a necessity to nearly every man and woman in this colony, and considering the price which has to be paid for it, the effect of the restrictions is to drive people out of the country, by preventing them from having fruit as one of the necessities of life. A man needs to be a millionaire to be able to pay the price that fruit is sold at in the

towns of this colony, and working men cannot afford such a price. Considering that in Adelaide, a few months ago, cherries could be bought at a very low price per hundredweight wholesale, it seems hard that people in these towns are not allowed to have imported fruit. We are told in paragraph 9 that jetty extensions or improvements are being made, or rather are about to be undertaken, at Albany and Esperance Bay and other places. I have heard, on very good authority, that some months ago a contract was let for the extension of the Esperance jetty; but, so far, no movement has been made in the matter. I consider the Public Works Department should see, if a contract has been let, that the work is carried out more expeditiously than is the case at present. The same delay occurs at Albany, for I believe the contract for the jetty was let some time ago, but no commencement of the work has been made. Paragraph 15 refers to the survey of the coasts of the colony having been resumed. I hope the Government will have a survey made along the Esperance Bay coast as soon as possible. There is no doubt that Esperance is fast becoming a port, and a very good one, and therefore the survey of the adjacent coast becomes all the more necessary. I am quite willing to admit that in winter a survey of that coast could not well be undertaken, but I do hope that in summer the Government will send a surveyor to survey that part of the coast as soon as possible. The Government and the colony are to be congratulated on the financial position, and I hope that whoever may come here next year as representatives may hear the same pleasing tale.

MR. RANDELL: After the very long and exhaustive speeches that have been made—I may say the able speeches of some hon. members—one might almost be tempted to recite the first part of the Address-in-Reply, and sit down. Hon. members have touched upon, I think, every point expressed within the four corners of the Governor's Speech. They have criticised, more or less severely, the actions of the Government, and especially as regards the administration of the public services; and they have arraigned the policy of the Government in not going to the country upon this question

of redistribution of seats, and the extension of representation to the goldfields. These are some of the aspects, politically, which appear in the Speech, and which have been taken up by members who have addressed the House. We have heard several things propounded by hon. members. We have Mr. George finding fault with the employment of day labor in the construction of public works. We have, on the other hand, the hon. member for East Perth pleading for the legalisation of eight hours as a working day, and for other domestic legislation, as he calls it. As to day labor and contract work, I think that both practices are desirable and necessary in the carrying on of the Government works of the colony. I presume that in most cases it is desirable, and I agree with Mr. George to that extent to employ contractors for the carrying out of Government works. I believe the employment of day labor is liable to great abuse, and I do not think any one going about the country, unless he has his eyes shut, can conceal from himself the fact that day labor under the employment of the Government is not always of the most satisfactory character. In regard to the harbor works at Fremantle, I quite agree in an opinion which has been expressed, that that is a work which may reasonably be undertaken by day labor; and so far as my observation has led me to form a conclusion, though I have not heard any of those reports which have been mentioned by the hon. member for the Murray, I think the whole of that work has been carried on very satisfactorily. We are told, in the Speech, that the north mole has been completed to the length originally contemplated, and that it is proposed to extend it another thousand feet. I think that work has been done with a great amount of expedition, and we are all pleased to see that it is withstanding the storms which have visited our coasts during the time of its construction and during the recent bad weather, and that no impression has been made on that very important structure. I am pleased to learn that it is to be extended, and I would like to know in which direction; because, if it is to go in a straight line as at present, I think that will not be the most beneficial mode of extending the north mole. I mention this because I

feel a real interest in this work, because of the influence that I exercised upon the adoption of the present position of the breakwater at the mouth of the river; and I hope we shall in a very short time have a good and efficient harbor within the two moles, for carrying on the commerce of the country at that central point. I do not think anything can contribute more to the progress of the colony, except internal development, than having a large harbor for the accommodation of shipping and commerce at the port of Fremantle, and I think that work will commend itself to hon. members. It is fraught with the greatest importance, especially to the central portion of this colony. With regard to the question of Federation, the hon. member for West Perth said he was in favor of Federation in the abstract, as he believed most hon. members were; and I suppose we all desire to see the Federation of the Australian colonies. But I must say I would like more light on the subject as to how it will affect the interests of this colony, before we commit ourselves to any very decided steps in that direction. I think it is quite right, as the Government propose, that we should send representatives to the Federal Convention for the consideration of those important questions which will come before it. Nothing, perhaps, may have greater importance to the future welfare of Australia than the happy accomplishment of the Federation of these colonies. But we, in this colony, have to bear in mind that we have only just started on the road to progress; that we are developing at a rapid rate; and that the circumstances which applied to Western Australia in 1891, when a Federal Convention was held in the city of Sydney, have entirely changed in this colony during the interval. I think, also, they have changed in the other colonies to a considerable extent, for their circumstances are considerably altered, and I do not think those colonies are in as good a position now as they were in then. Western Australia in every way stands in a different position from that which it was in when the previous Convention was held. At the same time, it is desirable that we should now send some of our best men to take part in the meeting of those politicians from the different

