

way Commissioner in the other States receives more than, and some of them twice as much as, the salary of Mr. George. I am not now speaking to members of Parliament: I am speaking, through this House, to the country. Members here have sense enough to know that for such a position £1,500 a year is not a big salary. But this is the point at which the people look; and I should like the public to reflect that £1,500 a year is a very meagre salary for a man in the position of Mr. George. I should favour one Commissioner instead of three; however, I do not expect to have all my own way.

MR. TAYLOR: You can rest assured of that.

MR. GORDON: I am quite content to follow the Government, if they do depart from my line of policy.

MR. DOHERTY: You are one of the "blind followers."

MR. GORDON: I wish I were deaf to some of your interjections, anyhow. The question of the Coolgardie Water Scheme is practically settled.

MR. DOHERTY: It has not commenced yet.

MR. GORDON: I was hoping that the bone of contention which was fought over so vigorously last session, and which gave rise to so much bitter feeling, had disappeared; but it seems it has not, for this is something which the Opposition seem to hang on. However, we may congratulate ourselves that to a great extent the question is settled. I do not intend to deal any farther with the Governor's Speech. I regret I am not sitting with members on the Opposition side of the House, to take advantage of the glorious feeling they must have that now there is a majority on the Government side, there will be some good accomplished for the benefit of the country.

On motion by MR. NANSON, debate adjourned until the next sitting.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the PREMIER, the House adjourned until the next Tuesday afternoon at 4:30 o'clock.

## Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 22nd July, 1902.

New Member.—Papers presented—Sessional Orders, Committees, etc.—Address-in-reply, second day of debate—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### NEW MEMBER.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY, who had not been present at the previous sitting, took and subscribed the oath of allegiance as required by law, and signed the members' roll.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS: 1, Regulations under "The Trade Unions Act, 1902." 2, Regulations under "The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1902." 3, Report of Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon the conduct and completion of the Coolgardie Water Scheme. 4, Report on Dealings with Class B Reserves, as directed by "The Permanent Reserves Act, 1899." 5, Regulations under "The Land Act, 1898," and Amendments. 6, By-laws under "The Cemeteries Act, 1897," and Amendments; "Parks and Reserves Act, 1895"; "Roads Act, 1888," and Amendments.

Order: To lie on the table.

#### SESSIONAL ORDERS.

##### SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson) moved:

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House do meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, at 4:30 p.m., and sit until 6:30 p.m. if necessary, and if requisite from 7:30 p.m. onwards.

Put and passed.

#### STANDING COMMITTEES.

On motions by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, Committees for the session were appointed as follow:

LIBRARY COMMITTEE.—The President, with Hon. H. Briggs, and the mover; with leave to sit during any adjournment and during recess, and authority to act

jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Assembly,

**STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.**—The President, with Hon. J. W. Hackett and the mover; with leave to sit during any adjournment, and authority to confer on matters of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Assembly.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE.**—The President, with Hon. W. T. Loton, Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom, and the mover; with power to act during the recess, and to confer with any similar committee of the Legislative Assembly.

**PRINTING COMMITTEE.**—The President, with Hon. G. Randell, Hon. M. L. Moss, and the mover.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### SECOND DAY OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from the previous Thursday.

**HON. C. SOMMERS (North-East):** Like the mover and seconder of the Address-in-reply, I rejoice at the recovery of His Majesty the King from the serious illness which befel him on the eve of his intended coronation. Certainly, if the good wishes of the large majority of the people of the Empire could have brought about His Majesty's recovery, then that recovery was inevitable. The intended departure of His Excellency the Governor, referred to in the second paragraph of the Speech, is, needless to say, a matter of extreme regret to myself, as to every member of the community. One and all of us are deeply sorry to lose His Excellency's services. Sir Arthur Lawley's intention to complete his term here was evidenced by the active interest which he took in all public questions and social and other matters. The degree of interest displayed by His Excellency shows that he has the interests of the community at heart. In his efforts to promote the public welfare he has been greatly assisted by Lady Lawley, and certainly the places of both will prove hard to fill. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] At the same time, it must be conceded that the Imperial Government, in selecting Sir Arthur Lawley for the important position he is about to fill, have shown no less an appreciation than ours of his high

abilities. While regretting the loss sustained by this State, yet I must congratulate His Excellency on the promotion, as I take it, now being offered him. A man of the greatest tact is needed to fill the position of Governor in a new country, and especially a country in which there are such diverse and clashing interests. I feel assured that the tact displayed by His Excellency here will stand him in good stead in his new sphere of activity. I can but re-echo the sentiments of regret expressed by the paragraph of the Speech dealing with the death of our late Premier, and also voiced by the mover and seconder of the Address-in-reply. As one who has had the honour of serving a short term under the late Mr. Leake, I can but pronounce his loss a severe one to the State. He was every inch a man, an honourable, high-minded gentleman, and the possessor of great abilities. I exceedingly regret his loss, and I desire to convey my sympathy to Mrs. Leake and the members of her family in their heavy bereavement. I have pleasure in tendering to Mr. James, our new Premier, my congratulations on the attainment of his high office, and on the foresight displayed by him in securing the services of Dr. Jameson as leader in this House. We all know Dr. Jameson's wholehearted devotion to his work in this Chamber, and I feel assured that so long as he retains office—and I hope his term may be a long one—he will enjoy the respect and confidence of every member. All of us are glad to learn from the Speech that the rate of immigration and the general state of our finances are both sources of satisfaction. We must also be pleased to know that the Government intend to use their best efforts to increase still farther the flow of population to our shores, and to foster our industries. Paragraph 8 of His Excellency's Speech touches on the management of the Railway Department, and here I reach a matter to which I must take the most decided objection. We are told that after Mr. John Davies's services had been dispensed with, it was thought necessary to fill the vacancy by the appointment of a Commissioner. We all knew, of course, that someone would have to take Mr. John Davies's place, and naturally every one of us believed

and felt satisfied that no effort would be wanting on the part of the Government to fill the vacancy with the man best qualified for it by previous experience. The railways are the great revenue-earning department of the State, and it is imperative for good administration that the man to whose care they are committed should know something about their management. We find, however, that Mr. W. J. George has been appointed to the vacancy. Mr. George may be, and I dare say is, a very good business man in his own particular department; but the course of putting a man such as he into a post like that of Commissioner of Railways, taking him wholly on trust, is equivalent to the making of an experiment such as I think we can ill afford to try at this particular juncture. I have been at some pains to ascertain Mr. George's qualifications for his new appointment, and I learn that he has had a good deal of experience in the construction of railways. That may be so. I dare say Mr. George knows just about as much of making earth-works and building bridges as any other man in the State. His abilities in that direction may be very great; and had we needed in the Public Works Department a man to supervise works of this description, possibly Mr. George's services would have been of great value to us. In the Railway Department, however, we do not require an expert in railway construction, for that matter is looked after by the Public Works Department; but we do require a man of considerable experience in the handling of large traffic, both passenger and goods, and in the management of men. If any attention whatever is to be paid to rumour, there is urgent necessity in the Railway Department for an administrator of great tact and long experience, more particularly as regards the handling of men. The railway servants are, I believe, deeply discontented at the present time, as they have been in the past. Therefore, only a man of great practical knowledge and experience, a man to whom the railway servants could look up as knowing the work to be done and competent to see that work done, should be placed in charge of the department. Mr. George, of course, is appointed, and I suppose we shall have to put up with his management, which I am sure I

hope may turn out to be of the very best. The salary attaching to the office is £1,500 per annum, which is not very large remuneration; indeed, not nearly sufficient for the holder of the position. I am told that the appointment is for five years, and that possibly Mr. George is entitled to a kind of two-years' retiring allowance if the Government wish to dispenze with his services at the end of the period of five years. Seeing we have done so long without a manager of railways—

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Done so well, do you say?

HON. C. SOMMERS: Seeing we have done so badly for such a great length of time, I think we might have gone on doing badly for another two or three weeks in order that Parliament might be allowed some say in the disposal of the railways management. Every effort, we are told, has been made to obtain the most suitable man for the position; and after all those exertions, it appears the Government had to fall back on Mr. George. I should like to know, however, what attempts really have been made to secure the services of a thoroughly qualified expert. So far as I can learn, no efforts have been made to engage such a man in the Eastern States, or at home, or in America. I venture to say it would have paid the Government to offer special inducements in order to secure the services of one of the highest experts in railway management obtainable. We are now embarked on an utterly new experiment. We are asking a man who has had no railway training whatever, except as regards railway construction—no doubt Mr. George knows a good deal about a boiler, both inside and out—to take commercial charge of our railway system. We do not want a man of Mr. George's description for that purpose.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What about the management of men?

HON. C. SOMMERS: I really do not know that Mr. George has had experience in managing large numbers of men. In any case, the men to be overseen on the construction of railways are of a very different class from the highly skilled officers employed in conducting the traffic of our railway system. I can therefore only regard Mr. George's appointment as a blot on the Administration, and as an

experiment on which we can ill afford to venture at this particular juncture. We are told that two other Commissioners are to be appointed, making a board of three in all. Presumably, the appointment of Mr. George, being the first made, is the best and most suitable appointment. Assuming this to be the case, and judging of the two Commissioners to be appointed by the sample of expert already selected, I fear the plight of the Railway Department will soon be a sorry one. If too many cooks spoil a broth, the result of the efforts of three bad cooks is likely to be disastrous. However, Mr. George is to stay at the Railways, and I can only hope his stay there will be for the best. It is our duty to give him all possible assistance, now he is appointed. I must repeat, nevertheless, that the appointment is a blot on the record of the Administration, which should never have taken such a leap in the dark as to select a man of so little experience as Mr. George. There is another aspect of the case which does not commend itself to me. At the time of his appointment Mr. George was a member of Parliament; he was an Opposition member who had given the Government a great deal of trouble. Therefore, nasty things can be said, or may be said, about the appointment. In passing from that aspect of the case, I have to say that the system which permits of such appointments is a bad one, and that if in future members of Parliament are to be appointed to offices of profit other than portfolios, they should first have resigned their seats for a period of, say, six months. Indeed, I believe there is some such provision in our Constitution. I am not sufficiently well versed in constitutional matters to speak positively, but I do understand the course I have described to be obligatory. If it is not, then the sooner it is made obligatory the better for the protection and safety of the State. Paragraph 10 deals with the matter of redistribution of seats. Curtailment of the number of members of Parliament is not referred to in His Excellency's Speech; but the Premier, in his address delivered in the Town Hall, informed us that the Government would submit a Redistribution of Seats Bill, whereby it was proposed to reduce the membership of this House from 30 to 21, and that of

the Assembly from 50 to 46. I certainly agree that we ought to have a Redistribution of Seats Bill; but I cannot agree that there should be any reduction in the number of members. In the Eastern States, where proposals to reduce the membership of Parliament have been favourably received, there is some ground for such a proceeding. Here, however, we have an enormous new territory, and an earlier portion of the Speech asks us to congratulate ourselves on the fact that the increase of population is rapid. This increase is proceeding, and must continue; our resources must be developed; people must continue to look to Western Australia as a good outlet for their energy and capital. Therefore, if we do cut down the number of members it will not be long before we shall have to increase it again. An amendment of the Constitution Act was made only two or three years ago, and continual tinkering with the Constitution is to be greatly deprecated. In any case, however, the proposal of the Government is absolutely ridiculous. They calmly announce their intention to reduce the membership of this House from 30 to 21—by nine, mark you—and the membership of the Assembly from 50 to 46, by only four. The proposal is utterly preposterous. There is no proportion between the two decreases proposed.

MEMBER: The Government certainly do not observe the same ratio.

HON. C. SOMMERS: No; they do not. In view of the shifting nature of the goldfields population, it is absolutely necessary that we should have an amendment of the Constitution Act. Two or three years ago there may have been 5,000 or 10,000 electors in a particular district—enough to return even two members—whilst at the present day the population of that district may have gone down considerably, most of its former residents having transferred themselves to another district, which, in its turn, is entitled to increased representation. A glance at the voters' list of the State discloses some ridiculous anomalies; in some cases the number of electors in a district is absurdly low, whilst in others it is far too high. The necessity for redistribution thus becomes apparent to every one. I certainly shall oppose, however, any reduction in the number of

members in either House. I may express my belief that, with our enormous territory, our rapidly developing resources, and the continuing influx of population, the probability is that if we reduce the numerical strength of Parliament, we shall have to raise it again before very long. Whether that belief be well-founded or ill-founded, and admitting for the moment that the number of members is now greater than it should be, the fact remains that it can be only a matter of a year or two when the population will have so increased as to make reversion to the present membership necessary. I note with pleasure the proposal to appoint a board for the management and control of the Fremantle Harbour Works. Any Bill with this object will receive my support, since it can result in nothing but good. I note that a similar arrangement is in contemplation for the ports of Albany, Geraldton, and Bunbury; and from this also nothing but good can spring, provided care be taken to appoint suitable men and to specify their duties accurately. The proposal in connection with the increase of our railways, especially the suggestion to take the railway on to Laverton, has my hearty support. I know in that district the lines pay well, and that the goldfield there is very rich indeed. People are paying large prices for carriage, and an extension of the line will be a great boon, will be profitable, and will mean the pushing forward of the industry. It is a matter of congratulation that the Coolgardie Water Scheme is approaching completion. It is a very great work, and at the present time is returning very little money for interest and sinking fund. I say this work should be pushed on, not only because it is a boon to the residents of the goldfields, who are waiting for water, but so as to get some revenue and to pay something towards sinking fund and interest. I see by paragraph 19, sub-paragraph B, of the Governor's Speech, that the question of raising a farther loan to carry out farther works, and, amongst other things, for the reticulation in the goldfields towns for the water supply is mentioned. I am afraid that unless this matter be pushed forward very rapidly we shall have the water to the goldfields before we have the reticulation ready. As soon as the money

is raised the work should be taken vigorously in hand; but I am afraid the water will reach the goldfields before the means of distributing it are provided; and as I said before, we are laying out a large sum of money on this work, therefore the sooner the reticulation is provided the better. I trust the Government will lose no time in pushing the work along. There is one short paragraph in the Speech which meets with my hearty approval, and I congratulate the Government on having proposed that the Right Hon. Sir John Forrest be asked, practically to lay on the water, to turn the tap on at Bulla Bulling, as soon as the water reaches that place. It is quite right that the compliment should be paid Sir John Forrest, as he was the originator of the scheme and has the work very much at heart. It will please him very much and be a compliment which we should pay to so great a man on the completion of so great a scheme. I see in regard to the surplus—when we find out how much the stores represent—that it is intended to spend money in the improvement of our gaols, and from all I can learn the improvement is badly needed. I am told that the gaols are unhealthy and damp, and that the space set apart for the criminals incarcerated is insufficient. To incarcerate unfortunate men in unhealthy premises is not right and the matter needs speedy alteration. I trust the work will be taken in hand and that we shall see an improvement brought about. I am also pleased that a lunatic asylum is to be erected, which is another good proposal, and that abattoirs are to be established, not only in the metropolitan district but on the goldfields; these are badly needed. We were told by the seconder of the Address that a bad state of affairs exist which the abattoirs will set right. In other places the returns from market dues and slaughtering licenses are very good and produce a fair revenue. The establishment of abattoirs will provide that the meat shall be properly inspected by competent men. I am glad to see this proposal has been made, and I trust it will be carried out. The revenue being as large as it is shows that we are paying a large amount in taxation, and I do hope there will be relief of some sort given to the people. I do not say strike off all the

duties, but some may come off on articles that are much needed.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What do you propose to put on?

