

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 24th October, 1900.

Appropriation Message: Loan Bill, first reading—Papers presented—Kalgoorlie Roads Board Tramways Bill, first reading—Motion for Papers: Retrenchment of Mr. H. W. Hargrave—Motion for Papers: Malcolm-Laverton Mails, Deviation—Motion: Railways Approved, to Construct by Private Enterprise (withdrawn)—Motion: Imperial Federation, a general Conference (adjourned)—Motion: Collie Coalfield, Reward for Discovery; select committee appointed—Motion: State Smelting of ores, Geraldton district (Amendment passed)—Assent to Bill—Municipal Institutions Bill, first reading—Fremantle Tramways Bill, second reading—Administration (probates) Bill, in Committee to Clause 2, Division, progress—Conspiracy and Protection of Workmen and Property Bill, in Committee, progress—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

LOAN BILL, £790,000.

Appropriation Message from the Administrator, presented and read, recommended an appropriation out of Consolidated Revenue, for the purpose of a Loan Bill to authorise the raising of £790,000 by loan, for the construction of certain public works and for other purposes.

Bill introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Petition of Claremont residents as to railway siding at Eric Street (ordered).

By the PREMIER: 1, Return showing Payments to Members of Australasian Parliaments (ordered); 2, Return showing Revenue and Expenditure of Midland Railway Company, 1898-1900 (ordered).

Ordered to lie on the table.

KALGOORLIE ROADS BOARD TRAMWAYS BILL.

Introduced by the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (to confirm a provisional order), and read a first time.

MOTION FOR PAPERS—RETRENCHMENT OF MR. H. W. HARGRAVE.

MR. KINGSMILL moved that papers and correspondence to date, in connection with the retrenchment of Mr. H. W.

Hargrave from the position of Resident Engineer attached to the Coolgardie Water Scheme, be laid upon the table of the House.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. B. C. Wood): If the hon. member wished the papers to be placed on the table, the Government had no objection; but an inquiry having been promised, it would be better to withdraw the motion.

MR. KINGSMILL: The inquiry spoken of had now been withheld six months or so from the date of the occurrences which gave rise to the motion. He was glad to hear the Director of Public Works was willing to lay the papers on the table, and hoped it would be within the power of the hon. gentleman to produce the papers as quickly as possible.

Question put and passed.

MOTION FOR PAPERS—MALCOLM-LAVERTON MAILS, DEVIATION.

On motion by MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie), ordered that all papers in connection with the proposed deviation to Euro, in the Malcolm-Laverton mail service, be laid on the table.

MOTION—RAILWAYS APPROVED, TO CONSTRUCT BY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

MR. MONGER (York) moved:

That, in view of the recent action of Parliament, it is desirable that legislation should at once be introduced authorising the Government to enter into negotiations with private persons for the construction of those lines of railway which have been submitted by the Government, and which have been refused by the Legislature.

He said: I desire to bring under the notice of the Premier and his Government the action taken by members of the Legislature, in refusing to support certain public works advocated by the Government. No further back than the other evening a Bill was introduced by the Government, having for its object the construction of a line of railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, and that proposal was thrown out. A few months ago another Government Bill, having for its object the construction of a line from Coolgardie to Bonnievale, was also rejected. The object of the motion is to allow, if possible, private enterprise to undertake the construction of railways

which have been submitted by the Government and rejected by the Legislature. If there be a desire by private enterprise to carry out any of these projects which the Legislature say the Government are not in a position to undertake, and offers are made which are reasonable and fair to Western Australia, in the opinion of those who look after the affairs of the Government, those offers ought to be accepted. That practically is the object of the motion which I now submit for the consideration of hon. members. I must refer to a speech made in the House during the debate on the Address-in-Reply by a member who, I am sorry to say, is not present. That hon. member said:—"I find on looking up the finances of Western Australia that we cannot possibly, as honest men, unless we are political criminals to the country, go into and incur any additional public expenditure." If that is to be the motto of the House, the sooner we allow private enterprise to take up these big undertakings the better; because if the state of the public finances does not warrant the works being carried out by the Government, it will be in the best interests of the colony to leave them to private enterprise. From top to bottom the Notice Paper is full of expressed desires to carry out big public works by private enterprise, and these are works which cannot be removed from this country, but must afterwards remain here; and in view of the number of private Bills, I am safe in asking fair consideration by hon. members of the motion which I now humbly submit.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The motion, even if adopted, would not carry us very far, because it only affirms that the Government should be authorised to enter into negotiations. These negotiations, whatever they might be, would have to be submitted to the House afterwards; and, speaking as a member of the Government, I may say that negotiations of the sort are somewhat troublesome. Everyone is prepared to do something, and negotiate with the Government. There are hundreds of people in the colony willing to enter into such negotiations; therefore, to go into all the details with these people is, as I say, very troublesome. It seems to me the right way we ought to act is that if

any one wants to undertake a work for the public, he should introduce a private Bill into the Legislature. There are plenty of people willing to introduce private Bills, but before they take that course they want the Government to pledge themselves to support those measures. That would place the Government in difficulties, political and otherwise; because to give such a pledge is inconvenient sometimes, and I do not think any Government would be anxious to promise support under the circumstances. The Government are quite willing to pledge themselves to works they wish to carry out themselves, and which are set forth in the Governor's Speech; but to give a pledge to support this or that measure is not very convenient. In order to enter into negotiations with any company to build a railway, the whole matter has to be discussed, not only the building of the railway, but also all the terms of the contract; and even when that is done, the intending contractor has to introduce a private Bill. We, therefore, find a difficulty in supporting the motion, not that I am opposed to private enterprise in constructing works which the Government do not intend to carry out themselves, where there are no political considerations to prevent the Government giving their consent, but it seems to me that the matter ought to be put on a different basis altogether. What we want is a statute governing the construction of railways by private enterprise. I have almost promised, I believe—at any rate I have had it in my mind—to introduce such a measure; but owing to the large number of works the Government were undertaking themselves, and also the pressure of public business, we have not had such a Bill. But it would be very useful to have such a measure for the construction of private railways, under the provisions of which anyone could apply, making only such alterations as the peculiar conditions or circumstances connected with the particular railway required. There can be no doubt that before one can come to negotiations with private persons for the construction of a line of railway, the whole contract and the basis of the Act of Parliament have to be considered and approved by the Government; or, at all events, the Bill

has to be put in such a shape that the Government are able to give some assistance in passing it through the House. I do not suppose it is easily conceivable that any private railway would be carried through the Legislature against the wish of the Government—I do not think that is very likely under these circumstances; but I can assure hon. members the difficulty is very great, as the matter stands at present. If there are persons who want to build a railway through any part of the colony, why cannot they introduce a private Bill? Such a measure would be sent to a select committee, as it has to be, and the terms would be carefully considered, and when the Bill came back from the select committee, the House would decide whether to agree to it or not.

MR. MOORHEAD: The sanction of the Government would have to be obtained for the resumption of public land.

THE PREMIER: I do not know that the sanction is required before a Bill is introduced.

MR. MOORHEAD: What is the use of introducing a Bill, unless the Government give their approval?

THE PREMIER: You cannot get the approval of the Government beforehand, and I do not think that, in regard to private Bills, the Government as a rule give their consent. Indeed, they cannot, because there are Bills before the House at the present time to which the Government have not consented, and which affect Crown lands. I do not think it is necessary for the Government to give their consent.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes; to the taking of the land.

THE PREMIER: There may be some technical consent necessary; but in regard to private Bills for tramways and railways, the consent of the Government has not been asked, or at any rate the Government have not promised support to private measures introduced. While the object of the member for York (Mr. Monger) is a good one, it seems to me that even if the motion were carried, it would fall short of what the hon. member desires. The only result would be some talk and negotiation; but this or any other Government will be found rather chary in promising private companies or syndicates their support to any particular

line of railway, before it comes before the House.