colonies who will have the consideration of Federal questions, and possibly have the elaboration of a Federation scheme. Yet we must be careful, lest we land ourselves in difficulty in this matter. I presume every hon. member will be unwilling to federate, unless our rights are considered to the very fullest extent, and they will agree that we should jeopardise none of the interests that are established in this colony. We want progress, but side by side with progress we desire to see the union of the Australias, for dealing adequately with the great questions which may come up from time to time, in the formation of a great and free and mighty nation in the future. It is, as we all know, rather difficult and troublesome to travel into other colonies and find there are Customs duties on the inland border; but at the same time, we should remember that those Customs duties have assisted particular colonies in the carrying on of great and important works, and therefore those colonies cannot at present give them up. The third paragraph in His Excellency's Speech refers to a very important matter, and one which has my approval. It is that the goldfields, by the rapid development which has taken place in the increase of population should have increased representation in this House. That is a matter which commended itself to my judgment long ago, and I think I expressed myself to that effect last session. We want to see this increase of representation upon a basis that will be fair and equitable to the interests of the entire colony; and while I concur in what has been said by the hon. members for Nannine and Geraldton, that population must enter into the consideration of this question, I think that is not the whole and the only consideration which should occupy our attention. We have at present a constitution which gives us members from the various district of the colony, and I look upon it as being a very important arrangement by which we can have, if I may use the expression, a sort of steady influence in the legislation of this colony. No doubt the goldfields are largely occupied by men of great intelligence, great energy, and great ability, and such men would make them-

selves felt in this House; but to give a preponderating influence to the goldfields in the representation would be disastrous to the colony's best interests. Therefore, it is desirable we should take into account the varied interests of the colony—agricultural, commercial, and mining—when the question comes before us for an increase of seats in this Assembly. I think these are something like the lines on which the Government are going to bring in their Bill. While on this subject I believe there is nothing in the Constitution Act which compels the Government to go to the country when changing the Constitution in this direction; but I feel it is desirable, and in accordance with the custom which prevails in other places, that we should do so, unless our Act definitely provided that another course should be taken. And possibly another course could be introduced into the Constitution, by which, if at some future time we again desire to increase the representation of the people in this House, it could be done without appealing to the country as a consequence of making that increase. If this kind of development goes on at the same rate, we shall have the same difficulty pretty often, and we may have a House that does not represent the constituencies of the colony. To have an appeal to the country on every occasion of this kind would be too much of a good thing, unless we are prepared to have annual or biennial Parliaments. If it is found necessary, and the question forces itself on the consideration of the Government and the country, that a large number of the people are not amply and fully represented, and are entitled to an increase of representatives in Parliament, it seems to me to be carrying constitutional government too far to say we should dissolve every time a new member or a new constituency is introduced into this House. I throw out this suggestion for the consideration of hon. members. I do not say I am prepared to introduce any plan by which this could be done; but it strikes me as a practical way of dealing with the question, apart from the constitutional aspect of the case. Referring next to paragraph 4 in the Speech, I think I may properly pass over it. Hon. members will see that the question embraced in that paragraph stands in a different position, since the statement was