HON. C. SOMMERS: I will not make any proposal, but I say that it is a matter of regret that the people have to pay so large a sum in taxation. I am sorry to see that no proposal is made for reducing the taxation in any way. On behalf of a large number of people, especially those resident on the goldfields, I say that some relief should be given, particularly in regard to articles that are needed for daily consumption. The proposal to ask for a farther loan to provide a water supply for Perth, in conjunction with Fremantle, is one which has my hearty support, and it is a work which is badly needed. The water at Fremantle, we are told, is so bad that some of the ship-masters who come to the port will not take it. That is a bad advertisement for the chief port of the State. The residents of Fremantle also complain of the water supply, and I trust that every effort will be made to see that a supply of good water is provided, and that speedily. I see that a number of Bills are proposed to be submitted to us during the coming session, and one I see is to deal with shops and factories, including an amendment of the Early Closing Act. I would just like to sound a note of warning in regard to the Shops and Factories Act. The tendency now-a-days is to attempt to help the labourer to do an injustice to the employer. What we want in the State, and what is badly needed, are more manufactories, more industries; and I hope that in the proposed Shops and Factories Bill the provisions will not be too stringent, and that the measure will not tend to drive capital out of the State. We want to increase the factories and bring about more employment. The Conciliation and Arbitration Act, to my mind, gives satisfaction and all the surety necessary to the employed. If an employee has a grievance he can bring it before the Court, therefore I hardly think that a Shops and Factories Act is needed; but if one is required, then we should take care not to make the law too stringent. Dealing with the question of providing railways, I am glad to note that steps are to be taken in regard to private companies, especially in regard to the Midland Rail-

way Company, to see that these railway companies carry out their contract. Mr. Drew has given notice to-night of a number of questions, to ask what action has been taken on the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Midland Railway Company. A deal of discussion took place six or eight months ago on this important matter, but things are going on in the same quiet easy-going way as before, and those people who have to use the private lines still make complaints as to the treatment they receive. I will not take up the time of the House at any greater length. I trust we shall all work harmoniously together, and in the absence of any party spirit, at least in this House, good legislation will result.

SIR E. WITTENOOM (North): Before proceeding to discuss the various items set down in the course of the Governor's Speech, I would like to make one reference in regard to the late Premier; and I should have had much pleasure the other day in indorsing the remarks which fell from the leader of the House and from Mr. Randell—sentiments so excellently expressed and so admirably said—had it not been that I felt very much indisposed. I do not wish to traverse what was said on that occasion. All knew the late Premier well. I take up my position from a standpoint different from anyone else. Mr. Sommers, who just sat down, and the leader of the House, were both members of the Ministry of which Mr. Leake was Premier. I occupied quite a different position. I was at school with the late Premier; we were school-boys together, and during the time that we were in politics together—for four years—the late Premier was in opposition to the Government of which I was a member. I think he was leader of the Opposition throughout the whole of that period, and during that time we had many close divisions, there was a great deal of warmth of feeling expressed, and I am pleased to say that during the whole time not one word ever passed between us, or from either of us, which we ever regretted. I think in these circumstances I could not refrain from saying a word to-day and adding my testimony, which has this difference from all others, that it comes from one who

was always a political adversary. I may say that I share to the fullest the sympathy expressed with the widow and family of the late Premier. Also, I may say I read with some considerable surprise and with mixed feelings that we are going to lose our Governor. I say, with mixed feelings, because on the one hand I feel extremely sorry that we are going to lose Sir Arthur Lawley, in whom the State will lose a good friend and a good Governor, but, on the other hand, I cannot help feeling satisfaction because the Governor is going to a better position and to promotion. I had pleasure in seeing Sir Arthur Lawley, then Mr. Lawley, and Mrs. Lawley, in London, a few days after the appointment to the position of Governor of this State, and I think I cabled out—and that cable no doubt is on record—that the selection of the Colonial Office was one that would give the greatest satisfaction to the people of Western Australia. I formed that opinion myself, an opinion I am glad to say all will agree with me has been borne out by facts. The universal verdict throughout the State is one of satisfaction that the Governor has carried out the duties so well; and I think that all will agree that one of the chief reasons His Excellency has been so successful is due to the very charming and admirable manner Lady Lawley has carried out her part of the business. I am going to refer to an important question. When we are discussing the selection of the next Governor and his salary, I hope no steps will be taken to cut down the salary. And I take an early opportunity of saying this because I consider at the present time the salary of the Governor—some £4,000 a year—is just barely sufficient to keep up with dignity the position in the way in which it should be kept up. I am one of those who think it is the duty of the Governor to entertain, not because a few have an opportunity of sharing that entertainment, but because it sets an example, such as should be set in a city like Perth. We have in this State a number of persons who are in a position to spend money in entertaining, and the Governor should set an example. I am not advocating this merely for the pomp of entertaining, but from another point of view. Look at the business which is made; look at the

circulation of the money that an entertainment brings about. It gives work to people, and means the circulation of a large amount of money. I cannot understand the democratic idea that the Governor should not entertain, and that other people should not entertain. If a man has a large income, should he hoard it up and not use it, and not allow it to be circulated? If that be so, we shall all have large credits in the Savings Bank, and goodness knows the credit there is large enough—I believe it is £1,800,000.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It will not be in the Savings Bank.

SIR E. WITTENOOM: Let us hope it will be. Look at other places in the world. Look at France, a most discontented country, because they have not a monarchy; they have nothing which causes people to spend money. Look at America, the most democratic of all countries: they are making society so as to get people to spend money. This is my idea. I do not know if it will commend itself to other members. Let me go from sentiment to business. I wish to come to a subject which deserves much consideration, and although, perhaps, the Government do not deserve a vote of censure for it, still it is open to the strongest criticism. I refer to railway management. I am of opinion that members of Parliament are entitled to a thorough explanation with regard to the recent arrangement in connection with the railways. I think Ministers should take Parliament into their confidence, and explain the why and the wherefore of the matter. We have had no reasons stated: all sorts of things have been mentioned, but nothing has been heard from an authoritative quarter. It is time now that the Government came forward and made a full explanation of their past actions to the people and to Parliament: those actions must either be justified, or else admitted to be wrong. The first point in connection with the question of railway management has been the shortage of trucks. Very few people, unless they have been in business, can know what that shortage of trucks has meant. It has caused endless inconvenience and expense. Take the case of ships which come here to load timber. I shall refer to the timber trade, because I know more

about it than about anything else, in this connection. Here are ships chartered to load at a certain date, with 25 or perhaps 28 days to load in. Possibly the timber station asks the Railway Department to supply 40 or 60 trucks. Then the station receives seven, or perhaps six, or perhaps four. Meantime, the lay days go by, and demurrage is inflicted on the charterers. The circumstance that timber companies are mulct in demurrage because the Government cannot supply trucks may not seem a matter of great moment. On the other hand, however, we must consider the man who is buying the timber, and is making arrangements for its receipt at the Cape of Good Hope, or in South America, or India, or London. That man's calculations are vitiated by the delay of two or three weeks, and the use of the timber for his contract is frequently gone. Very often a man in that position is compelled to buy timber in substitution in order to carry on his contract. That is one of the evils of the shortage of trucks, and here is another. When trucks are not available for the removal of timber as it is cut, the timber has to be piled up, thus cumbering operations around the mills. As this piling up continues—you cannot keep your men and your machinery idle—the stacks become high and the work becomes expensive, its cost amounting to as much as 4s. per load. This aspect, which is known to me personally, is only one of many in connection with the shortage of trucks. I shall not deal with the case of the goldfields. Although I have heard of what they have suffered, I do not know the facts of my own knowledge. I am in a position to inform the House what a business in which I am concerned has suffered through the scandalous state of things which prevailed. When Millar's Karri & Jarrah Forests, Limited, offered to provide their own engines to run trains at night if the Government would supply the trucks, they met with a refusal. "No; it is against the rules: there is too much red-tape to allow that." However, the trouble is ended. The supply of trucks is now ample, for the simple reason that the increase in rates has reduced the amount of the freight business so far as to balance the deficiency in rolling-stock. Another cause relieving

the stringency was the plentiful rainfall on the goldfields, by reason of which hundreds of trucks formerly used in water traffic were released and rendered available for other work.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The trouble is not over yet.

SIR E. WITTENOOM: Then another trouble is the rise in railway rates, a rise which, in the case of industries barely paying, amounts to as much as 50 per cent. Hon. members will see what such an increase means in the business of a company like Millar's. The higher rates involve an expenditure of £15,100 per annum over and above everything which the company has been in the habit of paying. Up to the date of the increase in railway rates, the company had paid only a dividend of 5 per cent. The higher freights, coupled with the demand for the eight-hours day—which latter may mean a farther loss of £12,000 a year—would just about sweep away all profit and leave the company working for nothing. No timber company but Millar's has ever paid a dividend, and yet the timber industry employs some 20,000 people. This is the industry which the Government seek to hamper in every possible way, instead of furthering the efforts of the various companies to work their business properly. I may just glance at the goldfields. We have already heard of protests from them. Everyone who reads the newspapers will have seen the cables which came from London recently. I believe a letter in the same connection was addressed to Mr. Walter James, the Premier. If these continually recurring and increasing imposts are to be inflicted on the gold-mining industry, the development of the State will be hampered. People will not continue operations here if these irritating imposts are put on time after time. It behoves us to be careful on that score. A farther effect of the increase of railway rates has been to advantage unduly companies owning mills situated close to the coast, and such companies as have their own railways. These companies are placed at an advantage of 8s. or 10s. per ton, as against companies otherwise situated. Of course, it may simply be said that the companies owning mills near the coast, or owning private railways, are very lucky; but, still, this



is not the way to regulate traffic and to render profitable the development of a large industry. Everything should be done on the fairest basis, and as cheaply as possible. If all the increases announced had continued, I should, perhaps, have had from my London board a cable instructing me to shut down the mills, with the result that 20,000 wage-earners would have been thrown out of employment. Dealing with the Early Closing Act, Mr. Sommers just now said, and said with emphasis, that we should do everything in our power to encourage industries, and certainly do nothing to hinder their development. I say that his remark is an admirable one, and applies equally to the question with which I am now dealing. One naturally asks himself, why should we be put to all this bother? Why should we have all this worry about trucks? Why should all these additional imposts be put on our industries? I do not know, and I have never found anybody who does know. I have looked for explanations, but have never heard a word of explanation from the mouths of Ministers or members of Parliament, or from the newspapers. The question appears to be unanswerable. The man in the street says the reason is that the railways are mismanaged, that the whole working of the department is ineffectively supervised, and that the proper course is not to raise railway rates, but to cut down expenses. It may be so. I do not know. I have met Mr. Kingsmill and Mr. Short, whom I have found very nice and very courteous; but somehow or other the high rates remain notwithstanding. We get no farther in that respect. I must admit that, as a rule, I do not repose much trust in the "man in the street," who generally knows about half the question while thinking he knows it all. Indeed, I have known members of Parliament who thought they knew a very great deal, whereas they eventually turned out to know very little. In some instances, a member when on one side of the House seems to know nothing, but when on the other side knows an immense deal. I need only turn, by way of exemplification, to the varying views pronounced concerning the Coolgardie Water Scheme at different times. On one point I am entirely with the Govern-

ment, and that is their determination that the railways shall be made to pay. There can be no question as to that. The railways are supposed to be a reproductive work, and they must be made to return working expenses, interest on capital, and sinking fund. If they do not return the amount of these three items, they do not constitute a reproductive public work; and in letting the returns fall below the point indicated we are breaking faith with the people in England who lent us their money. It is a distinct understanding between borrower and lender that the security of a loan floated is to be a reproductive public work. I do not think, however, that the railways should be made reproductive by increase of rates. I consider that end is to be attained by reducing expenses. A great drawback of this State is that we have no private railways. If we had a few private railways, we could compare their expense rate with that —

MEMBERS: What about the Midland railway?