MR. WILSON (Canning): The Premier always poses as the friend of private enterprise in the construction of railways in Western Australia; but I notice his support is not forthcoming when a project is put before the Government.

THE PREMIER: Where is the project?

MR. WILSON: I will name one which was put before the Premier.

THE PREMIER: Not before the House.

MR. WILSON: The Premier promised he would support the construction of a railway from Collie to the gold-fields by private enterprise, because the Government had not the money for the work; but when the proposition was brought before the House, he declined to give it his support.

MR. MONGER: The Premier declined to promise his support.

MR. WILSON: If the Premier is against private enterprise in connection with public works, let him say so, and not pose as the friend of private enterprise, and then place obstructions in the way. The Premier distinctly stated that if the money could be found, though he (the Premier) believed it could not, he would support private enterprise in connection with that railway.

THE PREMIER: The Government were not prepared to do so.

MR. WILSON: Exactly; the Government were not prepared to do so; but the Premier said he was prepared to support private enterprise if the money could be found, and I happen to know the money was put up.

THE PREMIER: It always is "put up," but there is none of it very shortly afterwards.

MR. WILSON: The Premier has no faith in anybody, except himself and his Government. The money was put up, and the Premier was notified and asked if he would arrange terms and support the Bill in the House; but he declined to do so, and would have nothing to do with the arrangements made. He practically opposed the proposal, though he was pledged to support the Bill if it were introduced. That is practically the kind of obstruction placed by the Premier in the way of the promoters in London,

who had put up the money for constructing this work.

* THE PREMIER: I do not think they ever said they had "put up the money," but that the matter was "arranged."

MR. WILSON: Well, that is what persons usually do: they arrange to put up the money for the work they propose to carry out when seeking a concession from the Government. The duty of the Government, if they wish to develop the country, is to encourage private enterprise on fair and square lines. I would not advocate a series of speculative projects to be carried out by private enterprise without proper protection for the public interest; but if men come forward in a *bona fide* manner, and are prepared to put up a substantial sum of money as a guarantee of their *bona fides*, then it is the duty of the Premier of this colony—

THE PREMIER: You do not know that they were prepared.

MR. WILSON: I do not know, but I say if they were prepared to put up a substantial guarantee, then it is the duty of the Government to state the terms on which they are prepared to support those persons in carrying out that private enterprise, and the Government should do this in the interest of the whole country. When a private Bill is brought forward for carrying out a work of this kind by private enterprise, it is necessary that the Government should give it their support, or the Bill may not go forward; and the Government ought to go into details with the promoters and arrange the terms on which the Government are prepared to support the Bill, saying they are satisfied that this is a fair scheme and are prepared to support it. The sooner the Government take a course like that, the better it will be in the interests of all parties. Unless the Government take this course, they will not get men willing to undertake works of this kind by private enterprise, because of the risk and difficulty of passing a private Bill through this House when not supported by the Government. We find the Premier now attempting to delay this Bill, and the persons who are promoting it will simply find that a Bill of this kind not supported by the Government is likely to be thrown out, and all their labour and expense be wasted. I quite agree with

the Premier as to the suggested general statute to control the construction of railways by private enterprise—that is a proper thing to do; but, as usual, procrastination has left it till the measure is too late. I hope the Premier will introduce this measure without delay, in order that proper persons who bring forward Bills for carrying out works by private enterprise may be able to come to this House with some prospect of their Bill being carried. But under present conditions, if such a Bill be brought in and not be supported by the Government, the measure is likely to be lost. The Premier has admitted that the country has gone as far as it safely can at present in borrowing money for public works; and therefore this is a proper time for encouraging private persons to undertake work which the Government are not in a position to construct. Of course later, in a year or two, we will be in the happy position of having a larger population, and shall be able to borrow further on the public credit; but at the present time we want to cease the construction of large works by the Government, for the next twelve months if not a little longer; and if private persons are prepared to carry out these railways on fair and equitable terms, under proper control and the public interests being duly protected, I say it is the duty of the Government to support any such project, and for that purpose they ought to bring down this Bill of a general character as soon as possible.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): I am sorry I am not able to support the motion, because it says it is desirable "that legislation should be at once introduced, authorising the Government to enter into negotiations with private persons for the construction of those lines of railway which have been submitted by the Government, and which have been refused by the Legislature." This would be a railway probably to Norseman or some place that the House would not agree to, and negotiations might be entered into with the Government, and the parties might let a contract for the construction of the work, and when the Bill came before this House it might not be approved by Parliament; so that after negotiations had been entered upon and some expenditure had been incurred, the

Bill would be lost. I think the mover had better withdraw the motion for the present, and ask the Government to bring in such legislation as will enable projects of this kind to be brought directly before the House, under the provisions of a general statute. Dealing with private Bills is rather a cumbersome transaction, for a lot of money is wasted in preliminary matters, and nothing practical will result if the Bill be thrown out by Parliament; whereas if the promoters of a private enterprise could come directly to Parliament and show they were prepared to expend a certain sum of money on a certain work, with proper guarantees for protecting the public interest, Parliament might be induced to pass such a measure. I think this House should be careful before granting concessions to individuals for the construction of railways. We have already had two private railways built in this colony: one of those we have had to buy from the company, and the other one we will have to buy. No doubt if more private railways be constructed, we shall have to buy them also, except in the case of those short private lines which are necessary for developing a business, such as lines to timber mills. The proposed railway mentioned by the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), to start from Collie and connect with the goldfields railway between Southern Cross and Coolgardie, is one of those lines that might be built by private enterprise, and is one of the few I should be prepared to support, because it could be used only for two purposes, namely for carrying timber and carrying coal. It would save a large amount of haulage to those engaged in those industries, owing to the shortening of the distance.

MR. WILSON: A saving to the consumers.

MR. A. FORREST: It would be much cheaper for the consumers, and we know that coal is a commodity of so small a value that the cost of its carriage requires great consideration.

THE PREMIER: Such a line would not pay, for another thing.

MR. A. FORREST: That is a matter for the consideration of those who would find the money—not for us. As we are an expiring Parliament, I do not think it advisable to go in for private railways at

this stage; because, after the next elections, a good many of us may find ourselves not here, and the course of legislation may be altogether changed. I understand the working classes in this colony believe in having the whole of the railways in the hands of the Government, and as they are the majority of the voters in the colony, they will have a good say at the next general election, and may not place in this House members who are in favour of private railways. As the hon. member has now had a discussion on the subject, and the Government have practically promised to introduce a Bill dealing with the matter, the motion should be withdrawn.

MR. MONGER (in reply): I have no desire to continue the discussion on this question, but I should like to confirm the remarks of the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) in connection with the proposals submitted by certain gentlemen for the construction of this line from Collie to some point on the Northam-Southern Cross Railway. I think the Premier will admit the proposals as submitted are fair and reasonable, and show all possible *bona fides*, and that this line could be carried out successfully by private enterprise. I should be only too glad if some hon. member would ask that the papers in connection with these proposals be laid on the table, to show how discourteous were the replies which emanated from the Government to a request which meant the bringing into the country of three quarters of a million of private capital. However, that matter is over, and I have no desire to continue this discussion; and after the remarks which have fallen from the Premier, and with the hope that whoever the next Government may be they will bring down a Bill such as the Premier suggests, I ask the permission of the House that the motion be withdrawn.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTION—IMPERIAL FEDERATION, A GENERAL CONFERENCE.

MR. VOSPER (North - East Coolgardie) moved:

1. That in the opinion of this Parliament it is desirable that the following Address be forwarded through His Excellency the Admin-

strator, to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies :—

SIR,

We, the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, desire, as one of the final public acts of this Legislature prior to entering the Commonwealth of Australia, to place on record our high appreciation of the efforts made by yourself and by the Imperial Ministry towards the consolidation of the British Empire, and the maintenance of those fraternal bonds which render the British race pre-eminent amongst the nations for stability, justice, and liberty; and to express our desire that the Imperial Government should continue that good work by calling, as soon as the Commonwealth of Australia has commenced to exercise its powers, a conference of representatives from all the self-governing provinces of the Empire, for the purpose of discussing and recommending to their various Governments any proposals that may be formulated for the closer political union of the Empire, and for the establishment of reciprocity in its commercial inter-relations.