made by the Premier that he intends, on Tuesday next, to provide us with the fullest information it is possible to give on this great and comprehensive scheme for supplying water to our eastern goldfields. I will say, in passing, it is certainly a great scheme. Some hon. members have said there is no such scheme in any part of the world for supplying water to a great distance. I am not prepared to say there is or is not. We know there was a supply to the city of Sydney, obtained by pumping water out of the sand at Botany; but that process did not involve the conveying of water a long distance, nor the forcing of it to any considerable height. Some hon. members said something about this goldfields water scheme being a monument to the professional ability of the Engineer-in-Chief. I can only express my hope that the glamor of this thing has not affected the judgment of the leader of the Government. No doubt it would be a magnificent thing, especially if it were successful. There are so many elements in the case, that the consideration of this scheme being a testimony to the initiative of the comprehensive brain of the Premier, or of the Engineer-in-Chief, should not lead us away from the practical consideration of this important question. I will not deal longer with the question at the present stage, because I do not desire to express any opinion on it now. I can safely say it shall receive, as far as my ability will permit, the most careful consideration I can give it. I need not dwell on paragraph 5. Passing to paragraph 6, if it had been the only paragraph in this very comprehensive bill of fare for any Government to place before Parliament at the opening of a session, so many questions are dealt with in that paragraph, and some of them of great importance, that—without any of the other great matters which are included in the Speech—this paragraph alone would deserve our most careful consideration. In regard to the Agricultural Bank Act mentioned in paragraph 6, and which we have had before us on several occasions, and which I believe, so far, has not proved a success—whether that is the fault of the Act I cannot say, or whether the alterations made by this House in the Bill when before us have prevented cer-

tain clauses from becoming so operative as they might have been without the alterations, I cannot say. But it is acknowledged that the Agricultural Bank has not accomplished that good which it was intended to accomplish, and which it may yet accomplish. I believe that if we can enlarge the scope of the Act, and increase its efficiency, I hope hon. members will give it their careful consideration, with a view to liberalising it and increasing its usefulness, and thus benefit the colony at large. The question of granting powers for land purchase by the Government, I must confess, I do not look on favorably, and I shall need strong and convincing arguments before I can give up my attachment to the other system of settling the public lands. It has been acknowledged that we have an amount of good land in the colony which should invite settlement, and which we should open to settlement by making roads or railways. We have been told from the Treasury bench, and particularly by the Premier, that we have any quantity of good agricultural land.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Not near the railways.

MR. RANDELL: Well, you are making railways to bring distant districts within easy reach of market; and I shall require to very carefully consider any proposal on the part of the Government to purchase private estates for the purpose of subdividing them into farmers' blocks. I am afraid that a high price will have to be paid for such land, and that the result will not be so satisfactory as is anticipated by some persons. I am glad the extension of the Cue railway to Nannine finds a place in the Speech, for I am strongly of opinion that every facility should be given to enable the goldfields, upon which the prosperity of the colony depends, to be fully developed. It is very satisfactory to find that the prophecy of the hon. member for Nannine, as to what the Treasurer's surplus would be this year, has come very near to fulfilment. Now the hon. member is prophesying again as to the very good times which are before us; and, if his prophecy should again be realised, we shall all rejoice in the prosperity and progress of the colony. When I hear the hon. member for the Murray, and other hon. members, complaining

that salaries are not paid at the time they are due, and that contractors are kept out of their money, and when I think of the great figures shown by the present revenue, my mind goes back to the time when the revenue was, I believe—though I have not looked up the facts—about £35,000 a year, and when there were delays in the payment of the salaries of civil servants and the amounts due to contractors, because there were no funds available, and often the Government of the day had to borrow from the Western Australian Bank to pay salaries and other sums due. At that time the Crown Solicitor of the colony was receiving a salary of £200 per annum, and the amount had to be reduced to £100, because the colony was unable to pay the salary. The Judge—the only Judge of the colony, Mr. Mackie, a gentleman of marked ability—was receiving a salary of only £300 per annum. There were then no roads or footpaths in Perth, and the people had to undergo hardships and struggles to which there is no comparison to-day. The hon. member for the Murray has no conception of what the pioneer settlers and those who were here in the early fifties had to undergo.

MR. GEORGE: Well, if being in a desert three days without water is not a hardship, I don't know what is.

MR. RANDELL: I am very glad that the duplication of the railway from Fremantle to Midland Junction, which has been repeatedly urged in this House by myself and other hon. members, is in progress, although the Engineer-in-Chief was formerly of opinion that there was no immediate necessity for this work. The block of the goods traffic at Fremantle, which recently created so much dissatisfaction and caused such disastrous losses to business men, and which evoked a public protest, both from the press and public bodies, which protest appears to have had good results, will not, I hope, be repeated. I am not wishing to throw blame on anyone, for the blame must be sufficiently felt by those who are deserving of it, and I trust that in future the department will achieve a more considerable measure of success. I fully concur in what has been urged in favor of placing the control of the department in the hands of the Traffic Manager. I would like the Engineer-in-