SIR E. WITTENOOM: Well, I did not like to mention the Midland railway, because I think the Government have come out so very badly over that business. In countries where railways are privately owned, the charges of one line are kept down by the competition of another. Here, however, the manager of the railways, being a Government servant, is practically an autocrat, and can charge what he likes. Here, if the Department is not paying, the simple remedy is to put up rates. The manager of Government railways has no competition to fear, and he is therefore able to raise rates to any figure he likes. Now we find Ministers trying to make a change—a change which amounts to a direct admission of their wrong-doing in the past. They are endeavouring to change the system of management by placing the control in the hands of three commissioners. That course is one which has my hearty support in every respect, and I consider that it ought to have been adopted long ago. The transference of the control of the railways from the Minister to the hands of three Commissioners will be an advantage to the State. I do not think, however, that the system of Commissioners will ever answer on the lines pro-

posed by the Government. I will refer hon. members to the concluding sentence of paragraph 9 of His Excellency's Speech:

Adequate provision, however, will be made to leave with Parliament the full power of controlling rates, and of dealing with all questions involving the interests of the railway servants of the State.

Now, what is the use of such a system as here sketched out? Did hon. members ever hear of a more mixed arrangement? It is neither one thing nor the other. Far better for the Minister to retain control than to part with it on such terms! Supposing the Commissioners want to raise a rate or to dismiss an employee, they must go to the Minister, and through him to Parliament, for authority to do so. Unless the Commissioners be granted full power to conduct the business of the railways on thorough business lines, no good result can flow from their appointment.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: Who will appoint the other two Commissioners?

SIR E. WITTENOOM: The Government, I presume.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: In the same way as they appointed the present Commissioner?

SIR E. WITTENOOM: The hon. member had better address that query to the head of the Government. I cannot answer. This brings me to Mr. George's appointment, on which we have heard a multitude of opinions, many of them adverse. For my part I know nothing about Mr. George; I have never heard of his managing railways; I have never heard that he has a capacity for management. He may, however, possess all necessary attributes; therefore it is desirable that Ministers should put us in possession of the reasons which actuated them in appointing him. This is one of the points on which the Government should be perfectly frank. Mr. George may be a very good man, and in every way fitted for the appointment; I am not in a position to say whether he is or not. So many people, however, have pronounced him unfit for the position that I think the Government should now come forward and state why Mr. George was selected. Mr. Kingsmill is a most careful man, who is not new to office as Minister for Railways; and I do not think he would have taken the

responsibility of making this appointment without careful consideration. I have not, however, heard Mr. Kingsmill's reasons. Naturally, therefore, I do not intend to condemn the appointment. Judging for myself, I cannot say much about it, as I have not the requisite knowledge. I should be interested to hear from Mr. Kingsmill a statement of the grounds on which Mr. George was chosen. In the meantime, as he has been appointed, there is no use in abusing the man. He is there: let us help him to do his work as well as possible. Let us trust he will prove a success. The fact that Mr. George has not been in control of railways before does not necessarily imply that he will not be a success. We have in this Chamber a case which negatives that view. The leader of the House is a highly qualified physician and surgeon, and yet he has proved one of the best Ministers for Lands the State could possibly secure. [MEMBERS: hear, hear.] There is no reason why Mr. George's appointment should not turn out similarly. The only thing I have against Mr. Kingsmill is that when the timber companies asked for a reduction of the high rates imposed, he practically told them that he would let them have some little thing, some mere trifle. His reply put me rather in mind of the story of an English gentleman who travelled on the Continent without knowing a word of any other language than English, and who was presented with a tremendous bill of 300 or 400 francs for two days' stay at an hotel. Bill in hand, the Englishman went in an awful rage to the hotel proprietor, with curses and abuse. When eventually the proprietor discovered what was the trouble he said, "Oh, yes; I will alter the bill"; and he took off five francs. Mr. Kingsmill's action towards myself and my friends puts me in mind of this story. I find, according to paragraph 12, Ministers are going to establish a school of mines and a system of agricultural and horticultural instruction to State school children in the higher classes. The little experience I had, a few years ago, showed me that elementary teaching is not much good. There is one thing the Minister for Lands might do, and that is to establish an agricultural college. He will find amongst the records of his

department that this matter was inquired into. I had it looked into some time ago, and everything was ready; even the land for the settlement on the South-West Railway. We want the youth of the country educated up to farming and agriculture, because that will be the staple industry in Western Australia by and by; but the young men of this country are growing up without any knowledge of agriculture. When I was in London I was asked by people who would like to send their sons to Western Australia, if there was an agricultural college to which they could send their boys, and they were sorry to learn that there was nothing of the kind here. I strongly recommend the establishment of a college to the Minister for Lands. At the present time we do not grow sufficient for our own demands. The Minister for Lands has done admirably in inducing people to go on the land. It is now popular to go on the land, and farming is going on all over the country. I do not think the Government could undertake a better work than the establishment of an agricultural college. I read with very great pleasure that we had such an enormous revenue last year; and I suppose we must be equally satisfied that there was an enormous expenditure. Still a balance was left and we have a surplus of £123,000. That only shows the vitality of the country, when it can produce such an enormous revenue as that contributed last year. That and the great output of gold is evidence that we are doing well. I have written to London several times pointing out that we are not going back. I was pleased, on reading the speech of the Premier the other day, that he expressed himself in favour of retaining the sliding scale. I always believed in the sliding scale. With our surplus, of course it seems unnecessary; but it would be unwise to discard that now, for we cannot tell what tariff may in the future be adopted by the Federal Parliament. We know that there is a great struggle going on between free-traders and protectionists, and if the free-traders win the day it may become most disastrous for us. On the question of revenue, therefore, we should retain everything that we have until we know how we are going to stand on the question. We

have an example in regard to this view from the other States. I am pleased to find that the Government do not intend to go in for any large railways, or large works, at the present time. We have quite enough in hand for the money that is available without going in for more works; and I consider that every penny the Government get hold of should be put into the existing railways so as to equip them. Let there be no farther bother about trucks. Let us equip our present lines and have them put in first-class order, rather than build new lines. There is one railway that I think might be undertaken in a cheap way, a line to Port Hedland.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That is your district.

SIR E. WITTENOOM: It is not mine. I do not own an acre of it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: But it is in your district.

SIR E. WITTENOOM: The country there requires thoroughly opening up and testing. I appeal to the gold-fields members to say how useless it is to attempt to develop a country without railways. I am not in a position to prove to the Government, or to the Parliament, that such a railway will pay. At all events, I know if the Government will not build a railway, the people up there are willing to undertake the alternative and build a private line. All they want is some means of opening up the country; and if this is done we do not know but that we may find another Kalgoorlie. The next subject I wish to touch upon is pastoral development. I cannot urge upon the Government too strongly the necessity for taking every step they can to develop this important industry. We all know of the scarcity and dearness of meat, and often the poorness of meat. We know that the sheep and cattle come from the North-West country, between Geraldton and Kimberley, and the pastoralists think that too much cannot be done in giving every facility to get the stock from the Northern portion of the State to Perth. It is no use for the squatters to fatten the stock unless it can be taken to market. The squatters want good jetties, good steamers, and good overland routes with good water on them. But the chief thing the squatters want at the present time is a really fast subsidised steamer

which will go 15 knots, suitable for meat carrying, and for carrying the mails. The present steamers are good and useful, but they have to call at every port, they have to wait; and are so slow that the stock are half-starved when they arrive in Fremantle. It is no use talking about feeding the stock in transit, because the animals will not eat; therefore a good fast steamer to bring the stock down would do a great deal to assist the pastoralists. The meat question is one that the Government should give their earnest attention to, and I feel I need only mention it to the leader of the House to get his sympathetic assistance in obtaining what he can for the squatters. The Government have shown their desire to do what they can by a promise of the construction of abattoirs and cold storage depôts. I have only one other subject to touch upon, and that relates to the agricultural portion of the country. I have travelled about the agricultural districts a great deal lately, and one thing has struck me forcibly, the need for good roads. Wherever you go, and wherever you find development, there is the same want of good roads. We have a fair number of railways, but no community can get along without roads. The Government are doing all they can to place the people on the land; then, I say, in the name of goodness, give them good roads; let them get to the railways; give them the roads to act as feeders to the railways. This is the one thing I have noticed that is sadly needed in the country. It is of no use having good railways unless the people are assisted by good roads. If you place a man upon a farm, and he cannot get his produce to market unless by paying ruinous rates, then you will not keep him there. Good roads will cause, quicker than anything else, the cheapening of food. The tendency now-a-days, everyone will agree with me, is for wages to come down and food to go up in price. How are we to reconcile these two things? I do not know. Therefore, every effort should be made to facilitate the construction of roads in consequence of the growing development in the country. I will not say more than that I have very great pleasure in voting for the Address-in-reply.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West) : I cordially agree with the various paragraphs in His

Excellency's Speech dealing with the recovery of the King from his recent serious illness; also with that part of it relating to the projected departure of Sir Arthur Lawley from Western Australia; and the reference to the late Premier, Mr. Leake. And I think I would be needlessly wasting the time of the House if I were to reiterate the expressions which have fallen from the leader of the House, and the remarks so ably made by the last speaker on this subject. Therefore, I shall proceed to deal with various matters to which the Speech relates—matters of public concern. I think first and foremost in the Speech, and first and foremost with regard to the public matters agitating the minds of the people, and which largely concern Parliament, are those connected with the railway administration. Firstly, we have been informed of the appointment of Mr. George to the position of Commissioner of Railways, and personally I take the very strongest possible objection to the method adopted in making this appointment. We know that for a very considerable period there has been the strongest agitation throughout the country to have the railways placed under a board removed as far as possible from political control. Opinions have been fairly expressed against a board consisting of three commissioners, and opinions have been expressed in reference to having one commissioner. On nearly all hands it has been decided that a board or commissioner should be appointed to control this important public department away from political control altogether. I ask myself the question, and I ask hon. members, whether the proposal the Government have made, and have attempted to carry into execution, has improved the position one whit on what it was previous to the appointment of Mr. George. I think I shall be able to show the House in a short while the position. Confusion is worse confounded now, or will be when we get three Commissioners. Let us look at the statements of Ministers since the appointment of Mr. George. The appointment has been defended on this ground. Ministers say that the Railways Act, which was passed in 1878, provided that an officer was to be created and called the Commissioner of Railways; therefore, it was intended always that the Commis-

sioner of Railways should act in that capacity, but he was not bound to be a Minister of the Crown. I do not think members of the House, or the public, are likely to regard this explanation as satisfactory. Before the appointment of the present Colonial Treasurer, there was a Colonial Treasurer, the head of a State department; also there was a Colonial Secretary, and a Commissioner of Railways. It is idle to talk now and say that the Colonial Treasurer and the Colonial Secretary could carry out the functions of their office and not be members of either House of Parliament. It is in the highest degree absurd to adduce that as an argument in justification of what the Government have done. Since Responsible Government became the order of the day, the Commissioner of Railways has been a Minister of the Crown.

HON. W. T. LORON: Before Responsible Government?

HON. M. L. MOSS: Before Responsible Government he was the Executive head, and as the hon. gentleman interjected, he practically carried out the duties that devolved on the Minister of the day.

HON. G. RANDELL: He was a member of the Executive.

HON. M. L. MOSS: The position I take up, and the difficulty which the country is confronted with is, in the first instance, that there are nearly 6,000 railway employees in the State, and one great difficulty the Ministry have to contend with, and all public men have to contend with, is that members of Parliament have been button-holed to prevent the Ministry carrying out any particular reform in the past. Take the Province I have the honour of representing. There are 2,000 railway servants in that Province, and is it not in the highest degree detrimental to the best interests of the State and the working of the Railway Department that a member of Parliament should be continuously subjected to the demands of the railway servants to prevent the Ministry carrying out any particular reform? Is it not in the highest degree detrimental to the best interests of the State that Ministers themselves are subject to the great lever at work when 6,000 electors of this country are able to record their votes in a particular way, because the Minister is actuated by a

desire to do that which is best in the interests of the country, that is something which is unpopular for the time being? My idea throughout has been that if a change is to be made in the running of the railways, they should be put under the control of some gentleman, or some number of gentlemen, whose one aim would be to conduct the railways in the best interests of the State, to conduct them as a private individual would conduct a business concern, and who would not be subject to that degree of influence and pressure which undoubtedly obtains at the present time. Leaving for a moment the question of the methods adopted in the appointment of Mr. George, I desire clearly to state that, to my mind, the want of backbone and the weak-kneed behaviour of Ministries have rendered a change necessary. During last session we had many instances of what were termed glaring cases in connection with the management of the railways, and the great object in view then was to put the railways under the control of a board clear of all political control. I do not wish to make any remarks in the slightest degree derogatory to Mr. George; but we do know that certain transactions of Mr. George's with the Railway Department were, during the last session of Parliament, made the subject of keen dispute and contention by the party which has now appointed that gentleman to the position of Commissioner. I do not say for a moment, and I never have believed, that Mr. George was guilty of any dishonourable act; but looking at the facts of the case as they are, I must point out that the Government, or the successors of the Government, who have put Mr. George in his present position, are the very persons who condemned him, and condemned him severely, on the score of certain transactions of his with the Railway Department. That being the case, we must look at the recent expressions of opinion and the recent statements of Ministers of the Crown to see what exactly is the position which they propose the new Commissioners, or at any rate Mr. George, shall occupy in connection with the management of the railways. Immediately on the appointment being made, we were given to understand that Mr. George was to have unfettered

control of the railways, and also unfettered control of the railway servants. I speak from personal knowledge when I say that so soon as the appointment was announced the gravest degree of contention arose with regard to it among the railway servants residing in the district I represent. I was approached with a request that I should protest against the appointment. I certainly intend to protest against it; but I should not have objected for a moment to the appointment of a competent person to the position which Mr. George has obtained, providing that competent person were granted the degree of power which I consider should be vested in such an officer. Mr. Kingsmill, during his tenure of the railway portfolio, and after Mr. George's appointment, stated that the railway servants had nothing to fear; that their position would be exactly as it was before the appointment. Strange to say, in my copy of the Governor's Speech I underlined, at the last sitting of the House, exactly the same words as Sir Edward Wittenoom has quoted :—

Adequate provision, however, will be made to leave with Parliament the full power of controlling rates and of dealing with all questions involving the interests of the railway servants of the State.