2. That the Government be requested to forward this Address to the Governments of the other Australasian Colonies, desiring their concurrence in this action.

He said: Hon. members will no doubt have read the motion standing in my name. I may say I have never risen to address this House with a greater degree of diffidence than that which I now feel. In fact, for some time, I may say for a very long time, the idea was in my mind, and I scarcely cared to bring it before this House, because I felt that a motion of such importance is not one which, properly speaking, should be moved by a private member. But, on consulting the leader of my party and one or two other members about the matter, the opinion was expressed that, after all, a motion of this kind should be a spontaneous action on the part of the Legislature, and therefore might perhaps come more fittingly from a private member of the House than from the head of the Government. I need not say that of late we have seen a remarkable revival of affectionate relations between the mother country and the various parts of the Empire; and it has been suggested in various directions that the tendency at the present moment is towards the consolidation of the Empire by means of the establishment of some form of Imperial federation. This motion aims at something being done, however

little, in that direction. Before I go into the motion itself it has been suggested that this is a matter which may more fittingly be taken in hand by the Federal Parliament than by the local Legislature; but I would ask hon. members to recollect that as yet the Federal Parliament has not even come into being, and it appears to me that if the various colonies as they exist now could be induced to make representations of this character to the Imperial Government, or if they would frame a recommendation of this kind to the Federal Government itself when it comes into office, they would at once give the cue, so to speak, to that body, and indicate that the States of the Commonwealth were anxious, not alone to secure the federation of the various Australian provinces, but also to do something to help on the federation of the Empire at large. And I would say also with regard to the motion itself that I do not want the House to adopt the motion as it stands, or the form in which it is worded. The words are intended to embody the principle only, for no one recognises more than I the crudeness of its language, and its want perhaps of diplomatic and statesmanlike significance. But the Government, if they approve of the motion, will be able to amend it in such a way as to make it acceptable to the Governments of the Eastern colonies and also to the Home authorities; and for my part I do not wish to suggest to members that they should adopt this particular wording, provided the principle itself is passed. I say I have been moved to act in this direction mainly on account of what I consider a very broad hint given us recently by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Chamberlain, in one of his speeches, delivered during the last general election campaign in England, when he said:

I believe in the practical possibility of a federation of the British race, but I know it will come, if it does come, not by pressure, not by anything in the nature of dictation from this country, but it will come as the realisation of a universal desire, as the expression of the dearest wish of our colonial fellow-subjects themselves.

It will thus be seen from that the right hon. gentleman regards the question, I think, in a very proper light. He sees plainly enough that if the mother country

were to take the initiative toward the federation of the Empire, it would be said, perhaps, by the foreign Press and by foreign powers, that Britain was using some undue influence or possibly some coercive force to bring the various colonies under one particular form of government. When, however, a motion of this kind emanates from a small colony, no such allegation can be made, and its spontaneity will be the more in evidence from the fact that it comes from a comparatively obscure portion of the Empire. I think we must all recognise the fact that something of this kind is required in order to bring about a commercial reciprocity between the various portions of the British dominions. To my mind it has long appeared in the last degree absurd that while on the one hand we should be full of lip loyalty, and should be spending money and the blood of some of our best men in helping to keep the Empire united, and to cement together its various members, we should at the same time be actually imposing a heavy taxation upon goods of British and colonial manufacture; in other words, that we should place the various portions of the Empire upon precisely the same footing as regards the tariff as we do foreign nations. And although I am myself a thorough-going free-trader, and believe in free-trade with all the world, still, I say, if we cannot have that, the next best thing to free-trade would be the establishment of an Imperial zollverein, which would give a preference to British subjects as compared with those of other nations. However, nothing of that kind can be done unless some agreement be arrived at between the various members of the Empire, and no such agreement can possibly be come to unless something be done in the direction indicated in this motion. The next point I would urge upon the attention of hon. members is the question of defence; and here I would point out that the colonies have already undertaken some very serious and heavy obligations. Some years ago we agreed to contribute £126,000 a year towards the maintenance of the Imperial navy. More recently we have given men and money for the prosecution of the war in South Africa; and some of the colonies have gone further than that, and have also sent men to China

in furtherance of Imperial designs. Let us consider for a moment what that means. It really means that the outlying portions of the Empire are being taxed for the maintenance of the Imperial foreign policy. It is nothing to the purpose to say that the taxation is purely in the way of a voluntary contribution; the fact remains that we have voluntarily consented to tax ourselves for Imperial purposes, and that being so, I think the necessary corollary finds its solution in the principle of this motion.

THE PREMIER: We are but defending our own shores.

MR. VOSPER: I agree with that, but still, on the face of it, we have already agreed to accept Imperial taxation; and following out the spirit of the British constitution I say we ought to be entitled to some degree of representation in respect of the small amounts we contribute towards the Imperial funds. I would also point out that we are not by any means at the end of our obligations. Captain Gillespie, the officer in charge of the Australian contingent in China, the other day made a very significant remark. Some of the men were complaining that they had come too late, and would see no fighting. He replied to this effect "Don't worry yourselves; you will see plenty of fighting, and it will not be with Chinamen either." That is the statement of a gentleman who is on the spot, and who, I presume, knows very well what is going on, and that there is a possibility of serious complications arising in China; in fact, whichever way we look at it, if this proposed partition of China is intended to be carried out, it must inevitably lead to considerable dissension among the powers, and it will take a very small spark indeed to ignite the train of explosives, with the result indicated by Captain Gillespie. I think any member of the British community would be mistaken in supposing that China itself is an insignificant power to fight. It is quite within the bounds of possibility that Australia may be called upon to make even greater sacrifices than have already been made in the direction of maintaining the Imperial supremacy in respect of that country. Besides that, we are taking an interest in other questions of the growth and progress of the various coloured races. Australia may be said

be the outpost of European civilisation in the far East, because it is a curious fact that what we in this country allude to as being "the far East" lies to a great extent to the North and North-West of us. We are the only European community which lies on this side of the equator, and in that quarter of the globe properly termed "the far East." We have to maintain white supremacy in this region, the loss of which would be not only serious to ourselves, but to the Empire; and there is always the possibility, in view of the influence of 19th century civilisation upon the black, brown, and yellow races, of our supremacy being disputed. We have seen the astonishing awakening of Japan in the last few years. That country, in the course of a couple of decades, as we may almost say, has risen from a position of insignificance in the family of nations to that of a first-class power. Sooner or later China will follow the example of Japan, and then we shall be living close to the borders of probably two of the greatest powers the world has ever seen—two alien powers who will have no sympathies whatever with us, no interest either of blood or race, and whose interests may very often diverge considerably from ours, and thereby make them inimical to our welfare, and even to our existence as an independent race. That this is not only my opinion, but is the belief of most eminent and respectable authorities, is shown by the opinion expressed on this point by Professor C. I. Pearson. Hon. members who come from Victoria will recollect that Mr. Pearson was Minister of Education in that colony, and will recognise that in quoting him I am quoting an ethnologist and anthropologist of the highest possible order. He says:—

The day will come, and is perhaps not very far distant, when the European observer will look round to see the globe girdled with a continuous zone of the black and yellow races, no longer too weak for aggression or under tutelage, but independent or practically so in government, monopolising the trade of their own regions, and circumscribing the industry of the European.