Chief to be relieved as far as possible of detail work, and that he may be able to give his whole attention to the great matters of railway construction and other large public works on which he has to advise the Government. If the railways are placed in charge of Mr. Davies, the Traffic Manager, and he is given a free hand, he will be able to administer the service with satisfaction to all concerned. I do not believe in sending out of the colony for a railway man at £2,000 or £3,000 a year, and I am not sure that that system has worked well in the other colonies. The railways which are to be made to Menzies and Kanowna are deserving of the support of this House; for it is absolutely necessary that every assistance shall be given to the goldfields, by carrying lines to all those centres which are of very great importance to the colony. I am convinced that the mining towns should be given every aid to their development and the economical working of the mines, by being connected with the railway system. I hope the Government will fully state the reasons which induced them to adopt any particular route for these railways. At the same time we should carefully consider this information when it is placed before us before we give our consent to the construction of any particular line. I look very kindly upon the proposed railway, either from Beverley or York, through the Greenhills district, to connect with the Yilgarn line; and from information which was obtained by the Select Committee of the House some time ago, we found that the good land in the district was of a larger extent by that route. I think that the Marradong people put forward some claim to a line which would pass through a splendid jarrah forest, second to none in the colony. In the Marradong district, to my knowledge, besides the timber, there is a large quantity of valuable land available for settlement. At the same time it would be well to look carefully into the matter, and to remember the warnings of the disastrous results which have overtaken Victoria through the construction of agricultural railways. As many other matters in the Speech have been fully discussed by other hon. members, suffice it for me to say that I trust that we shall come to right conclusions upon the important

matters that are committed to our care, and that the results of our deliberations may be the advancement of the welfare and the prosperity of the colony at large. I trust that the colony will be looked at as a whole, and that nothing may be done to advance any one portion of it at the expense of another. I think that the time is coming when a railway or a thoroughly good road should be constructed from Port Hedland through the remote Pilbarra goldfields, where the miners are almost cut off from civilisation, and are without the comforts which we enjoy in more settled districts. I join in the congratulations which we have heard upon the buoyant state of the revenue, but it has its dark as well as its bright side. In order that the Customs Department should have been able to show such a good account, the cost of living has been increased. I must say that I greatly regret that we have to import so much to supply our wants. We were told last session by the hon. member for the Williams (now Commissioner of Railways) that the time was near at hand when at any rate sufficient chaff would be produced by our own farmers to supply the requirements of the colony; but, whether it is due to a bad season or not, that desirable end is very far from being reached. I trust that there will be a greater development in the agricultural districts of the colony, because, if we do not have that development, too much money will be continued to be spent on imports from the other colonies.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I do not think that there is a great occasion for hon. members to drag out this debate very much longer. Some members have spoken of the Government rushing to extremes, over-borrowing, and launching this colony on a tide of disaster from which it would take many years to emerge. Well, I do not find fault at all with those who give this counsel. I know when I sat on the cross-benches I was master of many stock phrases, warning the Government that they were spending too much money, that they should be careful. [Mr. ILLINGWORTH: Evil communications corrupt good manners.] The hon. member for Nannine has taken up a warning cry that we must not borrow any more

money, that we must live on our own resources, live within our revenue; but the Government cannot stand still. We must go on. The Government had only two alternatives, between two lines of action. They must either say that we will borrow no more, that we will live within our revenue, or we must increase our taxation if we are to carry on public works. The fact is that if we stop we shall be run over and our bodies be trampled in the dust, or we must keep on carrying out a public works policy that will allow us to flourish and prosper. I am very much inclined to think that some hon. members are like the boy who wanted to eat his cake and have it too. They want railway lines, telegraph extensions, post-offices, and other works, but they do not want to pay for them. The Government have even been told that they are not proposing enough railways, that there should be one from Dundas to Esperance, and that the claims of Lawlers have been overlooked. Well, then, where is the money to come from to pay for all these things? I take it that the members who are so full of caution do not appreciate what it is to be placed in a position of responsibility, in charge of a public works policy which we have been very strongly pressed to carry out ever since the water scheme was referred to at the opening of the Coolgardie railway. I am very much afraid that this poor little Aunt Sally of a scheme for supplying water for the goldfields is being fearfully knocked about, and so mud-bespattered that we can scarcely recognise it. The variety of the criticisms is bewildering; it is enough to qualify us for the lunatic asylum. Let us look at some of the things which are said about the scheme. I am very glad to hear, for example, that there is any quantity of water on the fields, that the mines do not want water, and that if the Government took water there for them they would not buy it. I am afraid that this statement is somewhat discounted by what we have heard from some hon. members who take exception to the scheme, because the supposed supply of five million gallons will not be nearly sufficient for the mines. They say that to think five million gallons daily would be a sufficient supply for the goldfields is an absurdity. And we are also