If Parliament is to control the fixing of the rates, how is any board of Commissioners which may be intrusted with the working of the railways to run the department on anything like business principles? The Railway Department is a large earning department, but it is also a most expensive department to keep going; and the action of Sir Edward Wittenoom and his friends connected with the timber trade affords an apt illustration of what every Minister is bound to encounter. I am not now saying that it was a proper thing or an improper thing to raise the rates; but we see that, so soon as the interests controlled by Sir Edward Wittenoom and his friends are affected, those gentlemen complain, "You have no right to put up rates; you ought to cut down expenses." While Parliament is able to dictate to the Commissioners what rates shall be charged, and while Parliament is able to bring pressure to bear, how can the management be pronounced free from political control? For, if there are a

number of gentlemen in a position to bring to bear the pressure which Sir Edward Wittenoom and his friends apply in complaining that the timber rates are too high, it is only a matter of gaining the support of a sufficient number of members of Parliament, and then the rates must be immediately decreased. Unless the Government of the day are backed up by a sufficient majority in the other Chamber, they cannot resist such pressure. In making that remark, of course, I exclude the experience of last session, when an Administration carried on in a minority. Generally speaking, under our system of Government, the question is simply one of numbers. If the Government are backed up by a strong majority, they can pursue their policy; but if a sufficient number of members of Parliament pronounce, for example, that certain railway rates are too high, then Ministers must give way, and the rates must come down. Under such circumstances, how can the railways be run on commercial principles? It has been said that the competition of private railways would react advantageously on the management of our Government lines; but I do not think any member, after our experience of privately-owned railways in this State, will have the temerity to rise in this House and advocate a continuation of the system. Certainly, no candidate will appear in a constituency like mine and advocate anything of the kind. The experience we gained in this country when the West Australian Land Company held the Great Southern Railway, and the experience we are gathering now with the Midland Railway Company holding the Midland line, is such as we are not desirous of enlarging.

SIR E. WITTENOOM : Those lines were good in their time.

HON. M. L. MOSS : They were good in this sense, that in then existing circumstances those lines would not have been built by the Government. The subsequent developments, however, render it perfectly certain that if Albany had not been connected with Beverley at the time of the outbreak of the Coolgardie goldfields, a line would have been immediately constructed; as also would the Geraldton-Cue line, in view of the development of the Murchison district.

The country has been compelled to buy the Great Southern Railway, and will yet be compelled to buy the Midland Railway also.

HON. J. A. THOMSON: The sooner the better.

HON. M. L. MOSS: I am not going to advocate for one moment the construction of privately-owned railways; but I do say the Government railways, the most valuable asset of the country, would in private hands be made to pay handsomely. I concede that. I cannot see, however, why under State ownership the railways should not be made to pay equally well. I am afraid our railway system will not prove remunerative while it is controlled by Ministers dependent on the votes of members of Parliament, who are liable and bound to be button-holed at any moment with a view to giving their vote in Parliament in a particular direction. If the proposal is to appoint Commissioners who will be subject to Parliament in these matters, then Parliament will see that they carry out their duties properly; and a close watch will be kept by the Minister, as well as by Parliament, on the doings of the Commissioners. The railways can be made to pay, and can be worked to the much greater advantage and benefit of the country generally. I fear, however, that the proposal of the Government in its present form will lead to something very much worse than the existing state of affairs. We are to have three highly-paid officials carrying out the work formerly performed by Mr. John Davies; we are to have the Minister passing his veto whenever he thinks fit; and we are to leave the control of the Commissioners and the Minister subject to all sorts of criticisms. The Minister will be controlled in his position by the voice of the people, echoed through members of Parliament. Therefore, the state of affairs with the three Commissioners will be far worse than it is at the present time.

HON. W. T. LOTOX: The Bill for their appointment has not been passed yet.

HON. M. L. MOSS: I shall now leave that aspect of the question, and deal with Mr. George's appointment.

HON. G. RANDELL: Would you take away the prerogative of Parliament?

HON. M. L. MOSS: I should not take away the prerogative of Parliament; but I should appoint competent Commissioners, and I should see that the terms of their appointment sufficiently defined their powers. I should allow the Commissioners to fix rates, for I should say to them, "Here are the railways properly equipped; it is your duty now to make them pay in the same way as if they were privately-owned railways." As for Mr. George's appointment, it is well to glance for a moment at the circumstances surrounding it. Parliament, I believe, was originally prorogued to some date in the month of May. It was then farther prorogued until the 17th or 18th of June; and between the date on which Parliament should originally have met and the date of its actual meeting Mr. George's appointment was made. Mr. John Davies has been away from this State for a considerable time; and, I ask, what was the desperate hurry for the appointment of Mr. George to the position after the date fixed for the meeting of Parliament, and almost on the eve of the day it actually met? Sir Edward Wittenoom has said we are entitled to demand that the Ministry should take us into their confidence on this matter, both in respect to what they have done in the past, and what they propose to do in the future in connection with the Railway Department. I strongly indorse everything Sir Edward Wittenoom has said on this point. While indorsing his remarks, however, I must, to the best of my ability, condemn those features of the appointment which I consider unjustifiable and unwarrantable in the circumstances. Mr. George's appointment certainly ought not to have been made until, at any rate, there had been a vote from Parliament providing the Government with the necessary funds to pay the salary appertaining to the position. Parliament, without being consulted, has been pledged to the appointment of at any rate one Commissioner, and practically of three Commissioners. I do not suppose Mr. George's most ardent supporters will claim for him that he is an expert in the management of railways. I believe the utmost that is claimed for Mr. George is that he would be a very good man in connection with the rolling-stock, the engines, trucks, and carriages.

I have heard that statement made by persons well in the confidence of the Government. If this, however, is the reason for Mr. George's appointment, then I must ask what is the necessity for a locomotive superintendent at Fremantle. The locomotive superintendent is paid a large salary, £1,000 a year; and if he is not, he ought to be, competent for the discharge of the duties devolving upon him. I do not think the position, so far as that part of the system is concerned, will be improved by the appointment of Mr. George. After all that has been said for and against Mr. John Davies, I should be extremely sorry to equal Mr. W. J. George with Mr. John Davies in point of capacity for managing a railway system. Mr. Davies undoubtedly made mistakes; but it must be remembered that he controlled a department which has wrecked three or four Ministers, and which, at any rate since I took an interest in the public affairs of Western Australia, has represented the least enviable of portfolios. Now, if Mr. George is to be intrusted with the general management of railways, it amounts to committing to an utter greenhorn the control of a highly difficult and cumbrous department. My personal opinion is that it would be better for the country now, if Parliament were to say, "We do not intend to vote Mr. George's salary. If the Government have been so unconstitutional as, without the vote of Parliament at the back of them, to give Mr. George a five years' engagement, it is better for the State that we refuse to ratify the agreement. We will not confirm it. If Mr. George has any right of action in consequence of what has been done, it is better to pay him a little than to hand over this department to the control of a person not competent, in our opinion, to manage it." For my part, I say it would be undoubtedly better to pay Mr. George a small amount of compensation than to have the Railway Department thrown into an even worse state of chaos than has prevailed for a long time past. It is a moot point indeed whether Mr. George, in such circumstances, would be entitled to compensation. It is true the Executive authorities have given him this agreement, but Mr. George was a member of Parliament, and he knew very well

that no parliamentary vote had been granted, entitling him to receive a salary; therefore it is a question whether the agreement made with Mr. George would be binding in such circumstances. Apart from that, we find a member of Parliament appointed to this position whose dealings with the department the Ministry of the day had condemned. Mr. Sommers has correctly pointed out that the appointment of a member of Parliament, particularly a member of Parliament with a seat in another place, to such a position was utterly wrong, and was liable to grave abuse. Here we find that because a member has run counter to the Government, not only in connection with the management of the railways, but in other matters which I will not refer to now, he is hoisted into a position of this kind, and given a five years' engagement at a very high salary; very high compared with other salaries to be found on the Estimates. This is an unconstitutional proceeding, carried out without Parliamentary vote, a member being taken from the ranks of the Opposition and appointed to a high position. We must remember that the Government who have appointed this gentleman said that his dealings with the department were not fit to bear the light of day. I said before that I do not believe, and I never did believe, there was anything dishonourable in Mr. George's dealings with the Railway Department. I promise the Government, as far as my vote in connection with Mr. George's selection is concerned, if I stand alone, that I shall vote against it. I have come to this way of thinking, that we ought to express our opinion: we ought to be more than registering machines for the Government. The Ministry had no right to pledge the country unless they had a vote behind them. The Government had no right to pledge the country on a large question of policy for the next five years, and provide a salary of fifteen hundred pounds a year for any gentleman without first taking the country into their confidence. Only on occasions of great pressure, when Parliament is not meeting, should the Government act in the way they have now acted. But there is nothing of that kind in this instance. We know that for months and months the railways have been run equally as satisfactory as they



have been run during the past fourteen days. Therefore, the Government could have waited until Parliament had been taken into their confidence, and Parliament had approved of the great change which has been made in this large revenue-earning department. It is promised in the Governor's Speech that there is to be constitutional reform. Two things are promised: that the Constitution Act shall be amended, and that there shall be constitutional reform. Last session, in speaking on the Address-in-reply, I drew attention to the fact that with the advent of the Federal Parliament, the Customs Department, the Defence Department, and the Post and Telegraph Department being taken out of the arena of State politics, there ought to be a considerable reduction in the number of members of Parliament. I then advocated that the Ministry should be reduced to four members; that the number of members in the Legislative Assembly should be reduced to 40, and in this Chamber to 18. On more mature consideration I am inclined to think the opinion expressed last session was somewhat hasty. I believe if this country was going to stand still it would be a good thing at the present time to reduce the number of members. If we were confronted with a deficit, as in other States, it would be a matter of paramount importance and of necessity to cut down in all directions, and we would be bound perhaps to commence at the top of the tree and make a reform in Parliament. But when I look to the immigration returns, I find that population is pouring into the State at the rate of twelve or fourteen thousand persons a year. Therefore a temporary reduction of members only could be made. It would only be a temporary expedient, and would mean that we should have to tinker with the Constitution Act again in a short period. We are not in a similar position to the sister State of South Australia. There a reduction is forced upon the country as an imperative necessity. There there is a dwindling revenue with no safety-valve in the shape of a sliding scale. And even with the reduction of members in South Australia, the Government are bound to go in for a very serious impost in the shape of direct taxation. We are confronted with nothing of the kind here.

We have a good revenue, a considerable surplus, and we have the safety-valve of the sliding scale. With regard to that sliding scale, I think it would be in the highest degree improvident to abolish it at the present time. The Federal tariff is not a settled commodity. The Senate have had many disagreements with the House of Representatives as to the tariff; and when that tariff is settled it may be very different from that which was introduced by the Federal Ministry. To interfere with that which is producing our surplus at the present time would be in the highest degree suicidal. We are told that there is a surplus of £127,000, that is allowing for a reduction to be made in the writing down of the stores. If that be so, we know that the sliding scale is producing considerably over £200,000. Minus the sliding scale, we should have to resort to a considerable reduction, or face a deficit. I am prepared, in the unpopular circumstances, to say that the duties on food should remain; that the sliding scale should be kept on until we know what the Federal tariff will be. We know that the sliding scale is disappearing at the rate of 20 per cent. every year; and within two and a half years after the imposition of Federal duties, we know perfectly well the sliding scale will be practically gone. Because, as soon as inter-State duties are reduced below the Federal duties, the latter will prevail. It does not come within the range of practical politics at present, therefore, to say that the sliding scale should be abolished. I do not think it wise to go in for any great reform in regard to the two Houses of Parliament at present. The Premier, in his speech in the Town Hall, said that he proposed to reduce the number of members in this House to 21, and in the other place to 46. That would reduce the number of members of Parliament by 13, which means a saving of £2,600 a year. That saving is very much less than the extra expense the country is going to be put to in employing three persons to fill the position of General Manager of Railways. If that is the only saving to be effected, then I am not prepared to give my vote in favour of it. If we reduce the number of members in this Chamber to 21—I am aware that once there were only 15 members, that