Lord Wolseley, one of our greatest military authorities, goes further than that, and predicts that in the very near future what he terms the "Armageddon of the races" will have to be fought out between the European on the one side and the

Chinaman on the other. That would only be a case of history repeating itself, because in the 13th century a similar battle of the races was fought; and hon. members familiar with European history will remember that in that century the Tartars, who were practically identical with the dominant caste in China at the present day, proceeded as far as the centre of Europe itself, and shook Western civilisation to its very foundations. Russia was merely an appendage of the Chinese Empire, Poland fell under the Tartar yoke, Hungary was subdued, and a great portion of what is now known as Prussia became a Chinese province and paid periodical tribute. What happened in the past under the domination of Genghis Khan may happen in the future; and it is essential, not only that Europe should be ready for such a crisis, but also that Australia should be prepared for its occurrence; and nothing can be better calculated to make us prepared for trouble from that quarter than the consolidation of the various portions of the Empire into one harmonious whole. Some time ago I took the liberty of addressing a letter to His Excellency the Administrator on this question, in which I said:

The present war, whatever may be thought of its origin, has had at least two happy effects. It has demonstrated the union of the British race in the most unmistakable manner. It has also shown that the colonies are not by any means so defenceless as was hitherto supposed. The magnificent response of Australia and Canada to the call of the Empire has shown colonists and the world at large that while the Navy is invaluable for Imperial purposes and for the protection of our international commerce, the colonies need not, in the event of European war, look to it as their sole means of defence. Within twelve months a colonial army of at least 150,000 men could be raised in Australia alone whose knowledge of bushcraft and acquaintance with modern implements of war would enable them to make short work of an enemy who had the temerity to invade our shores. Of such an army the members of the contingents now serving in South Africa will form at once the nucleus and the instructors. This consideration places the colonies on a footing of greater equality with the motherland, and therefore paves the way for definite partnership in Imperial concerns, while the remarkable wave of loyalty now passing over the Empire renders the consideration of suggestions having an Imperial Union in view most opportune and desirable.

That view, I am glad to say, has been confirmed by no less an authority than Mr. Chamberlain himself, as shown in the quotation I have already made. I will also trouble the House with another extract from the same letter, in which the theory of the Imperial federation movement is set forth:—

The movement in favour of Imperial federation first took definite shape (so far as I am aware) in the year 1884, when the Imperial Federation League was formed, under the presidency of the late Right Honourable W. E. Forster. A committee of that league prepared what was termed a practical scheme of federation and presented it to the league on November 12, 1892. In this document it was suggested that an Imperial Council should be appointed by the United Kingdom and the self-governing colonies. It was proposed that these delegates (appointed by the Governments or Parliaments of their respective groups of colonies) should have the power to appropriate moneys for Imperial defence, such moneys to be raised by the common contributions of the colonies and kingdoms represented. The fundamental idea of the league was that an Imperial Senate should be created for the purpose of founding and maintaining an Imperial navy. To such a plan as this, in common with most Australians, either native or adopted, I consider there exist well-founded objections. We have neither the machinery to secure the necessary representation or to raise the required revenue, nor is it at all likely that the colonies will join in a scheme which has for its principal object the raising of a large armament which may be used for purposes of aggression, or be made the means of involving the various self-governing states in warfare which all their interests would prompt them to keep out of. In addition to this, the populations of the various groups of colonies know too little of each other to be willing to entrust to a majority of the whole number the administration of Imperial affairs without themselves having some share in the disposal as well as the raising of the funds to be disposed of. The Colonial Conference of 1897 came nearer to the practical idea of what united action in affairs of common interest should be. The assemblage of colonial premiers under Mr. Chamberlain's auspices undoubtedly was of great assistance to the Colonial Office and to the colonies themselves, having brought about doubtless a better understanding of mutual wants and wishes than any correspondence could possibly have accomplished. One peculiar feature of the deliberations was that the two colonial ministers in favour of closer Imperial Union were Mr. Seddon and Sir E. N. C. Braddon—men at the very opposite poles of political thought. This is encouraging as showing how widely disseminated is the hope of Pan-Britannic union. But the Colonial Conference, useful as it was, occurred but once, and except on the rare occasion of a jubilee, it is not easy to see how such an

assemblage of colonial statesmen could frequently be convoked.

That, in a few words, gives the history of the movement up to the present day; briefly, it is true; but at the same time it is taken from the principal authority on the subject, and shows clearly what has hitherto been done. The Colonial Conference, however, had one very serious drawback. The Premiers who attended it were summoned to London on an entirely different mission: they were summoned there to wait upon Her Majesty on the occasion of the Jubilee and to represent their various States at the rejoicings which then took place. The idea of calling them together in conference was apparently formed after their arrival in London, and the result was that while they could give their personal opinions on matters affecting the colonies, they were armed with no mandates from the States they represented, and could do no more than discuss, in an academic spirit, the various points raised. The proposal set forth in this motion which I am asking the House to consider is of a different nature. It suggests that the Colonial Office should, if it see fit, call together a conference, when Australian federation has been accomplished, representatives from Canada, Australia, and the various other self-governing portions of the Empire, the members of which should be elected by the Parliaments concerned, or (if deemed advisable) by the people themselves. They also could go armed with a mandate to enable them to discuss authoritatively the various matters which might be brought under the notice of the conference. I will not trouble the House with any views of my own in connection with what this conference might or might not do. Suffice it to say there is a very great deal of work the conference might usefully attend to without committing the colonies to any serious scheme of Imperial federation. Take, for example, the question of Imperial postal facilities, the question of assimilating and codifying the various commercial laws of the different portions of the Empire, the question of reciprocity in our fiscal system, the question of the treatment of native races and of aliens, and the codification and assimilation of the various laws relating to marriage or to defence. Matters of the

and might come within the scope of the conference, and I believe and hope that the initiation of such a conference scheme might be devised whereby something of the nature of the Imperial Council I advocate might be formed, which could recommend to the various colonial parliaments certain lines of legislation to be adopted or, it might be rejected. By that means we might gradually get together a code of law dealing exclusively with Imperial subjects, on which, in the course of time, the foundations of an Imperial constitution might be laid. To my mind the great danger of all schemes of the kind that we may depart from the time-honoured traditions, customs, and spirit of the British constitution. We do not want to have a written constitution any cut-and-dried scheme. What we desire is to allow the scheme to evolve gradually; but no scheme can expect to evolve unless conferences and negotiations take place from time to time. I believe the future of the Empire will lie somewhat more in the direction of series of alliances, rather than of dependency on a common centre. My hope and desire is that the suggestion made by Mr. Chamberlain will be carried out, and that Western Australia should have the honour of being the first in the field adopting the suggestion. *Appropos* of the spirit of union which exists at the present time, some remarks made by Lord Rosebery seems to me to be peculiarly apt. Lord Rosebery says:—

What, at any rate, this war has done, if it has done nothing else, is to prove that the Empire is a fact; that it is based on a rock; that it is as compact as that, and it is not merely a small congeries of countries in the world. Australia, Canada, and the great cities of India, have shown a spirit not inferior to that of the mother country herself. That has been—I can vouch for it, at any rate, in Australia, from which country I heard only yesterday—not so much the work of governments as the spontaneous impulse of the people themselves. I say, then, that if with our reverses we have purchased only the fact that our Empire is a united Empire, and, therefore, henceforth a supreme factor in the balance of the world, we should have made a profitable transaction out of the war.