told that the undertaking will not pay. Well, all I can say is that the calculations have been made by the Engineer-in-Chief. I am not an arithmetician to check them, nor do I know whether any member of the House is; but there are the figures: they can be analysed and challenged, if hon. members do not agree with the calculations, that if we supply five million gallons per day, and sell the water at the rate of 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons, the receipts will be sufficient to pay interest and provide a sinking fund for the outlay incurred upon the work. And if we should find that five million gallons of water per day are not sufficient, and that there is a demand for more at the same price, we shall be only too happy to duplicate the pipes, and be glad that the scheme has been such a great success. There is no doubt that if we could depend upon the selling of all this water at 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons, the success of the waterworks would be almost assured. I am not going very deeply into this scheme, but I must say that I am surprised to hear a common-sense man like the hon. member for Perth say that he is sceptical as to whether the water could be pumped to the required height or carried such a distance. He seems to be quite frightened at the idea. Well, I will ask hon. members, supposing the project was to make a reservoir and to force the water to it from say forty miles, would they consider this impracticable? Is not pumping done by every squatter, who thinks nothing of bringing water up a hundred or a hundred and sixty feet? Well, what is this project that seems to frighten hon. members? It is simply a repetition of the pumping operation, the erection of a series of pumps instead of one. The route to Coolgardie will be divided into sections, and the water forced on from stage to stage, and by this means there will be no more trouble in carrying it eventually to the top of Mount Burges than in making a single lift of 150 feet. It is like the man who walked round the globe; he only had to make one step at a time. If there is nothing impracticable in forcing the water the first lift, the successive stages will present no greater difficulty. It is only a question of money and fuel, if the Engineer-in-Chief's calculations are correct, and they are open to the House to



test. All I can say is that, if we cannot rely upon these figures, if we have officers who mislead us, the sooner we get other officers the better it will be for the country. The hon. member for the Murray thinks that there will be a difficulty in the carriage of pipes. He thinks that we might have to duplicate the line in order to carry the pipes to the goldfields, but there is nothing in this objection. The weight of the pipes will be only about double the weight of the rails and sleepers required for the same length of railway line, and surely it is not contended that, because we are making extensions to Kanowna or other places, we shall have to make a duplicate railway line in order to carry the material. The objections that we have heard against this scheme are, as I have said, very numerous, and some of them are inconsistent with others. One hon. member will say that it is very speculative, another that it is so good a thing that it should be left to private enterprise; another that because the cost will so far exceed the estimate he will have nothing to do with it; others say that the supply will be so insufficient when the water is carried to its destination that they cannot support the scheme, while the very opposite is argued by hon. members who allege that there is so much water on the fields that ours will not be saleable. I do not think that there is much danger about that. It has been said by that eminent authority, Captain Oates, that the proper thing to do is to conserve the rainfall in tanks and reservoirs, and supply the country in that way. I am inclined to think that when you get the Engineer-in-Chief's figures it will be made clear that the cost of conserving water in tanks and reservoirs will be very much greater than that of our scheme. There is another thing to be borne in mind. Whatever means of supplying water is adopted, it should be of a permanent kind, for it would be a terrible thing to have a drought upon the goldfields, among the very large population that will be residing within those districts in a few years. Now as to water conservation, I do not think that since gold was discovered at Coolgardie there have been any of the droughts which are periodically experienced in that district. There is no doubt, from the accounts of explorers,