was at the time when Responsible Government was initiated—it is dangerous. Important matters may slip through when there are only five or six members present. Take the House to-day : there is nothing like the full number of members present, and those who have been in this Chamber for some time know that frequently business is transacted with little more than a bare quorum. You, Mr. President, have frequently drawn attention to the fact that the attendance of members is not what we require. Therefore, to reduce the number of members in this House to 21 would be detrimental to the country. The most objectionable part of the whole scheme is this, that in case of a deadlock, a proposal is to be made for both Houses to sit together and vote together—the Assembly consisting of 46 and this House consisting of 21 members. Let us consider what the position would be. The state of demoralisation which the Assembly gets into just before a general election is well known, and is pretty well admitted by the members of that House themselves. We are blessed with triennial Parliaments, and it is a very good system, because it keeps members in touch with their constituents. But just before a general election, members in another place are pretty well prepared to vote for anything that is popular. The result would be this, that in a joint sitting of the 21 members of this House with the members of the Assembly to the number of 46 members, the protest of the Legislative Council would not count for very much. During the 10 or 11 years we have had Responsible Government I do not think there has been any deadlock between the two bodies. If we are asked what this Chamber is existing for, well, it is for the purpose of making a deadlock occasionally on matters of ill-considered legislation. I am of opinion it is important that the Legislative Council should occasionally block matters that are considered in the last hours of a session, and in the last hours of a dying Parliament. I do not know any time when the Legislative Council in this State has not carried out the unwritten rules which the House of Lords invariably acts upon. If any matter of policy be rejected by the Lords and a general election is held, and the people favour that

matter, the House of Lords invariably yields. I have known of no case in this country where a deadlock has occurred, and where the Legislative Council, after a general election, knowing of the expression of opinion of the electors, has not given way. If an occasion should arise when the Legislative Council absolutely blocks any measure of reform that the people are demanding, then it is time enough to talk about making the Legislative Council yield. To agree to a measure of reform such as the Premier has suggested in regard to this Chamber, is making the Legislative Council nothing more than a myth. The Council would have no independence, and it would be time to abolish it. I highly prize the position I hold in this House as a member of the Legislative Council, but I have no desire to occupy a seat in this Chamber if by so occupying that seat my independence is gone, and that at any time when there is a disagreement between the two Chambers I should have to sit with the other Chamber, in which case the votes of this House would be overpowered by members of another place. When that measure for reform in our constitution comes here I am not going to agree to it, but I shall oppose it to the best of my ability. I hope members of this Chamber will reflect what is about to be done. There is always a certain amount of popularity in agreeing to changes. Because it is a popular change, there will be plenty to vote for it; but I believe it will be worse for the country. We obtained from the Premier, in the speech to which I allude, the very candid admission that members of the Legislative Assembly frequently pass measures in the hope that the Legislative Council will reject them; and this he advances as the reason why he wants both Houses to vote together. It would be unconstitutional for me to cast any reflection on members of another place, and I do not propose to do so; but if there are, either in another place or in this Chamber, any members who pass legislation while entertaining the hope that the other branch of the Legislature will reject it, the sooner such legislators are known by the constituencies, and compelled to seek fresh fields and pastures new, the better it will be for the community at large. We are promised electoral reform; of

course, a very popular subject. Every candidate for political honours, I believe, condemns the electoral law, though I think there is little in the condemnation. Our electoral law is, to my mind, very liberal, and there is only one part of it to which I can really take exception. I consider that when a person gets his name on the electoral roll he should be entitled to vote. I do not believe in that portion of the Electoral Act which prescribes that a person shall not vote unless he has been six months in the State, and, farther, has had his name for six months on the electoral roll. The result of this regulation, particularly in the populous portions of the country, is that the votes granted by an electoral roll do not correspond with the number of names contained in it. Thus it becomes a matter for the returning officer, or his deputies, to ascertain whether a person claiming to exercise a vote has had his name on the roll for the requisite length of time. I hold that once a person's name has been put on the roll, that person should be entitled to vote. The great trouble in connection with the electoral law—I make this statement now, and I have made it on many previous occasions both in this Chamber and in the other branch of the Legislature—is something not inherent in the law itself: it is the apathy of the people generally. The trouble is that the people are thoroughly lazy in connection with electoral matters. They exhibit no interest in the matter of obtaining votes until just about the time when an election is taking place. Then, possibly learning from a candidate that their names are not on the roll, the people concerned kick up an awful row, contending that it is the business of the Government, or of some other people, but not their own, to see that their names are on the roll. Mr. Randell has frequently pointed out that the general public show themselves most apathetic in this respect. There is no trouble in getting on the roll. The only difficulty encountered in connection with the electoral law is to be found in the circumstance that the people are thoroughly lazy, and take no interest in electoral matters except, as I say, on the eve of an election. Then the electoral law is blamed by those who find themselves not entitled to vote.

**MEMBER:** People do not vote when they are on the roll.

**HON. M. L. MOSS:** It has been urged by many public men—and I greatly doubt that the adoption of the suggestion would not result in an improvement—that persons who are on the roll, but do not vote, should be struck off until they showed a disposition to exercise their votes. While on the subject of projected improvements of the electoral law, I should like to mention a matter which affects other persons besides myself. Cannot Parliament do something to cheapen the cost of elections and to prevent the corrupt practices which obtain, I believe, in connection with all elections? The cost of an election contest on the goldfields and in the metropolitan and Fremantle areas is becoming so high as to amount almost to a prohibition to the man of moderate means from seeking a seat in Parliament. I make this statement as one who has had much experience of the outlay which an election contest involves.

**HON. W. T. LORON:** Circulation of the coin.

**HON. M. L. MOSS:** There are many ways in which the cost of elections might be cheapened. I should like absolutely to prohibit the decking of any vehicle with posters or streamers intended to convey that the vehicle is being used for electoral purposes. A highly beneficial result would be obtained by this means alone. Candidates at the present time, we know, are not allowed to pay for vehicles conveying voters to or from the poll. We know, however, that their friends may pay for such vehicles; and I believe I am not letting out any secret when I say that candidates often have to foot the bill in the end, without being too curiously inquisitive concerning the items which make up the total. (Laughter.) I would go farther still to deal with an evil which is rampant in the populous portions of the State. The evil I allude to is the employment of professional canvassers, who, in my opinion, should be done away with altogether. The matter has been satisfactorily dealt with in New Zealand. There it has been made penal for any person to canvass for votes; and the employment of canvassers disqualifies a candidate, if the fact of their employment by him can be proved. I know that in the great

majority of cases proof of such employment could not be given, and to meet the evil, I should make the soliciting of votes penal. I should give the candidate himself the fullest and freest opportunity of conveying his views to the electors. I would not object to the candidate himself soliciting votes; but I would do away with the professional canvasser, and with vehicles decorated with streamers or posters. By these simple means the cost of elections would be greatly reduced. When the promised Electoral Bill comes down, I shall endeavour to draft two or three clauses having in view the objects stated, and I hope hon. members will see fit to support me. The Speech informs us that the Coolgardie Water Scheme is progressing apace, and that we may expect shortly to have the water through. I sincerely trust the best anticipations of the Government in this regard will be realised. The Coolgardie Water Scheme is undoubtedly a very great work, and any expectation other than that it will be an unqualified and indubitable success would be a serious blow to every member of the community. It will be a good thing when the Coolgardie Water Scheme is in such a state of forwardness that it will begin to earn interest, sinking fund, and upkeep. Mr. Sommers has pointed out that there is a possibility of the water getting to Bulla Bulling before the reticulation works are completed. I give the Government credit for better sense than to allow such a state of affairs to arise. In fact, I am inclined, from the pronouncement in His Excellency's Speech, to think that part of the policy of Ministers is to proceed with the work of reticulation as soon as possible, so that the undertaking may become reproductive and may do that which those who formulated the scheme and carried it to its present position so much desire, namely, return to the country some portion of the outlay, and enough to pay sinking fund and interest. In touching on this question, I desire to say a few words with regard to the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor. I think there is no one in the community but deploras the loss of that gentleman. It is ten thousand pities that Mr. O'Connor did not live to see the fruits of his great work. Certainly the Coolgardie Water Scheme and the Fremantle Harbour

Works are two enduring monuments to Mr. O'Connor's professional skill and capacity. Both works are great after their kind. Those of us who knew the Swan River 10 or 11 years ago, when there was nothing but a rocky bar across its mouth, and who now-a-days see boats of 13,000 or 14,000 tons burden come through and find safe berthage in a commodious harbour, must acknowledge the Fremantle Harbour Works to be a great engineering achievement. The Coolgardie Water Scheme is a work which stands almost alone. Nothing so stupendous has been undertaken, I believe, by any other nation, and certainly not by any other colony. This is the first opportunity I have had of expressing my views on certain observations made in this Chamber last session by a gentleman who has now passed away. I refer to the Hon. F. T. Crowder. While crediting that gentleman with the desire to state everything fairly and honestly, whatever matter he might be speaking on, I have to express my belief that no more honourable, no more conscientious Government officer than Mr. O'Connor ever lived. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I believe that the statements which appeared in a certain portion of the Press of this country, alleging of him that he had "grown fat and wealthy out of the Coolgardie Water Scheme," are infamous lies and base slanders. I have always held this opinion concerning Mr. O'Connor, that he was a highly arrogant man, but honesty itself, integrity itself. I think there can be no greater monument to his honesty and his integrity than the value at which his estate was sworn—some paltry two or three hundred pounds. I well recollect Mr. O'Connor coming to my house—a very unusual occurrence—on the Sunday of the week before his death, and expressing himself as bitterly hurt by an attack which had been made on him in another branch of the Legislature. He felt deeply also the attacks made on him by a section of the Press. I then remarked that I had been mistaken in him, that I thought him a man of strong will and high resolution, and not one who would be weak-kneed enough to feel the strictures passed on him either in Parliament or in a section of the Press. I well remember the

man walking across my room and saying, "Why, I am not worth the value of the suit of clothes I stand up in, and to have to labour under the stigma of having made money out of the country, out of the sacred trust reposed in me by the Government of the country, is more than I can bear." I well remember how the man shook at the idea that he should be accused of having made money out of the country. It seems to me that this is an episode which makes one ponder. Public men frequently make statements on matters as to the facts of which they are absolutely astray; and a certain section of the Press, which undoubtedly exercises great influence in the community, occasionally, I regret to say, writes articles appealing to the bad side of human nature. A section of the Press undoubtedly is guilty of such conduct, and a large section of the public appears to place a good deal of reliance on the newspapers in question, which, however, are as far out in their facts as are certain gentlemen who sometimes rise in public or in Parliament to make haphazard and random statements. I consider the castigation which Mr. O'Connor received in Parliament and in the Press was thoroughly undeserved. Undoubtedly a wrong has been done; and undoubtedly, seeing that the late Engineer-in-Chief passed away almost a pauper, it will be a scandal and an everlasting disgrace to this country if the Ministry of the day fail to guarantee that Mr. O'Connor's widow shall not become an object of charity. Let hon. members go over the Estimates for the past 10 years, and they will find annuities bestowed on and compassionate allowances granted to persons who have not rendered anything like the services of Mr. O'Connor to the State. He had a salary of £1,500 a year, and I venture to state that if we were to replace him at the present time by an engineer of equal eminence and of equal capacity in the designing and carrying out of gigantic works, we would not obtain his successor at anything approaching the salary paid to Mr. O'Connor. My friend Mr. Wood, who has been a Minister of the Crown, and who has controlled the department of which Mr. O'Connor was the permanent head, says that the family of the late Engineer-in-Chief have great claims on

the country. I re-echo and indorse all that Mr. Wood has said on the subject, and I shall await with a great amount of interest an expression of opinion from the leader of the House. The matter of £3,000 or £4,000 is a mere bagatelle to the country, especially when one reflects that Mr. O'Connor carried out great works, and that—I advisedly make this statement—in carrying out his duties he acted honourably by this country in every particular during the whole time of his service. I ask hon. members to consider what person in the employ of the Western Australian Government, had he been desirous of making use of his position, had greater opportunity of doing so than the Engineer-in-Chief? I think none. The fact that Mr. O'Connor died almost a pauper speaks volumes indeed for his honesty and integrity. Before I pass on this subject I wish to make one more statement. When I came to this country I was 10 or 11 years younger than I am now; and Mr. O'Connor at that time advised me to buy some land at such and such a place. I asked him had he bought any, and his reply was, "No; I made this rule for myself at the time I came to Western Australia, that, embarking as I was on a large scheme of public works, I would own no land in the State, so that it could never be said of me that I took up land knowing that its value would be enhanced by the construction of public works." Possibly I have detained the House unduly on this portion of my speech. I have done so, however, with the desire, as a member of Parliament, as a friend of the late Mr. O'Connor, and as a friend of his widow, of seeing justice done. I desire that Mrs. O'Connor's claims should be brought prominently before this branch of the Legislature, and I presume other members will rise to maintain the claims of that lady in the other branch of the Legislature as well.

At 6:30, the PRESIDENT left the Chair.  
At 7:30, Chair resumed.