It let us leave the Imperial aspect of the question, and come down to the purely local aspect. We have seen the suggestion made by the Imperial Government, who

have practically said they are waiting now for some portion of the colonial dependencies to take the matter in hand. We have that opportunity. The suggestion is made for the first time, I think, in any of the colonial parliaments, and it is made within the precincts of this House, and surely it would be a good thing, beneficial in every sense of the word, if in a matter of this kind Western Australia were in the van. To pass a resolution would do us no discredit; on the contrary I submit that it would result in the highest credit and honour redounding to this House and the colony generally. It is for these reasons I submit the motion, and I move it also because I believe that in time to come the Empire is destined to be consolidated, and when that consolidation is accomplished, Great Britain will not only be the greatest power in the world, but also on the whole the most beneficent power, and those who participate in it will have more to boast of, perhaps, than the members of any race or empire in the history of the world; because they will be able to say, not only that they belong to a great and powerful empire, but to an empire which makes for honour, justice, and righteousness, in dealing with the nations of the earth. The House ought to give a motion of the kind the most careful consideration; and with all due humility and with a full sense of the disproportion between myself, as mover, and the importance of the motion, with the enormous scope it opens up, I beg to submit the proposal, in the hope that either the motion as framed, or with some modification, will meet with favour at the hands of hon. members.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am sure everyone has listened with pleasure to the speech of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper); and in regard to the substance of the motion and the sentiments embodied in the proposed address, we must be all pleased to concur. One thing that strikes me is the versatility of the hon. member, and I think that if he would devote himself to flights of oratory in regard to Empire and the predominance of the British race, it would be much more entertaining than those other flights of oratory he favours us with sometimes, and which, if he will permit me to say so, do

not soar so high, and so far as most of us are concerned are not so much appreciated as his present effort. While I congratulate the hon. member on his motion, and express the opinion that it does great credit to his loyalty to our constitution and to Imperial authority, I think the motion is somewhat out of place. I do not think the motion would have any chance of obtaining the consent of the Governments of Eastern Australia, because the answer they would give is easy to anticipate, namely that this is a matter which should come from the Commonwealth Government. The whole speech of the hon. member shows us that he has not yet realised the change that has come over this colony and our constitution, by the adoption of the federal scheme under the Commonwealth Act. All the matters he has referred to are matters over which this local Parliament will have little or no control, and in regard to which our voices will only be heard through our representatives, or by resolution addressed to the Federal Government. Take for instance "calling, as soon as the Commonwealth of Australia has commenced to exercise its powers, a conference of representatives." If the Imperial Government did call a conference of representatives, Western Australia would not be represented. I have been at two conferences myself in London, in 1887 and 1897, and at these conferences only the Federal Parliament of Canada was represented, there being no representatives from Lower Canada, Ontario, British Columbia, or any of the other Canadian provinces. If representatives were summoned to the councils of the State at home, Australia would be represented by the Federal Government, and not by representatives from the States Governments, the latter of whom would have no voice whatever. Then again, we must remember that under the Commonwealth, we will no longer be the sovereign State we are at present, and we must realise and understand that our views on great questions of State will only be heard through our representatives in the Federal Parliament. The hon. member has referred to such matters as postal and fiscal questions, and the laws relating to marriage and to defence; but he must know very well that all these are matters the Federal Government will

have the exclusive right of legislating and, that legislation once passed, the Parliament will have no voice whatever in regard to them. We will have nothing to do, for instance, with defence, except through our Federal representatives; and then again, what will this Legislature have to do with the question of reciprocity?

MR. VOSPER: It is not suggested that we do anything but recommend the Imperial Parliament to call a conference to deal with these matters.

THE PREMIER: We are asked to forward this address to the other colonies desiring their concurrence; that before we actually come into existence as a Commonwealth, all the States should send representatives to the Imperial Government. But does the hon. member not think that the reply would be that we had better wait until we are all represented by the Federal Parliament, and that then the Imperial Government would be glad to listen to united Australia? I wish it to be distinctly understood I am not in any way taking from the credit due to the hon. member for submitting this motion, because if we had to retain the same power as formerly, this would be a very good address to present. I would suggest, however, that the address be somewhat differently worded, and that it should be sent to the Queen instead of on to the Secretary of State, that could be, I understand, in keeping with the forms and usages of Parliaments, though I do not speak with authority on this question. My main objection to the motion is that we shall never get the other colonies to agree with us in sending this address, on the eve of the establishment of a Commonwealth Government. For that reason, while I am sorry to say one word against the proposed address—with the terms of which I am absolutely in sympathy, because no more fitting terms could be found than those used by the hon. member—I ought to ask the House and the House to consider whether we are really likely to do any good at all by moving in the matter at the present time. If, however, the House thinks so good will result, because the sentiments expressed are such as no one could take exception to, then I would ask some hon. member to move the adjournment of the debate in order that the address may

framed in a somewhat different way and, while carrying out exactly the same sentiments, be addressed to Her Majesty rather than to the Secretary of State. I have no objection at all to sending an address.

MR. VOSPER: It will do no harm, at all events.

THE PREMIER: But at the same time, I do not think the second part of the motion is likely to find any favour in the other colonies.

MR. VOSPER: Send it on our own account.

THE PREMIER: That is the only thing to do; because I am quite sure there is no chance of getting the concurrence of the other colonies to an address of this sort on the eve of the establishment of a Commonwealth Constitution.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I see some of the objections which have been suggested by the Premier, but the hon. member who submits this motion states most distinctly that he does not desire to bind this House to the form, so long as we retain the spirit of the address; and if I understand him aright, he wants Western Australia to have the credit of being the first of the colonies to take steps towards Imperial federation. We have always kept in view, when discussing federation for Australia, that it would be one step forward towards the establishing of Imperial federation, and at any rate that was one of my strongest reasons for supporting Australian federation. I do not think there will be a great motive power in this motion, if passed, nor that it will lead to very definite results; but we may at any rate be the first in the field by passing this proposal, and thus perhaps secure some little *kudos* for having been the first to promote the idea. I would suggest to the mover that he should abandon entirely paragraph 2 in his motion, as to forwarding the address to other Governments.

MR. VOSPER: I am not wedded to that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: By passing the motion, we should be the first of the Australian colonies to suggest this course of proceeding on the part of the Federal Parliament; and one of our last acts as a sovereign State would be to further the

idea of Imperial federation by taking a step in that direction. The mover asks only that Her Majesty's Ministers should consider as to the best way of taking some step towards furthering Imperial federation; thereby expressing our sympathy in what we believe is, after all, the aspiration of the British race throughout the world. The prominent aspiration of this century is the feeling, the desire, that the English-speaking peoples of the British race, whether in Canada, in the United States of America, or in the Commonwealth of Australia, shall be one grand federal unity.

MR. MORAN: Do you mean legislative unity, or what sort of unity?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No; we are not going into details at this stage; but it is well to start with a main principle and work in the details later. I do not see any difficulty in passing this motion in the amended form I have suggested. We are acting within our powers in passing it, and we shall be doing an act which may perhaps set the ball rolling in the direction we all desire; and if we can do that, we shall be helping to realise the great Imperial idea of the age, and Western Australia will be taking a step which will go down to history, perhaps with the hon. member's name at the top, as having been the first State in Australia to suggest that the united Commonwealth of Australia should take a leading part in promoting the federation of the British race. I think the hon. member should accept the suggestion of the Premier; and while I do not want to stop discussion now, I hope some member will move later that the debate be adjourned, in order to enable the hon. member to amend his motion in such a way as to be acceptable to the Government, so that they may put it in that better form to which Ministers are more accustomed. If that be done, the Government might very fairly adopt the motion, and reconstruct it in such terms as will enable them to pass it through the House in a satisfactory form.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): The mover probably knows I am entirely opposed to any resolution coming from this House of any nature mentioning or advocating Imperial federation. I do not know whether it is the feeling of the people of Australia, but I certainly do

know that the feeling of the people in Eastern Australia is that we should not go back to any form of government which would revive in Australia practically the Crown colony system as it formerly existed. It is generally understood by public men all over Australia, that any attempt to frame a representative constitution which should include the whole of the British dependencies under one Parliament would be a most dangerous as well as most undesirable step to make, because it would be going back to those Crown colony days from the restraints of which this colony has but lately escaped. I hope this House will not lightly rush into a movement of this kind; for what a tremendous question is involved in this motion! No matter what amendment may be made in the motion, I trust the good sense of the Government will not lead them to adopt the motion with the first paragraph as it stands, because to do so would hold us up to the ridicule of the other Australian colonies as having attempted to deal with matters over which we have lost all power. If the motion were to give an assurance to Her Majesty that the loyalty of the British race and the bonds of the British Empire are as strong or stronger than ever, I should be at one with the hon. member; but in a quotation which the mover made from the speech of Lord Rosebery, it appears to me that the question is in this position, that recent events have proved that the British Empire is built on rock, and is just as firm as rock. How can we make a movement and ask for a conference with the object of taking away from us that independence which we received when we obtained responsible government from the British Parliament? To take a step backward from that position would bring about a feeling on the part of the rest of Australia that we should be giving up our absolute independence by becoming part of the old British system. If you try to bind the whole Empire into one unit of government, this young continent of Australia will be brought under the restraint of having its household legislation interfered with by the Parliament of the old country.