that part of Western Australia is sometimes dry for two or three years, so that after you had built your tanks and reservoirs you might have no rainfall to conserve. The risk of this would be a very serious danger. Another hon. member pointed out that a pipe might fracture or the machinery break down, but surely the Engineer-in-Chief has made provision against such contingencies. There will always be a two days' supply, according to his estimate, and in two days it should be possible to make repairs; besides, we will doubtless have some spare engines to supply an emergency. I think the House may take it for granted that these things would be considered in a scheme about which such large interests and where the welfare of such a large population are concerned. In any case I submit that there would be much greater difficulty in connection with injury to gravitation schemes, because with the water rushing on, repairs could not be so easily effected. After all, our scheme is one for the conservation of the rainfall, only that we begin at the end where the rainfall is certain and plentiful, instead of, as Captain Oates would recommend us, at the end where it is scarce and precarious. Then we come to the argument in favor of private enterprise. Our scheme does not bar private enterprise. There is room for the Government and for private companies to all bear a hand in the equipment of the goldfields. Let us all be up and doing. But I do think that it would be unwise to give the control of the only water supply on the fields to private people. It should be remembered too, that the Railway Department will save £30,000 or £40,000 per annum by being supplied with water from the pipes, and that the desert will be turned into an oasis. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: What? Five million gallons!] The question of the expenditure of so large a sum of money as two and a half millions has not been lightly dealt with by the Government. We regret very strongly that we have to ask Parliament for such a sum, but it is imperative in the interests of the goldfields and the colony. I was a very long time before I was brought to see that there was no other alternative, but the evidence after a full examination was too clear, and so I believe it will be with the majority of the members of the House

when full and detailed information is placed before them. In the course of the debate something has been said about a new scheme of land settlement. I do not see that more can be done in this direction. We give land, we give railways, and cheap money through the medium of the Agricultural Bank. If these advantages will not induce people to make homes upon the soil, I would not be in favor of doing any more. If you have got to carry a man to the land, and prop him up when you get him there, spoon-feed and nurse him, I think that he is better off the land. There should not be too much artificial aid, because settlers obtained by means of it are not likely to do any good for themselves or for the country. In conclusion, I desire to thank hon. members for the careful way in which they have approached the subject of the water scheme. I am inclined to think that when they have digested the scheme they will think more of it, as I did the more I learned of it; and it should be remembered that the giving of the water is to make the goldfields prosperous, and if the goldfields are prosperous all other parts of the colony and the people generally will be prosperous also. We have read and heard reiterated for the last year that the goldfields should be given better supplies of water, and the Government have been urged to get Parliament to sanction expenditure for water conservation; indeed, the hon. member for Yilgarn declared, time after time last session—to such an extent that he was twitted with having water on the brain—that he would keep pegging away on the question until the Government undertook the work. It is most extraordinary that, when the Government come forward with a proposal to supply water to the mining districts, people turn round and say they do not want it, and will not use it. It is very difficult, of course, to account for these eccentricities, but I ask members to suspend judgment until they are in possession of the promised data, facts and figures. If, after giving these serious and honest consideration, they consider the scheme is unjustifiable and dangerous, all I can say is I hope they will have the courage to throw it out.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS** (Hon. F. H. Piesse): One or two

points were referred to in this debate in connection with the department over which I have the honor to preside, and I think it is just as well to put the right aspect of the case before hon. members. Allusion was made by the hon. member for Nannine with regard to the difficulty which he alleges the public are suffering from through not receiving payment of their accounts. This may have been the case six or eight months ago, probably six months ago, but at the present time I am pleased to say the public have no reason to complain of any delay in these payments. Indeed, many of the public creditors are able, by a system of progress payments, to obtain moneys as soon as they are due. I also wish to say that it is the desire of the Government to facilitate these payments in every way, and so assist the public creditor to obtain his money as soon as possible. With regard to the accountant's branch of the Public Works Department, of course it is not for me to say anything of its failings in the past; all I wish to say on that head is that they have not occurred during my administration. Dealing with its present management, I may say that a few weeks ago the accounts were got into order by the gentleman who has been discharging this duty, and I must give him credit for bringing the accounts up to the date on which he relinquished the position, and they are now in a much more satisfactory state. During the past few days a gentleman has been appointed to permanently fill the vacancy, and I think, with his assistance, as his reputation is of the very best, the accounts will in the future be kept in a much more correct and satisfactory state. I should like to say a word of commendation for a few of the other officers, who have also done very good work in bringing about this state of affairs, and it is because I am afraid that when they hear these charges levelled against their branch it will discourage them, that I take this opportunity of defending them. They have brought these accounts from a state of chaos to a proper adjustment.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** You admit the chaos?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS** (Hon. F. H. Piesse): Only by reputation; personally, I know nothing about the matter. It may interest hon. members