HON. M. L. MOSS (continuing): In the Speech we are promised that the Government will bring forward new legislation for the purpose of creating a harbour board for the control of the

harbour at Fremantle. For two years in this House I have advocated the placing of the Fremantle harbour works under the control of a board, and I believe, firstly, that the placing of the harbour under a board will simplify the administration and the affairs of the department which is now controlling the Fremantle harbour. For one month, as most members know, I was Colonial Secretary, and during that month I had sufficient opportunity afforded me of forming an opinion of the trivial matters Ministers controlling the various departments are obliged to direct their attention to. I only mention this matter in passing. I refer mostly to the hospitals and charitable institutions in the country. The appointments of nurses and doctors, the promotion of nurses and doctors in the various institutions, are matters that come under the direct purview of the Ministers controlling them. That system was very good 10 or 12 years ago, in the Crown Colony days, and when the number of these institutions was small; but now it is intended to create a board to control the harbour works, and during the recess—I say during the recess because no system dealing with matters like this can be formulated during the session—I think boards should be appointed throughout the State for controlling hospitals and charitable institutions. The amount of work the Colonial Secretary has to undertake in connection with these institutions no Minister should be called upon to perform. In regard to the harbour board at Fremantle, I hope the Government will not make a blunder in the appointment of that body. It is very easy to say that the members shall be elected by the ratepayers of Perth and Fremantle, and the Government thus relieve themselves of all trouble. But the administration of such a body, I say, would not be satisfactory to the public, and not beneficial to the business of the people of the State generally. We are told that the board is to consist of five members. I have said in this Chamber before that the Perth Chamber of Commerce ought to have an opportunity of appointing one member to the board, but I am strongly of opinion that the board should be a nominee body, removed as far as possible from political control, so that the trouble that has arisen in connection

with the railways should not present itself in connection with the harbour works. Members may not be aware that at the present time there is a dual control in connection with the Fremantle harbour. The berthing of ships and the locating of the berths are held by the harbour master, who is under the Premier's Department; but the controlling of the wharves, the railway lines, and the sheds, forms part of the administration of the Railway Department. Members can understand, with such a dual control, that the result has been chaos from end to end, has never given satisfaction to the public in Fremantle or Perth, and has caused an amount of inconvenience to the business people generally. Such a body should be removed from political control. I sincerely congratulate the Government on that part of their policy which deals with the constitution of this body, and I only hope that the matter is going farther than appearing in the policy Speech, because there are many matters which are constantly recurring in the Speech of His Excellency. For instance, for four years we have been promised a water supply for Perth and Fremantle and the intervening localities, and although that promise has appeared with regularity for the past four years, we have never got beyond that. I hope it is not the intention of the Government, so far as the harbour is concerned, to put this proposal in the Governor's Speech, and leave it there. I hope that in the early days of the session the Bill will be brought down, that members of both Houses will have an opportunity of making the measure as workable as possible, so that this very important branch of the service will be administered for the future in the best interests of the country. It is my intention at an early date to move for a return showing the total cost of the Northam-Goomalling railway line. That work has been carried out on the day-labour system, and I venture to say that it has proved the most expensive railway ever constructed in this State. Undoubtedly, considering its length, it has taken a longer time to construct than any other line; and I believe it has been the most expensive as well. These remarks also apply to the construction of the Menzies-Leonora line. If it is intended to construct lines otherwise than

by contract, the Government, instead of experimenting with the day-labour system, which to my mind is productive of such high cost, might try the experiment of constructing on what is known as the co-operative system. This system has been in operation in the colony of New Zealand for about eight or nine years. I hold in my hand a most interesting pamphlet, published by the Under Secretary for Public Works in New Zealand, describing exactly what the system is. It is set forth that—

The method followed in letting and carrying out the work is somewhat as follows. When a length of railway is to be constructed on the co-operative principle, the formation work is divided into sections of suitable size. Where the work is heavy, one cutting and one embankment will be sufficient for a party, but in lighter works sometimes as much as half a mile, or even a mile, of formation may be intrusted to one set of men. Plans and sections of the work are prepared, and a brief and simple specification is provided. The engineer who is to have charge of the work then carefully computes the quantities of the several classes of excavation and other work requiring to be done, assesses the value of the same, and forwards his estimates to the head office, where they are submitted to the Engineer-in-Chief for an expression of opinion as to their reasonableness or otherwise. The rates are based on the current rate of wages ruling in the district for similar work, with a small percentage added to represent in some degree the profits which a contractor would have made had the work been let by tender in the ordinary way. That is, the price fixed should enable a first-class workmen to earn an average per day of eight hours slightly in excess of what a contractor would pay him for the same work, while workmen of less strength and ability would earn proportionately less. There is, however, an understood proviso that the work shall not cost more than if let by contract at fair rates, and experience has generally given favourable results in this respect.

I do not propose to weary the House by a lengthened description of the system. It is sufficient to say that a perusal of the Public Works statements of New Zealand for the last six years shows that the system has been carried out in connection with such works as the formation of railway lines, and also the construction of buildings and bridges. In a conversation I recently had with the Premier of New Zealand, Mr. Seddon, at Albany, I learned that the co-operative system of working has been productive of much good in New Zealand. It has assured

that the workmen get the profit which otherwise would go to the contractor, and under it there has not been that danger which attaches to the day-labour system. As regards the Northam-Goomalling line, I have no doubt that an accurate statement of the cost—if we can get such a statement, which I very much doubt—showing the amount expended for wages, the amount expended for material, and the amount chargeable to the work for engineer's time and so forth, will be perfectly appalling to the House. The cost of the line has been enormously heavy; and the same thing, I believe, applies to the Menzies-Leonora railway. That line, I think, will be found the most expensive ever constructed on the goldfields. I trust the Government will see their way to give this co-operative system a trial. Personally, I am altogether against a continuance of the day-labour system. I do not know whether the Legislative Council can do very much to stop the system; but, at any rate, I shall use my influence with members in another place, as well as in this Chamber, with the object of seeing the system ended, as I consider it results in terrible waste, and, consequently, in heavy loss to the country. Needless to say, the reference to Sir John Forrest in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme has my entire approval. The Government, in my opinion, deserve commendation for making the proposal that Sir John Forrest should be here when the auspicious day arrives to open the waterworks. Sir John Forrest and those associated with him in advocating this stupendous undertaking were risking a great deal, because failure would have meant everlasting disgrace to all connected with the scheme. Success is now practically assured; and I think that, giving honour to whom honour is due, Sir John Forrest, above all others, is entitled to the privilege of opening the works. Just before I was defeated in December last, on standing for re-election, I had had laid on the table of the House a bulky bundle of papers in connection with the advances—I hardly know how to characterise the transactions—amounting to £40,000, which had been made to the city of Perth for the carrying out of a surface drainage scheme. I had tabled a motion to the effect that, until Parliament had approved

the matter, no farther sums should be advanced to the city of Perth for that purpose. I am speaking now for the rest of the State, and not for the city of Perth. I am speaking not entirely for the town of Fremantle and the district I represent: I am speaking on behalf of other electorates as well. What the city of Perth has obtained from the Government, every other community in the State has a right to demand. Perhaps, however, I make a somewhat rash statement when I say other communities "have a right to demand." More correctly, I should say the city of Perth had no right to get the £40,000 it obtained. At this juncture, I do not propose to submit to hon. members a *résumé* of the file of papers referred to; because the notes I made concerning that file during last session comprise some 14 or 15 pages, while pretending to be but a mere abstract of its contents. It is sufficient for me to say that originally the Perth City Council approached the Government with the intention of procuring a loan for the carrying out of certain drainage works. Hon. members may not all be aware that in 1896 there was passed a Loan Act, in the schedule to which a large sum of money, considerably over £100,000, was earmarked as a first instalment of funds required to carry out a deep drainage system for Perth and Fremantle. In 1896, authorisations were obtained for the purpose of carrying out the Coolgardie Water Scheme and other large public works; and the proposal in the Loan Bill in question to borrow money for the deep drainage of Perth and Fremantle represented those cities' share of the plunder and spoil granted them to secure their votes for the Coolgardie Water Scheme. The deep drainage system promised was, however, only a sugar-coated pill, so to speak; since it was never carried out. I am mentioning the matter only for the reason that a sum of £10,000, afterwards given to Perth for the purposes of a surface drainage scheme, was charged to a vote in the Loan Bill for the deep drainage scheme. So matters went on until the Perth City Council eventually got a sum exceeding £30,000. Hon. members may say that I am not right in referring to a matter which is past and gone; but I am calling attention to it for a very tangible

reason. I observe that the Perth City Council have made a demand on the Government for an additional £6,000 for the continuation of the work.

HON. W. T. LORON: Not a demand.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Well, I will say they have made a request for £6,000.

HON. W. T. LORON: No.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Whether the Perth City Council claim the money as a matter of right or as a bounty, I personally must enter my emphatic protest against the granting of any farther advances to that body by the Government. The history of the transaction plainly discloses the fact that the money was originally granted to the Perth City Council as a loan. Members of this House do not need to be told that before a municipality can borrow money it must go through a number of forms prescribed by the Municipal Act, and, farther, that before a municipality can borrow a certain number of the ratepayers have the right to demand a poll, at which the loan may be vetoed. Consequently the amount given to the Perth City Council was not a loan at all. The file shows that when a demand was made on the Perth City Council for payment of interest, that body first promised to pay; but only as a lever for getting additional amounts. Later, when Mr. Alexander Forrest, as Mayor of Perth, was asked for payment, he said that the city had no money to pay interest with, that it would not pay interest, and that it could not legally pay interest. It appears also that the Perth City Council gave a number of promissory notes, signed by the Mayor, for the first instalment of these advances. The promissory notes in question are held by the Government, but, of course, are not worth the paper they are written on. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Oh!] Municipalities cannot give promissory notes, and cannot borrow without going through the formalities prescribed by law. There is quite enough centralisation in Perth, and quite enough Government money spent in Perth. No reason exists why the Perth City Council should have had £40,000, charged, as I have said, to a vote passed by Parliament for a deep drainage scheme. If I am now to come down to the level of considering the matter from a purely Fremantle point of view, I say that as this



money was originally allocated to the deep drainage of Perth and Fremantle, my constituents have an equal right with the citizens of Perth to demand that, at any rate, they should receive similar consideration. If it is proper to charge expenditure on a surface drainage scheme to a deep drainage scheme, Fremantle has an equal right with Perth to the amount of £40,000. I do not stand here to advocate that Fremantle should get a similar amount because Perth got it. My constituents have a right, however, to demand that what was sauce for the goose shall be sauce for the gander. My argument is this. We are told that the present Ministry will give us clean government and clean administration, and therefore Ministers should firmly refuse to give another £6,000 to the city of Perth in aid of these works, unless the same treatment is to be accorded to other localities throughout the country, on the goldfields and in Fremantle. Fremantle, we are told, is not the cleanest place in the country. Had £40,000 been expended in Fremantle, as in Perth, on sanitary purposes, I have no doubt that the position of Fremantle from a hygienic point of view would be very much better than it is at the present day. Here is another aspect of the matter. These presents have been made to the city of Perth without parliamentary sanction; on the contrary, in direct violation of the emphatic instructions contained in the Act of 1896. The money in question was raised on the London market, and was earmarked for the specific purpose of a deep drainage scheme; but it has been allocated to a purpose for which it was not originally intended. Members of the present Government have contended all along that the system of reappropriation of money is bad. I cordially agree with their contention, and I say that the demand or request—whatever it may be called—made by the City Council for farther funds for the carrying out of a surface drainage scheme must not be yielded to unless other communities and localities are to be similarly treated.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: If Fremantle gets the same concession, it's all right?

HON. M. L. MOSS: No; it is not all right. It is not right of any Ministry, present or future, to allocate to another

purpose money which Parliament has voted for a specific object.

HON. J. A. THOMSON: We want deep drainage for Gingin, too.

HON. M. L. MOSS: We are promised a considerable amount of legislation. I do not propose to deal with the subjects of the Bills foreshadowed, because there will be an opportunity of doing that when the measures come before us. I desire to refer, however, to two matters which, from their importance, might have found mention in the Governor's Speech. They are both matters on which I have spoken in previous sessions, and I propose to bring them once again to the notice of the Government, because I deem them important to the public. The first matter is the Stamp Act. I told this House last session that, in my opinion, the Government are losing thousands of pounds annually through the method adopted of collecting taxes under the Stamp Act. I think I am correct in saying that the majority of instruments requiring stamp duty which need not be filed in the Supreme Court or registered at the Titles Office, do not have stamp duty affixed to them: because in this country the duty stamp may be affixed by any party to an instrument, or by a witness to it. Throughout other portions of Australia, in the old country, and in New Zealand, the duty stamp is not allowed to be affixed to an instrument by any party to it; and there ought to be officers throughout this country to whom the instrument could be submitted so that the stamp could be affixed, and the instrument should be submitted within one month. Every resident magistrate throughout the State could be made a deputy commissioner for stamps, and the instruments could be taken to him within a definite and fixed time to have the stamp affixed. I think if the Government amend the Stamp Act in that direction, a great deal of revenue will come in to the coffers which does not do so at the present time. The other matter to which I alluded is an amendment of the Companies Act. I contended last season that seeing there are so many foreign companies carrying on business in this State, and mostly connected with the development of mines, those persons in the State who are giving credit to these mines should be put on a preferential footing as to the payment of their debts.

In Queensland the Legislature has dealt with this subject, and the law there provides that the assets of all foreign companies in the State of Queensland are assets for the payment of the local debts in priority and in preference to the debts contracted outside the country. It is a fair proposal for the reason that the bulk of the liabilities which the companies incur in Western Australia are liabilities for the purpose of obtaining plant and material for the development of the mines. Last session I gave an instance which showed that the Standard Exploration Company had incurred debts with various well-known firms, such as Sandover and Harris, Scarfe, and Co., to the extent of £10,000; and the Standard Exploration Company was supposed to be an undoubted company that could meet its liabilities at a moment's notice. But the Standard Exploration Company did what a large number of other companies have done in this country: it over capitalised, and did a great deal of capital-mongering. The Standard Exploration Company was not singular in this respect: all other companies I believe do the same thing. The result was that although £10,000 of liabilities had been incurred in this country for the purpose of development, the debenture holders were able to come in. The £10,000 of local liabilities were such a bagatelle to the amount of the debentures that there was every probability of the local people being compelled to lose their money. It was only by a fortuitous circumstance which occurred in a local winding-up order being made, and the local liquidator threatening to sell up the mine, which enabled the local creditors to obtain their money. The legislation of Queensland is well worthy of being copied here. It is this, that the liabilities a foreign company incurs are to be a first charge for satisfying the local debts. I do not think it is the duty of any private member to bring in legislation of that kind. I think it is the duty of the Government to get the parliamentary draftsman to draft a measure on the lines of the Queensland Act. Such a law would be of advantage to business people and banking institutions, and enable them to treat in a degree of security with foreign companies which they cannot do at the present time.