MR. WILSON: They will never interfere with our household legislation.

MR. MORAN: Then what will they interfere with?

MR. WILSON: With Imperial matters.

MR. MORAN: I say household legislation is all legislation. It includes the legislation of colour, and how will the Imperial Parliament deal with the question of 200 millions of black labour in India, and how can we deal with them under Imperial legislation? What closer union can you have than the present union, which gives us local independence under the Imperial Parliament? As Lord Rosebery says, the present union is perfect, because it leaves everybody free. Are we going back to the condition of Crown colony days, and have our legislation controlled from Downing Street? For that is what this motion means, a return to the position of the Crown colony days—that is the position exactly. The hon. member, himself a democrat, says he repudiates all idea of Imperial legislation of the Crown colony age; that he does not mean an Imperial legislation which is to bring about any parliamentary union of that kind. But the hon. member has failed to lay down what he does mean by his motion; whether he means such a form of Imperial federation as will create a central government such as that which was tried on an Australian scale in the Federal Council of Australia, which while it existed had no real power. If his idea of federal union means the creation of a government like that, then what will be the use of it? We should be clear as to what we mean by Imperial federation. The mover would oppose any taking away of West Australian autonomy, but he would not oppose the taking away of the autonomy of the whole of Australia by embracing it within an Imperial federation. We know our interests are well looked after under the present system; that the Imperial Parliament is always willing to take the advice and give due consideration to the opinions of all the different colonies and dependencies within the Empire; and we cannot well improve on that system. This is too great a question for us to do as the mover proposes, approach the old country with a request that the Imperial Government should "continue that good work by calling a conference of representatives from all the self-governing provinces of the Empire," for formulating a closer political union. But seeing that this colony received its independence from the old

country only ten years ago, I ask anyone here if he has any desire to go back to the old condition of things as it existed 10 years ago in this colony.

MR. VOSPER: Nobody wants to do so.

MR. MORAN: How is the mover going to conserve the independence of Australia under the system he proposes, and at the same time conserve Imperial federation? What does the motion mean? The first part of it is extraordinary in this respect, that it expresses a desire to "place on record the efforts made by yourself (Mr. Chamberlain) and by the Imperial Ministry towards the consolidation of the British Empire, and the maintenance of these fraternal bonds which render the British race pre-eminent," and so on. Now we know the Imperial Parliament is made up of parties, first one in power and then another; and while I have been in favour of the Liberal party generally, I am willing to admit that in time of danger like the present the Conservative party are better in power. We in the colonies recognise that. But what we are asked to do by this motion is to place on record our high appreciation of what the Imperial Ministry have done towards the consolidation of the Empire, "and the maintenance of those fraternal bonds which render the British race pre-eminent for stability, justice, and liberty." I ask, what have fraternal bonds got to do with justice and liberty? Will anyone explain how fraternity means justice or means liberty? You may have all sorts of fraternities; and as an instance of fraternity, there is no instance on record in recent history of a fraternity which has stuck together better than have the Boers in South Africa. There is fraternity amongst that race, anyway.

MR. VOSPER: Not fraternity towards "the stranger within their gates."

MR. MORAN: All right. That is what I want to get from the hon. member. He said, "Not to the stranger within their gates." Is the hon. member prepared to extend his fraternity to the 200 million blacks in India who are British subjects, and to the 20 million or 30 million Mahometans? And as he wants to consolidate the marriage law, will he make the Mahometan marriage law apply to

the British Empire, so that a man may have a plurality of wives?

MR. VOSPER: You forget the fact that India itself is a distinct empire.

MR. MORAN: Then the hon. member would leave out India?

MR. VOSPER: I would leave that to wiser heads than mine.

MR. MORAN: That is what I wish to be done. I want this great question left to wiser heads than ours—left to the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia. The phraseology of paragraph 1 of the motion is bad: "fraternal bonds"—what does that mean?

MR. WILSON: Strike out the words; amend the motion.

MR. MORAN: I will allow the hon. member to do that: he has a more perfect knowledge than I of the English language. We shall see what kind of a fist he can make of it. I say a united British Empire would mean our uniting in fraternity with 200,000,000 Buddhists of India, also with the Chinamen under our rule in Canton, and with the North-American Indians in Canada. I think the hon. member who moved this motion is the champion opponent of black labour in Western Australia: he is certainly its most consistent opponent; and as he must draw the line between black and white, therefore the motion should be put in an amended form.

MR. VOSPER: You refuse to allow any equality between black and white.

MR. MORAN: Yes; the same as does the hon. member. Go on a little further in the words of the motion:

And to express our desire that the Imperial Government should continue that good work by calling, as soon as the Commonwealth of Australia has commenced to exercise its powers, a conference of representatives from all the self-governing provinces of the empire, for the purpose of discussing and recommending to their various Governments any proposals that may be formulated for the closer political union of the empire.

Yet the hon. member says he repudiates all idea of parliamentary or political union. The hon. member has drafted this proposition without that care and attention which his own expressed political opinions would lead one to expect. He is going against all his own beliefs. The hon. member is an anti-federalist, yet he now wishes for federation; he is a free-trader, a free-trader with all the world,

and yet he wants to call together a conference to have protection against all the world.

MR. VOSPER: Nothing of the sort. The conference is not bound to establish protection against all the world or anything of that kind.

MR. MORAN: What is the meaning of "reciprocity with the British Empire"?

MR. VOSPER: I say the next best thing to free-trade with the world is free-trade with the British Empire.

MR. MORAN: The next best thing is protection under the British Empire? But if the hon. member is a free-trader, why attempt to do away with his own cherished beliefs? Why propose that we should call a conference to have an inter-British protection? That is the point. I ask the Premier to consider this matter very seriously. Is he now, in the last fortnight of this Parliament, to pass a resolution on matters which have gone altogether beyond our power? As the Premier himself pointed out, these matters can be dealt with only by the Federal Parliament. The Premier said we shall have very little power to deal with these questions. I say that anyone who knows the Australian Federation Act knows that Western Australia has not one tittle of power left to deal with such matters after federation. We shall have no voice whatever in dealing with the immigration question, no voice in dealing with our commercial relationships outside the colony. That is left to the Federal Parliament; and yet we are asked to pass a resolution here, and to stultify ourselves by admitting that we have no power; because we say: "Do not call this conference until after the national Parliament meet." Here we are, 180,000 people, asking the Home Government to approach the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia, which is not yet in existence, with a request to do something which we have lost the power to do ourselves. The position, is, to me, altogether incongruous. The motion is against my beliefs. I am entirely opposed to making any request for political union with Great Britain. Let that come from the statesmen at home. Let us be asked first, and do not let us go with our newly-found nationhood and

say we wish to come in again under an Imperial federation and the Imperial Parliament. That, to my mind, is intolerable. Imperial federation to me would mean an absolute clog on the wheels of progress, giving us nothing at all like Parliamentary representation of these colonies in the old country, giving us no true representation on a population basis. Such a scheme would be setting back the wheels of time 100 years, and I cannot understand how any democrat could propose its adoption.