to know what amount of work the Accountant's branch has to undertake. There have been completed and passed to the Treasury for the financial year 1895-6, ended June 30, 28,910 vouchers, as against 17,227 for 1894-5, showing an increase on the previous year's transactions of 11,683, equal to 68 per cent. For June 1896 there were scheduled 6,000 vouchers, as against 3,500 for the corresponding month last year, or an increase of 2,500, equal to 70 per cent. The staff in the branch, independent of juniors and messengers, consists of 18 officers, while in June last year there were 17, and it will be seen that although the work has increased by 70 per cent., there has been only a 6 per cent. increase in the staff. I think everyone must admit that each man is doing a fair day's work and doing it well. There are only four men occupying a position in the office who have been there over 12 months. The new officers who have been selected are men of ability and experience. With regard to the architectural branch, it has been suggested that the whole of the work should be thrown open to public competition. That matter deserves great consideration. There are so many details in connection with some of the work undertaken by the branch that these could hardly be carried out under competition. Certainly large works, such as law courts, or other large public buildings, might be competed for. We have in the department to-day men who came from Victoria with a good reputation, and I have no doubt if the department is properly directed—

AN HON. MEMBER: There is not much direction.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. F. Piesse): These men will turn out excellent work in constructing public buildings. I will not go so far as to say some of the public buildings already constructed could not have been improved upon. I will qualify my statement with regard to the efficiency of the department by saying that it needs properly exercised direction, and I think, given that, the work turned out will be satisfactory to the colony. I have already withdrawn, even after tenders had been advertised, no less than 12 designs, which I had taken precautions to

examine, and I have now made it a rule that every design must be placed before me for approval before being advertised. I quite agree that many of the buildings erected in some parts of this colony are too elaborate and costly, and it is my intention to see that in future we shall have buildings of a type suitable for the districts they are intended for, at the lowest possible cost, especially where the work is of a pioneer character.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How about the drill-room?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. Piesse): I would rather not say anything about that, because I might come into collision with the military. As regards the railways, I do not intend to say much excepting with regard to the future, which I hope will prove satisfactory. The duplication of the line to Fremantle has been mentioned, and I am pushing it forward, and it is one of those things that I took up at the earliest possible moment after I was appointed. As regards the recent accident, the hon. member for Toodyay said it made him exceedingly nervous to travel over that portion of the line. I can quite understand this, for he travels often over that part; but I assure him and every hon. member that every precaution has now been taken to prevent any recurrence of an accident in that locality. A few days after that event I read of a similar accident in New South Wales, which is supposed to possess the best-managed railway system, and also of one in England. The accident was due to the breaking of a coupling, and it was said that the train was very much overloaded; but this, I understand, was not the case. As the hon. member for the Murray knows, these couplings are liable to break.

MR. RANDALL: What about the chain?

THE COMMISSIONER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): I will speak about the chain later on. In this instance the coupling certainly did part, owing, no doubt, to a fault in the iron. There was only one coupling chain attached, which also gave way when the severance took place; but a chain will not bear very much strain. I would like to tell hon. members what we are doing with regard to the future safety of these trains. The other day I met the Engineer-in-Chief and other officers of the depart-

ment in consultation, and, as a result, refuge sidings will be provided at Lion Mills, Parkerville, and Swan View, where catch points will be provided, so that in the event of a train breaking away on the heavy grades, these sidings at the three stations mentioned will prevent or minimise the danger. The points are so constructed that a train will simply run into them automatically, and the siding is on an incline, which will soon bring down the speed. This is no new idea, as such sidings have been used in England where severe gradients exist.

MR. GEORGE: Why not put them in at first?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): I cannot answer that. An order has been given that when two engines are used on the Ranges, one will be at the head and one at the rear of the train. I am stating these things to reassure the public mind, and allay nervousness on the part of the people who use the line. All the couplings of the same character as that on the derailed train have been recalled, and we have adopted a much stronger buffer. With regard to the contract for the Esperance Bay jetty which was mentioned by the hon. member for Plantagenet, there is no doubt that this work has been delayed, and to a certain extent the department is to blame. The contractor was unable to get the timber along the South-Western line, because we were unable to supply him with points and crossings. He has now been supplied with them, and the material is now on board a vessel in Bunbury harbor.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Is there a harbor at Bunbury?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): The other contracts, for the goods shed and bonded store extension have also been let. With regard to the Agricultural Bank, it has been said that the Government admit it has not been a success.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It requires a loan of £9,000.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): I do not think the Government said it was not a success, but that it was not availed of to the extent anticipated. One reason for that is that the Government were not allowed to