I have very frequently in Parliament advocated prison reform, and members have been obliged to advocate it without any great effect; but it gives me every possible pleasure to know that the present Administration have grappled with this question, which does them infinite credit. The Fremantle prison is a better managed institution to-day than it has been for a long time past. In this House I have complained of the delay which has taken place in providing proper and up-to-date prison regulations. I have complained of the old ticket-of-leave regulations, which were entirely out of date and not suited to the requirements of the community to-day. I believe Dr. Jameson has influenced the Cabinet, and has had a great deal to do with the bringing about of reform in this direction. I offer to him congratulations, as he, apparently, has been the moving spirit in bringing about this improvement. In Fremantle prison to-day, instead of a prisoner being kept in a degree of idleness, trades are taught, such as boot-making and tailoring, and I believe the institution is able to supply boots and clothing for the use of the inmates; and I believe in a very short time the prisoners will be able to supply the boots and clothing for inmates of the Lunatic Asylum. I believe that in a short time mat-making, on an extensive scale, will be going on in the gaol. It has been a scandal in the past that instead of the Fremantle gaol being a reformatory institution, men who are sent there come out worse than when they entered. The prison administration has been highly punitive, but not reformatory. Men are now taught trades, and when they come out of prison they are better members of society, and of advantage to the community. Besides that, the expense of running the institution will become less on account of this administration. I know those controlling the institution have been tremendously handicapped until they got a member of a Ministry who was alive to the importance of placing the institution on a better footing. I think Dr. Jameson and his colleagues are to be congratulated on the step they have taken. There is one institution in Fremantle I cannot refrain from speaking about. I understand some efforts are to be made by the Government to

procure another site for the Lunatic Asylum. I do not wish it to be understood that I approve of the present site in Fremantle. I am quite sure it is the worst possible site, but I am not going to commend to the Government the advisability of taking the institution to Guildford or to Midland Junction, for I believe it is a great deal to the advantage of the inmates of such an institution, in a country like this, where we have three or four months of summer such as we do in Western Australia, to be as near the sea as possible. The point of view I wish to impress on the Government is this. I believe that an alternative site has been suggested somewhere about Claremont, and I think that is the site the Government should choose. I must admit, in speaking on this subject, that I am actuated from a self-interested point of view so far as Fremantle is concerned. The Lunatic Asylum has been in Fremantle for many years; the officials have their property situated in Fremantle, and the institution has been the means of some money being spent in Fremantle. Already the removal of the Fremantle railway workshops is an accomplished fact, and I do not know that the Government should specially desire to injure any particular locality. There are vested interests in Fremantle, which has had this institution for so long a time, and unless its removal be in the interests of the inmates, and they may be improved by residing inland, I think this institution should be kept in Fremantle, or as near as possible to the sea coast. Before I sit down there is one other item which I wish to speak about. Last session I complained that the income in connection with the Railway Department was not subjected to audit by the Auditor General, but that the audit of the accounts was carried out by officers employed in the Railway Department. The Government can never get a proper and independent audit while the accounts are audited by persons under the control of the General Manager of Railways. At the time I then spoke there was a great deal of trouble in regard to Mr. John Davies, and at that time Mr. John Davies did not bear the best character; but I did not condemn Mr. Davies in the House. What I said was that we might have a dishonourable man at the head of

the railways, and, if so, while the accounts were audited under his control we might expect such things as the Ice Company frauds to be the order of the day. Mr. Leake, when speaking on the no-confidence motion in the other House, said that the railway accounts had been placed under the Auditor General to be audited. I am given to understand that the railway accounts have not yet been audited by the Auditor General, and until that take place—feeble as it may be—I am going to protest against the accounts being audited by officers of the Railway Department, when the income from the railways approximates a million and a half of money. The audit in connection with that money should be carried out under the control of the Auditor General. As far as the audit by the Auditor General is concerned, I understand that an officer goes to the central station and checks the returns that come in from the out-stations. I may be wrong, but I cannot understand why the officers who audit under the Railway Department could not be immediately transferred to the Auditor General's department, so that the reports might be more complete and reliable. I shall never be satisfied until this reform is brought about. I shall await with some anxiety a statement from the Minister as to the reasons why this rule has not been made. I think I have unduly trespassed on the time of the House, but I have endeavoured on each subject to be as brief as I can, although my brevity may not have been a success; still I hope that some of the remarks I have made may be useful to members. I hope the Government will bring down their Bills promptly, and that members will not be rushed with a number of measures at the fag-end of the session as in the past. I hope we shall be able to give due consideration to the measures, in which case the probability is that the country will get better legislation than if the Bills are brought down at the end of the session and are ill-considered. This being a non-party House, I shall do my level best to assist in the conduct of the business of the country; but Dr. Jameson, and the Ministry generally, must understand that when large matters of policy, proposed by them, are not reasonable, perhaps my criticism may be a little more caustic. Still I hope the Government will

credit me with the best of motives; that I am doing it in the interests of the country.

HON. S. J. HAYNES (South-East): In addressing myself to the motion, I shall be as brief as possible, having due regard to the fact that we have listened to some lengthy and able speeches by members who have preceded me. I am in entire accord with what is contained in the Governor's Speech, and what has fallen from hon. members by way of expressing the joy felt at the rapid restoration to health of His Gracious Majesty the King, and the deep regret occasioned by the circumstance that he was struck down in such an unfortunate manner on the very eve of his intended coronation. I can only trust that His Majesty's complete restoration to health will speedily follow, and that he will be spared for many years to reign over this vast British Empire. I join also in the general expression of regret at the retirement of His Excellency the Governor from his office in this State. I think I shall not be considered presumptuous in stating my assured belief that during the short time Sir Arthur Lawley has presided over this State he has held his position with dignity, honour, and the highest intelligence, and that he has gained the respect and affection of the entire community. My feeling of regret is, however, somewhat assuaged by the reflection that this community's loss is the gain of another. Sir Arthur Lawley's removal from our midst carries with it his promotion to a position in South Africa which must for many years to come be one of the most serious importance, calling for the performance of much hard work and the exercise of great tact. I can only trust that His Excellency will ultimately retire from his South African governorship with the same feeling of satisfaction as he must, I am sure, experience in relinquishing his office here, and that in his retirement he will carry with him equally the goodwill and affection of the people of that large and important section of the British dominions. The Speech makes reference to the termination of the long and costly war in South Africa, where so much blood and treasure has been spilt during the past three years. I fervently hope that the peace which has been attained will be an enduring one, and that

the new South African colonies will prove valuable and important acquisitions to this large and growing Empire. The war has brought out one feature of which I feel sure we are all proud, whether we are sons of the old country or whether we are Australians. The war has shown what Australians, or rather colonists, can do. It is with great gratification I look back on Australia's achievements during the war. The sons of this continent have gone to the aid of the Empire as loyally and also, I may say, as spontaneously as the inhabitants of any other portion of the British dominions. Our soldiers, during the time they were on active service, and indeed at all times, have—with a very few exceptions—borne themselves in a manner reflecting credit equally on the land of their birth and on the British nation. I rejoice, as every right-thinking person must, in the fact that peace has at last been secured; and I heartily trust that peace may prove eternal. I desire to indorse, in the fewest possible words, the eloquent observations of the leader of this House, Dr. Jameson, and also the observations of succeeding speakers, expressing regret for the loss sustained by this State through the death of the late Premier. I had the pleasure of knowing that gentleman ever since I arrived in the State. I first came closely into contact with him when he represented Albany, the town in which I reside. I cannot find more eloquent or more appropriate words than Dr. Jameson's to express my feeling of regret at the loss sustained by the State and by the family of Mr. Leake. I desire especially to join hon. members in extending sympathy to those most nearly affected by the calamity—Mr. Leake's widow and her children. What I may term the eternal removal of Mr. Leake has brought on the scene a new Premier, who is, I believe, a son of Western Australia. I desire to congratulate that gentleman on the attainment of so high a position, and I trust that during the time his Administration may be spared or permitted to hold the reins of government, he and his Ministers will act in the best interests of the State, so that when their time comes to retire we shall be able to say that they have done their country good service. As regards paragraph 8 of the Speech, I can approve neither of Mr. George's appoint-

ment as Commissioner of Railways nor of the mode of his appointment. In common with the speakers who have preceded me, I disclaim all desire in any wise to cast reflections on Mr. George; but I think we are entitled to draw reasonable conclusions from information circulated in the Press, and from data derived from other sources, with respect to that gentleman. Mr. George may be an excellent man of business and he may have managed admirably the large undertaking which he had under his control; but I think that, considering the turmoil and trouble this State has passed through during the last eighteen months in connection with its railways, it would have been more desirable and more fitting if the Government had appointed to the responsible position of Commissioner of Railways a gentleman who had enjoyed previous experience in railway management. In my humble opinion, at any rate, the best means of securing efficient conduct of the business of our huge railway system would be to secure the services of a railway expert either in England, or in America, or even in one of the other States, if such a man can be obtained in Eastern Australia. I doubt whether we have in this State a man fitted for the position. In the endeavour to secure such an expert the Government should not allow themselves to be hampered by paltry parsimony. It is well known that the large railway systems of the old country and America pay their general managers and other high officials very large salaries indeed; at all events, salaries far in excess of the remuneration paid to any officer of our Railway Department hitherto. Unless the Government are prepared to pay a liberal salary, they cannot command the services of a well-qualified man. Mr. George is to be paid at the rate of £1,500 per annum. I should have preferred to see in his place one of the type of railway managers we have known in the Eastern States. I do not think I shall be doing wrong in mentioning names, since I shall do so in a good connection and in praise of their bearers. One is Mr. Eddy, of New South Wales—[MEMBER: The late Mr. Eddy]—and another is Mr. Mathieson, who was engaged for some years in Queensland and for some years later in Victoria. The latter gentleman now holds

a highly responsible position on a leading English railway. If men of the type of Mr. Eddy and Mr. Mathieson can be secured for other services, they can be secured for ours: it is merely a question of pounds, shillings, and pence. Instead of offering a salary of £1,500 a year, which is comparatively paltry, it would be well to offer £5,000 or £6,000 a year, and so obtain the services of a man who would have the confidence of the Government and also the confidence of the people generally.

MEMBER: Pay him more than is paid to the Governor?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I should not object if such a man were paid more than the Governor. The man who controls our railway system is in a position of the utmost responsibility; he has to deal with one of our most valuable assets, one of our most important sources of revenue, and the enterprise in which the bulk of our loan moneys has been sunk. Even £5,000 or £6,000 a year would be well spent in securing the services of a thoroughly competent man for the position. The salary I have mentioned may seem high, but it would not be too much for the right man. Paragraph 9 of the Speech contemplates the appointment of two other Commissioners of Railways. The concluding sentence of that paragraph has been drawn attention to in a marked manner by two previous speakers, Sir Edward Wittenoom and Mr. Moss. With a large part of the remarks of both those gentlemen I am in entire accord. It seems to me that the appointment of three Commissioners, as proposed, would only aggravate existing evils. Three officials with good salaries—or, at any rate, with salaries of £1,500 a year each—are to be appointed, whilst a large measure of the responsibility for the fixing of rates in particular, and the management of the railways in general, is to remain with the Minister. I would rather see one strong man placed in full control. That, I believe, would really be the step most conducive to effective railway management. I would give that strong man a high degree of independence and power in dealing with questions of rates and generally in the administration of the Railway Department, so that if possible he could manage the railways in the way that a successful

business man would manage his own affairs. Before passing on, I would like to say that I quite agree with what has fallen from other members. I see no reason myself why this appointment was made at the time when the sittings of Parliament were near at hand. I think the matter might have been left to have been discussed, and Ministers could then have had the decision of Parliament before them. If Mr. George is retained in the high position to which he has been appointed, I sincerely trust he will prove a success, and that those who have doubts as to the wisdom of appointing him will be disappointed. No doubt inconvenience and loss and trouble have been suffered by the general public in the past, and ought to be assuaged as early as possible. Whilst speaking in respect to the railways I desire to take this opportunity—I do not desire to repeat the words which have fallen from the previous speakers about mismanagement of the lines, as I am in accord with them—of pointing out that the trouble is rather with the expenditure than with the rates. Notwithstanding that, there is room for a vast amount of improvement on our railways. My experience of them consists chiefly of that of the Great Southern line, and all I can say is that this line—I am speaking of the portion from Beverley to Albany—is in many ways managed disgracefully. I have travelled on the line, and I speak advisedly when I say that no business company would run lines in the way this is managed. In many cases the carriages are disgraceful. They are not cleaned up properly, and nowhere have I seen filthier carriages than some I have noticed on several occasions when I have travelled up and down the line. The ordinary conveniences and decencies of life are not provided for where women and children are travelling long distances. No private company or business firm would run a line in such a way as this is run.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: The Midland Railway Company do.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I have not had the experience. I am speaking of the line I know of. On other occasions the carriages have not been properly lighted, and once when I was travelling, when there were a large number of women and children in the carriages, the lights went out. My light went out, and I went out-