MR. VOSPER: I do not think any conference would consent to such a scheme for a moment.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member knows there are men who have heart and soul set upon that idea as the principal plank in their platform, and that they form a very strong party in England to-day. It is their great contention that the time has arrived for an Imperial Parliament. Against that I will always raise my voice. But in passing a motion as the last act of this Parliament, to congratulate Her Majesty on the fact that the war has proved that Australians are able and willing to take their part in defending the Empire, and that we do not want the trammels of a constitution to make us loyal—there I am with the hon. member and with the Government. But I hope the Government will not pass the first paragraph of this motion; I hope no mention will be made of an Imperial federation in any resolution passed by this House. Let us express our earnest hope and desire that the British Empire will continue as in the past. It is firm now, and let it remain firm. But to tinker with a written constitution is like tinkering with the sacred relationship of the family. How can we set down on paper the love of a daughter for a mother, or of a son for a father? And how can we set down the relationships existing between the mother country and her colonial offspring? Anything of this sort coming from this ten-year-old infant, Western Australia, is altogether out of keeping with our position. Let it come from the mother country—from some greater member of the Empire, or from the Federal Parliament when in session. I hope the Government will not consent to sending out any resolution dealing with political union or with com-

mercial matters, which are too important to be tinkered with. I hope the motion will be passed as one of congratulation to Her Majesty, but touching upon no political matters, and not taking upon ourselves the questionable privilege of commending either of the great political parties in the old country. I am not willing to congratulate the Conservative party, for they have not my support, although they have to some extent my admiration. The Parliament of Tasmania passed such a resolution, and the other colonies firmly rejected it. They said it would be unwise to interfere between the political parties in the old country.

MR. VOSPER: That was interfering with a general election, and it recommended the British people to vote for a certain party.

MR. MORAN: And if you recommend a party, you are recommending it to the country. It is just the same. If we are to pass this motion, I will ask the Government to draft it in such a form that we can all vote for it, because, even if I am entirely unsupported, I shall certainly oppose a motion dealing with anything in the nature of commercial relationships or political union for the present, or drawing tighter bonds which are now firm but free between us of the motherland. I hope the motion will take the form of an address to Her Majesty, and we may with great pleasure pass it as one of the last acts of this Parliament. I shall divide the House, if I can get any support, against a motion of this kind, embodying politics; but I shall agree with pleasure to an address of congratulation, leaving such great questions out of consideration.

MR. WILSON (Canning): I think the hon. member who has just sat down made a mistake by dealing with the details of the motion rather than with its spirit.

MR. MORAN: We must analyse it.

MR. WILSON: I think the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) has, in his motion, voiced the hopes and aspirations of nine-tenths of the people of Australia, when he says we wish for Imperial federation in some form or other. To-night I shall not discuss the details of that federation. I think the

Premier's suggestion is, perhaps, the best. The address ought to be to Her Majesty, and if it can be couched in such language as will be unanimously accepted by this House, it will be all the better, and will carry much more weight. I shall, therefore, adopt the suggestion of the Premier by moving the adjournment of the debate, in order that such an address may be drafted. I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

MOTION—COLLIE COALFIELD, REWARD FOR DISCOVERY.

SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. LOCKE (Sussex) moved:

That a select committee be appointed to consider the question of the allotment of the reward promised by the Government for the discovery of payable coalfields at the Collie.

A *Gazette* notice dated 10th August, 1887, was as follows:

It is hereby notified for general information that the Government of Western Australia offers a reward for the discovery of a payable coalfield within 50 miles from any declared port of the colony, the sum of £1,000, upon the following conditions: (1) That the reward be not payable until 5,000 tons of coal of a quality approved by the Government have been delivered at the port of shipment. (2) That the Governor of the colony for the time being in Executive Council do finally adjudicate and determine to whom alone, or, if there be several claimants, to whom, if any, of the number the above reward shall be payable.

He said this offer did not appear to have been revoked. There were several claimants for the reward, the required quantity of coal having been brought to a port of shipment. To help the Government out of the difficulty and to decide the merits of the rival claims, he moved that a select committee be appointed to inquire who, if anybody, was entitled to the reward. Some time ago £100 each was awarded, he believed, to two claimants, with a promise that when the coalfields were further developed the Government would be prepared to consider whether the balance of the money should be paid. He was not here to put anybody's claim forward, or to say who should be paid, or whether anybody should be paid at all. What he desired was that a select committee should be appointed to inquire into the matter, and if money had been promised by the Government—and the

Government always intended to, and did, he believed, keep their word—it was only fair the money should be paid; but if the House decided otherwise he would be perfectly satisfied.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): The question of who should have the reward, if any, for the discovery of coal at Collie had been brought before the Government on many different occasions during the past two years; and it was, he thought, generally admitted that Mr. Perrin was the discoverer, and that he was assisted by Mr. David Hay to bring the matter under the notice of the Government. That had been admitted by the Government, inasmuch as a sum of £200 was placed on the Estimates the year before last as a reward to these gentlemen for the discovery of the field. It had been claimed, however, that the reward of £1,000 offered in 1887 for the discovery of a coalfield within 50 miles of a port, the reward to be paid after 5,000 tons had been delivered at the port of shipment, should be granted to those gentlemen; and there was no doubt now that a coalfield had been discovered within 50 miles of a port, and that more than 5,000 tons could be delivered, as stated. The Government recently appointed a committee, consisting of the police magistrate of Perth (Mr. Roe), with the Under Secretary for Lands and the Under Secretary for Mines to go into this question and forward a report setting forth who should be rewarded for the discovery of coal, or whether any reward should be given at all; and he believed that the report of that committee was about to be submitted. Certainly the evidence was documentary, but it was generally admitted that Mr. Perrin was the discoverer. Influential persons in the South-West District, such as Mr. Hayward, Mr. Clarke, and others, who certainly would not have expressed an opinion unless they were certain of what they were about, had signed statements that in their opinion Mr. Perrin was entitled to the credit of having discovered the Collie coal. The report of that committee (he the Minister of Mines) had reason to believe would satisfy the member for Sussex (Mr. Locke). The Government had no objection to a select committee being appointed, but there appeared to be

no necessity for such a step, because if the report of the committee already in existence was favourable to the reward being given, it was quite certain the Government would carry out any recommendation to that effect.

MR. LOCKE (in reply): Only just now had he heard that a committee of inquiry had already been appointed by the Government; but he did not intend to withdraw the motion, because any information gathered by that committee would be at the disposal of a select committee appointed by the House. The inquiry would not take long, and opportunity would be afforded of gathering further information.

Question put and passed.

A ballot having been taken, Mr. Ewing, Mr. Higham, Mr. Kingsmill, and Mr. Piesse, with the mover (Mr. Locke), were appointed a committee, with power to sit during any adjournment of the House; to report this day week.

At 6-30, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MOTION—STATE SMELTING OF ORES, GERALDTON DISTRICT.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Geraldton) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a State smelter be erected in the vicinity of Geraldton to smelt ores of gold, copper, and lead.

In speaking to this motion, I intend as briefly as possible to explain my reasons for bringing it forward, and also my reasons for thinking that hon. members should support the motion. My reasons for bringing it forward are that at the present time in the whole of the mineral country north of Geraldton the people are unable, at any payable rates, to get their ores dealt with by smelting, except in a very few cases where gold is found at more than 1oz. or 1½oz. to the ton. If those persons could have a State smelter erected in the vicinity of Geraldton, it would be the means of opening up a large extent of mineral country from Northampton away up to Cue, and would lead to the development of lead, iron, and limestone works in and around Geraldton and Northampton, over a