go as far as they desired. Had the measure gone through in its entirety, the bank would have been more largely availed of, and if hon. members will liberalise the provisions of the Act as proposed, I think it will prove the success that was hoped for. At the same time I wish to say that I do not endorse those criticisms, because I have seen many instances where the bank, by giving assistance to farmers, who have certainly been able to do a good deal with the money, has proved a benefit. I certainly hope for a great deal of good from it in the future if the operations are liberalised. With regard to agricultural development, and the allusions made last year as regards the production of cereals, that has certainly not been very great, for the reason that chaff is at such a high price; but there has been a great falling-off in the importation of chaff, and if hon. members will look at the returns they will see that only a few hundred tons have been imported. I saw it stated under the heading of "Commercial News" lately that the supply had been exhausted in the country. I think it is unwise to make these erroneous statements. The hon. member for Northam would tell us, if he were here, that there are large supplies, and, speaking for my own district, I can say the same. It may be, perhaps, that we are able to provide for only nine months of this year, but I think next year we will have no importations. I think the hon. member for Geraldton said that chaff was £10 a ton. I do not think it is at so high a price, but competition will reduce this. No matter what the duty is, as soon as the supply reaches the demand, competition amongst producers reduces the price. I believe that within a year or two there will be a reduction in the price of chaff, and then the production of wheat will commence, and I think the miners will admit that it is fair to give the farmer a chance. In fact, some of these people have told me that they were willing to forego the loss brought about by the duty increasing the cost of living. But I think that is a misnomer, because these duties do not increase the cost of living. I am living now in Perth, and I find that there is a great difference in the prices, not, I believe, through the duties bringing prices up, but by combination amongst

business people and those who dispose of the goods.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Do you include meat?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): Then as regard the prohibition of apples and other fruit, it is not so much the duty as the losses incurred in importing fruit. If we look at a report made a few days ago in connection with the importation of fruit trees to assist the people of the colony to develop the soil by producing fruit, we will see that the regulations are having a beneficial effect. There is no doubt that this colony will become one of the greatest fruit producers in a few years' time, and then fruit will be as cheap as in any other part of Australia. As I shall have many other opportunities of speaking during the session, I will not say much more now, but I wish to refer to the water scheme which the Government have brought forward. It is a scheme which has had very grave consideration by such cautious men as the Attorney-General and the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and as they have agreed to this scheme I think we may consider that they are thoroughly satisfied. If it had emanated from myself, probably the argument would not have had so much weight—I do not say I am not cautious, but probably I look upon things always in their best light—and when without very much persuasion, and after great consideration, these gentlemen are in favor of adopting this scheme, I believe it may be considered acceptable to the country. When I say that they have given the fullest consideration to the proposal it should strengthen the case of the Government, and it shows that the scheme cannot be such a bogey as hon. members think it is. I am quite sure that when it is fully explained by the hon. the Premier, he will be able to alter some of the opinions about it. I know he will try. I think it is the best scheme for the development of the goldfields of this colony. I also wish to add my thanks for the congratulations of hon. members, and also the kind remarks that have been made with reference to myself, and I hope future events will justify my appointment, and that I will be able to carry out my duties to the satisfaction of the country.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I move that the Address-in-Reply be adopted.

Question put and passed.

Ordered—That the Address-in-Reply be presented to His Excellency by Mr. Speaker and members of the House on Tuesday, July 21, at a quarter to 5 o'clock, p.m.

#### MESSAGE—COOLGARDIE GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY BILL.

The following message was delivered by the Premier to the Speaker, and the same was read, and was as follows:—

“GERARD SMITH,

“Governor.

“In accordance with the provisions of “section 67 of the Constitution Act, 1889, “the Governor recommends to the Legislative Assembly that an appropriation be “made out of the consolidated revenue “fund for the purpose of an Act to “authorise the raising of a sum of “£2,500,000 by loan for the construction “of works to provide water to the Yilgarn “and Coolgardie Goldfields.

“Government House, Perth, July 16, “1896.”

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved the first reading of the Bill.

Agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I beg to move that the second reading of the Bill be made an order of the day for Tuesday next. In suggesting this I may state that it is not the wish of the Government to rush the Bill through the second reading, but simply in order that I may be able to place the full details of the scheme before hon. members without delay, in order to allow as long a period as possible for the consideration of the details of the scheme.

Agreed to.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House, at 6.30 o'clock, p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, July 21, at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.