side and found that nearly every light in the train was out. Not the slightest notice was taken of it. Three stations were passed, and we were still in darkness. I called the attention of the guard to it, and he said, "Well, sir, you had better mention it to the station-master." I called him over and said, "Do you see anything peculiar about this train?"—I do not know whether he was blind or colour-blind—"if you look round I think you will find nearly every compartment in darkness." I think there were two compartments with lights in them. If the officials attended to their duties properly, directly they saw anything wrong they would attend to it. Then, if at the stations, shelters, and sheds along the line they were to provide what is required, it would conduce to business, and protect goods and produce sent. I really think that if one tried to imagine or work out a scheme for the ineffective and inconvenient running of that line, one could hardly do it better than by adopting the present system. What do we find? Inconvenience practically at both ends. By the present service there is what they term the mail train from the Perth end, and another train from the Albany end, once a week; that is to say, the train from Albany starts at ten minutes past six, at night time, on Wednesday, and arrives here practically at noon next day, at half-past eleven; and, *vice versa*, leaves here at half-past three, getting to Albany next morning at, I think, half-past eight. These trains are convenient, but there is only one each way. The other trains during the rest of the week are unsatisfactory. Before the recent alterations were made passengers had to leave at the unearthly hour of ten minutes past six in the morning, arriving at Perth at two o'clock the following morning, and perhaps one was a stranger in the city. Another mode of getting down is to leave at midnight, as I have often done. I have been jolted and rocked up and down for eight and a half or nine hours till I got to Beverley, and then have had another 12½ hours' journey before getting to Albany. Recently I saw in the paper that the railway rates were to be revised, and I thought that at all events either the Government or the railway officials who had the management of these matters

would make the present time-table more convenient than the old one. We find, however, that whereas we used to leave at 10 minutes past six and arrive in Perth at two o'clock next morning, they have altered the time of departure to a quarter to six, so that passengers leave nearly half an hour earlier, and arrive at their destination at the same time as prior to the alteration. How can the Government expect the railways to pay by such methods? I have tried time after time to see why the time-table cannot be made a more convenient one. I do not profess to be an expert on railways, but I know something of this service, and I say advisedly that there is nothing to prevent the train leaving Albany at eight o'clock in the evening and getting here at identically the same time as at present without hurrying itself in the least. I asked the officials who are chiefly responsible for the management of the railways and the arrangement of the time-table why the present time-table was adopted, and the reply was: "To connect with the gold-fields line." I said, "Do you get to Beverley or Perth any sooner?" and they said, "No." I simply refer to these matters, and I trust the Government will see, at any rate, that a more reasonable time-table shall be adopted for the Great Southern service, for otherwise it will be a deliberate attempt to kill the business on that line, and instead of killing the line, it is the duty of the Government—and it would be the pleasure of any business concern—to attend to it. In many respects we were much better served by the old private railway; in fact, we were much better served by it than we are by the Government. The Minister for Lands has been in that district recently, and he knows perfectly well that in the South-East there is a large track of important good country. Immense settlement has taken place, and there is every inducement for the Railway Department to give proper facilities. Time after time I have inquired from officials, and they tell me it cannot be done, in consequence of this thing, that thing, or the other thing. So far as I was concerned I could not then check that assertion, but I can check one thing, which is a patent fact, and that is that by the alteration which has now been

made the journey is half an hour longer than it was before, and consequently that much more inconvenient to the travelling public. I am perfectly satisfied that line is worthy of more attention than it receives, and I think the stock used on the line ought to be kept in a better state than it has been for some time. I am in accord with the Government in bringing forward a Bill for the amendment of the constitution with the view of redistribution of seats, and although it is not a pleasant thing to be continually tinkering with our Constitution Acts, still it is one of those matters we should be rather gratified with, because at any rate it shows that we are a live State, that we are progressing and growing. The anomalies which at present exist with respect to provinces and districts should be remedied, but I am not at all in favour of an adjustment of electoral boundaries on a purely population basis. There is room for a considerable improvement on the present arrangements, and I trust that the Government will bring in a measure that will at all events protect the agricultural and pastoral interests. I do not want any interest to overwhelm another.

HON. W. MALEY: You are going to wipe them out.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: At any rate, I personally am not. I am also in favour of a reduction of the number of members in both Houses. When the previous Bill for an amendment of the constitution by increasing the number of members was before this House, I opposed it. We were then on the eve of federation, though we had not decided to join, and I thought the amendment proposed an unwise one. Therefore I opposed it, but I was in a minority and the Bill was carried, the number of members here being increased to 30, and there being also an increase in the other House. Whilst I would join in advocating a reduction in the number of members in both Houses, the reduction proposed in regard to one place as compared with that in the other is disproportionate. It has been set forth in speeches, made I believe by the Premier and other Ministers of the Crown, that they propose to reduce the number of members in this House to 21, this being a reduction of nine, whereas it is proposed to reduce the number of members in the Lower House by four. To my mind that

is altogether disproportionate, and if we were going to revert to our old figures, we should have a very fair working House, and business would be as satisfactorily conducted as it has been hitherto, at any rate. I believe that one of the proposals is that when difficulties occur between the two Houses there shall be a joint sitting. As far as I am personally concerned—and I think the majority of the House are of the same opinion—I should bitterly oppose anything of the sort, for it would practically wipe this House completely out, and members would have very little respect for their own independence if they voted for a measure of that kind. In the States generally the Upper House has been of good service, and as time goes on this House would, under the present constitution, be an extremely useful one, and would prevent, as I feel satisfied it has done in the past, hasty legislation, and legislation that might be detrimental to the community at large. I am pleased to see that the educational system of this State will be added to by the introduction of technical schools. This is a step in the right direction, and I take this opportunity of expressing my gratification at the large strides which our educational system has made in this State. I have recently had the pleasure of visiting one or two of the State schools, and I was astonished at the efficiency of the teaching. I was pleased and surprised at the intelligence and knowledge the children possessed. I am speaking of country schools, and if the schools I have visited are a sample of the schools generally, I am quite satisfied our educational system is a great success, and in my opinion that success will be very materially increased by adding technical education in the manner suggested in His Excellency's Speech. I am in favour of harbour trusts and boards of that nature, and I hope the Government will bring in a thoroughly well-thought-out measure which will meet the exigencies of the various leading harbours of this State. I believe that had harbour boards been in existence in the past, a considerable amount of money would have been saved, the facilities concerning such harbours would have been greatly increased, and we should have had more conveniences for shipping than we have at the present time. I notice

that the Government, and I think we all, are satisfied with the progress which has been made with the Coolgardie Water Scheme. I was in the minority when I opposed that scheme, but I opposed it on two grounds. I did not think the country was in a position to stand the expenditure of so gigantic a nature. I also considered that sufficient details of the scheme had not been laid before Parliament to warrant members entering into so important a contract. The views I held then have to a certain extent been supported, because the cost of the work has been much greater than the estimate.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Very little.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The hon. member says very little, but I think it is considerable: the reticulation has to be provided for. In addition to that, it was said that the consumers would never pay the rate mentioned, and it is now admitted that the rate which was at first proposed will not pay. I trust that the anticipations of the warmest supporters of the scheme will be realised, because if the scheme turns out unsuccessful it will be a national disaster. I am glad to see that the surplus will be spent as promised. I have not had experience as to the suitability or unsuitability of the institutions in Fremantle, but no doubt there is room for great improvement, and there is room also for improvement in the small gaols. The Albany gaol is a disgrace to civilisation, and if that institution is a specimen of the gaols that are to be found throughout the country, I say the sooner they are razed to the ground the better. The Albany gaol is certainly not a suitable establishment for the town: the wild beasts at the Zoo have far better buildings. Anyone entering the Albany gaol is struck by the insanitary surroundings, the want of air, and the repulsiveness of the fittings generally. There is room for improvement in all the town gaols, and they should be improved out of any surplus that exists. I am gratified to see that the present Government in their policy Speech have intimated their intention of bringing down very few Bills. One of the mistakes in the past has been the rushing in and passing of a multiplicity of Bills and then amending and tinkering with them the very next session. In addition, Bills come down from another



place at the end of the session when members cannot give that consideration to them which the measures warrant. The result is that the Bills must be slaughtered or are passed with defects, causing trouble and annoyance to this over-legislated State. I am exceedingly pleased at the small number of Bills promised by the Government. The first measure referred to, the consolidation and amendment of the law relating to justices, there is room for, because the Justices Acts are to be found all over the statute book, and if the laws are consolidated it will greatly assist the justices and those who have to attend to the business of the police courts. A Shops and Factories Act is promised, and I trust it will be a reasonable measure, having regard to the fact that this is not a manufacturing country. I notice that there is to be an amendment of the Early Closing Act. I was one of those who opposed the passing of that law. I did not see, nor do I see now, the necessity for it. The Act has caused a great amount of injustice and wrong to struggling people; it has been pretty well the death-blow to a number of small traders. I trust the amendment will be in the direction of remedying the injustice done. The Government are to be congratulated on their promise of the consolidation and amendment of the Goldfields Acts. At the present time, if a private individual wishes to know what the mining laws are—I mean the mining prospector, the miner, or the shareholder—it is very difficult to ascertain. A book is handed to an individual by the Mines Department, but the law has been amended in so many directions that it is impossible for anyone to know what the law really is. It is quite time that the Goldfields Acts were consolidated. I am pleased that there is great progress and prosperity in the mining, agricultural, and pastoral industries of the State. I trust that under the present Government the progress and prosperity will continue. One of the most pleasing factors in our progress is land settlement. Settlement along the agricultural railway lines has been going on by leaps and bounds. I have recently been privileged to go over a small extent of the country, and was astonished to find how much settlement had been effected.

Conversing with the settlers, I found they seemed satisfied with their lot on the land; and I think, as time goes on, there will be a vast population settled, and satisfactorily settled there, because in the south-eastern and south-western portions of this State the bulk of the land is quite good enough, while our present land laws are, I trust, sufficiently liberal. People are attracted to this State; we want population; and I hope the good done by attracting them here will not be undone by other legislation, whether or not it take the form of increased railway rates. Great and perfectly justifiable dissatisfaction has recently been caused by the alteration in the freights; and it was shown to me, and I am sure to many other members, that if the rates were enforced in parts of the country distant from the market, produce could not be forwarded but would be simply wasted; because, after deducting the cost of production and of carriage, the producer would suffer a loss. I do not think the alterations in the rates were opposed so much on the ground that an increase was not justifiable, as on the ground that the incidence of those rates was absolutely wrong. For instance, the farmer at Northam, who is in a better position with regard to the goldfields than one at the far end of the Great Southern or the South-Western line, is better treated than the latter, who is utterly handicapped by the greatly increased rates he has to pay under the present tariff; and I trust the Government will see their way to make an equitable adjustment, so that no injustice may be done to the farming industry, which we all know to be one of the most important in the State. I have been as brief as I can. It is useless for me to reiterate what has fallen from other speakers with respect to many important matters mentioned in His Excellency's Speech. With many of those remarks I am in accord, though I do not arrive at my conclusion from the same premises as were taken by preceding speakers. However, I trust the legislation which will be put on the statute book during the coming session will be for the permanent welfare of this State, and that in future our progress will be as rapid and our success as great as in the past. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE, debate adjourned until the next sitting.

#### SUPPLY BILL, £1,000,000.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and, on motion by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, read a first time.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at eight minutes past 9 o'clock, until the next day.

### Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 22nd July, 1902.

Election Return, Swearing-in—The late Premier, Letter from Mrs. Leake—Papers pre-ented—Questions to Ministers, length of notice—Libel Prosecution (R. C. Spear)—Railway Siding at Sawyers' Valley—Death in Fremantle Lock-up—Land Purchases at Rocky Bay—Drainage Scheme, Perth Suburbs—Water Rate at Jeederville, Refusal to Strike—Sitting Days and Hours, Amendment, division—Government Business, Precedence—Printing Committee: Hansard Reports, to Curtail; division—Sessional Committees—Supply Bill, all stages—Address-in-reply, second day of debate; Amendment—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### ELECTION RETURN—SWEARING-IN.

The SPEAKER reported having received a return to the writ issued for the election of a member for the Murray (in room of Mr. W. J. George, resigned), showing that Mr. William Atkins was duly elected. The member, being sworn, took the oath and his seat.

#### THE LATE PREMIER.

##### LETTER FROM MRS. LEAKE.

THE SPEAKER announced that he had forwarded to Mrs. Leake the resolution passed by the House sympathizing with her in the loss she had sustained by the death of her husband; and that

he had received the following letter, which she asked him to read to the House:—

21st July, 1902.

Please convey to the Legislative Assembly my sincere thanks for their kind sympathy to myself and family; also my deep appreciation of the honour paid to my dear husband in placing on record his services to this State.—Yours truly, LOUISA E. LEAKE.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the conduct and completion of the Coolgardie Water Scheme. 2, Regulations under Lands Acts. 3, Regulations under Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. 4, Regulations under Trade Unions Act. 5, By-laws under Cemeteries Acts. 6, By-laws under Parks and Reserves Act. 7, By-laws under Roads Acts. 8, Report dealing with reserves "B" under Permanent Reserves Act. In regard to the first paper, he said the appendices and evidence had not yet been printed, nor had he in hand a sufficient number of copies of the report to be able to supply each member with one at present; but in a couple of days he would have the whole report and the evidence and appendices printed, so that each member should have a copy.

Order: To lie on the table.

#### QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS, LENGTH OF NOTICE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James), addressing members generally, requested that in giving notice of questions to be asked on a future day, the replies should be made returnable in not less than 48 hours. Two days' notice was short enough in the case of questions involving much research. In the case of urgent questions, Ministers would endeavour to reply at once.

#### LIBEL PROSECUTION (R. C. SPEAR).

Mr. J. L. NANSON asked the Premier:—1, Why, after the defendant had pleaded justification, did the Crown enter a *nolle prosequi* in the charge against Richard Clarke Spear of criminally libelling Mr. Justice Parker. 2, Seeing that the defendant pleaded justification, and that the charges were made against a Judge of the Supreme Court,