length of 110 or 120 miles of country. Persons desiring to develop minerals in that part of the country cannot get the ores smelted, and only a small quantity is treated by a private smelter in the colony, because the rates for smelting are so high that, with the extra railage to treat the ores at Fremantle, the cost makes the thing impracticable; whereas by the erection of a State smelter in the vicinity of Geraldton, a large development in mining would take place. I believe there are at present a number of men around Lennonville and Mount Magnet who would, if a State smelter could be erected, take advantage of it and employ a large amount of labour in mining. The extensive lead and copper lodes stretching from the Irwin River to beyond the Lower Murchison, a distance of about 120 miles, would be again opened up and worked by those men—there is no doubt of that; and we have only to look at what was done in years gone by in that district, practically without capital, to feel assured there is a vast mineral field there awaiting development. In 1877 the quantity of lead alone raised in that district, within 30 miles of Geraldton, amounted to £47,468 in value; and when we consider that the charge for smelting at private works is £1 2s. 6d. a ton for galena and £4 12s. 6d. a ton for smelting carbonate, with a charge in proportion for gold smelting, hon. members will realise how impossible it is to have ores from those districts treated at the private smelter in Fremantle. In addition to the charges for smelting, there is the extra railage to pay; and considering that the charges for smelting at Broken Hill amount to only £1 per ton, we can realise how impossible it is without the aid of the State to develop the mining industry in the northern part of this colony. In Tasmania, at the Mount Lyell mine the charge for smelting is 16s. to 18s. a ton; and if at a State smelter to be erected in this colony, suppose we pay three times the amount as compared with the charges in Tasmania, there will still be a large margin remaining as profit to those engaged in the industry in this colony. A few years ago, lead mining in the Victoria district enabled hundreds of men to be employed directly or indirectly in the industry, because nearly the whole

of that country is capable of being worked for lead and copper. Lead lodes extend over a great part of what is now agricultural land; and by developing the mining industry, we would be assisting not only the mining but the farming and pastoral industries also. In one mine, 14 miles from Geraldton, £60,000 worth of lead was taken within a few years, showing the vast field there is in that district awaiting development. Recollecting also that of all the mines which have been worked there for copper, in only one solitary case has a shaft been sunk to so great a depth as 300 feet, and in the majority of those mines the depth is 100 feet to 120 feet; so that we can realise how little development has taken place under the existing system, without the aid of a State smelter in the district. To show what has been done by lead mining in the past, I find from the statistics of the Mines Department that within one or two years of the passing of the amending Mining Act, known as the poor man's mining law, in 1872, the export of lead ore alone in the first year after the passing of that Act was valued at only £4,368, whereas in 1877, as the result of the passing of that Act allowing men to get on to the land chiefly in small parties for working the minerals, the export of lead ore increased to £47,466. The erection of a State smelter I am asking for would be at a place about two miles from Geraldton, as the most convenient site, the land there being owned by the Government or by the Municipal Council. The railway from the Murchison and also the railway from Northampton junction there, and a large quantity of ironstone and limestone are obtainable within ten miles of that junction, the railway running through that land, and of course enabling the ore to be taken up there very cheaply. The lead and copper, when smelted, could be exported from that wharf, and there would thereby be a saving of unnecessary railage and handling, giving a better profit to the people concerned. I have found out from the railway people in Geraldton that the average total capacity of empty trucks coming back from the Murchison each month is about 2,000 tons. We know it is admitted by railway men that empty trucks cost almost as much, if not quite as much, to haul as if

they were loaded, so that by erecting this smelter we should assist the railway revenue, while opening up low-grade mines that cannot otherwise be worked. I learned a few days ago that in Port Augusta, South Australia, one is being erected by the Government, and I had a wire sent to the mayor of that place asking him the capacity of the smelter and also its estimated cost. He replied as to the capacity, and referred us to the Minister of Mines for the cost. The mayor wired me: "The total capacity is 30 tons." Another wire from the Under Secretary for Mines, South Australia, reads: "The estimated cost of erecting smelter at Port Augusta, £5,000." This sum is not a very large one to ask the Government to provide for such a purpose; and when I tell the House that I do not ask for the money to be spent until, by means of a league we are forming in that district, we satisfy the Government that the ore will be forthcoming to keep it going, I think hon. members can have very little objection to assisting me in the effort I am making on behalf of the mines and the public generally in that district. Some hon. members may object to this because it is a State undertaking; but I would ask them what this or any other Australian colony would be if it were not for State undertakings? If we are going to object to State undertakings purely because they are such, we should object to State-aided railways and waterworks, to a State-aided Agricultural Bank, and in fact to almost every work in this colony which has largely tended to further its progress. I hope any member putting forward that objection will be able to show something better than I think he can bring forward, some better reason why we should not undertake the expenditure of this £5,000 for which I ask. We do not ask for the money to be spent or the works commenced, until we satisfy the Government that there is more than enough ore to keep the smelter going; and if we can get the plant erected to smelt at twice or three times the cost of the same treatment in the Eastern colonies, even then we shall be able to open up an immense area of country and to employ a very large number of people. I hope hon. members will see their way to support me in passing the motion.

MR. RASON (South Murchison): I have pleasure in seconding the motion, and if this House will agree to it and the Government can see their way to establish a smelter, there is not the slightest doubt it will be a reproductive work. The mover has shown that in the immediate vicinity of Geraldton are large quantities of lead and copper ore, and an abundance of the necessary fluxes; and in my district I can assure the House that at Lennonville and elsewhere there are immense lodes of iron ore carrying gold in more or less payable quantities which can be treated by smelting only. It is an expensive process to ship ore from the South Murchison even to Fremantle; but during the twelve months ending August last no less than 600 tons of gold-bearing iron ore were forwarded to Mt. Magnet and despatched to Wallaroo and Fremantle. This shows gold-bearing iron ore does exist, and although 600 tons in 12 months is a respectable quantity, it cannot be taken as a criterion of the immense lodes that are there, because, owing to the excessive cost, it naturally follows that the ore sent away so far has had to be picked, whereas, if it could be smelted at a reasonable price, I can assure the House there are whole hills that could be carted away for treatment—[MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mountains!]
—and I can assure the House that during this month alone 100 tons has been sent away from Mount Magnet to Fremantle. The railage from Magnet to Geraldton is 9s. per ton— $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a ton per mile; and from Geraldton to Fremantle it is 12s. $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton. The latter price alone, on low-grade ore, represents a very respectable profit. If only the freight be saved, that in itself will be sufficient to induce a very large development of this gold-bearing iron ore. No doubt it will be said this is a matter for private enterprise, and to a great extent I am with that argument; but, unfortunately, private enterprise has not, so far, entered into this industry. There is no prospect of private enterprise coming forward, and even if it did, my experience teaches me that private enterprise, in the absence of competition at all events, charges an exorbitant rate and looks for a return on its capital, not, as the Government would look, for a reasonable return and a margin for depreciation, but for the biggest pos-

sible profit that can be squeezed out of the industry. That is only human nature, and there is a great deal of human nature about private enterprise. I am sure, if the Government see their way to undertake this work, it will be of a distinctly reproductive nature. Even if they merely cause inquiries to be made, they will satisfy themselves, with very little trouble, that, by an expenditure of, say, £5,000 they could equip a smelter which would meet present requirements; the result of such inquiries would prove that a smelter would be constantly employed at remunerative rates; therefore, I suggest that an enterprise of this nature would really be profitable to the Crown. Both inside and outside this House I have always advocated public batteries, and I think nothing the Government have undertaken has done more to advance the mining industry than the initiation of public batteries. It was said the other evening by a member sitting in Opposition that it was an unfortunate circumstance that the Government had initiated public batteries, unfortunate inasmuch as during last year's working there had been a loss of £10,000 upon those batteries. Even if that expenditure be a total loss, I still submit that in one respect it is an actual gain to the colony, because public batteries have enabled working miners to develop properties which, in the absence of public batteries, would never have been touched. To my own knowledge, forfeited leases have been taken up when a public battery was erected in the neighbourhood, and these leases are being worked to this day by their owners. If it be necessary, as is often urged by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, to encourage yeomen settlers on our soil, it is equally necessary to settle yeomen miners on our mines. By public batteries we encourage the very best class of miners for this colony, the men who own and work their own properties. If that has been the effect upon the mining industry in regard to free-milling ores, the same effect will certainly be produced by the erection of a smelter for treating refractory ores. I hope the House will look favourably upon this motion, and that the Government will see their way, at all events, to make the fullest possible inquiry as to whether they are justified in erecting this smelter.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I rise with much pleasure to support this motion.

MR. A. FORREST: Let us hear, first, what the smelter will cost.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member was not in his place when the mover read a telegram from the Under Secretary of Mines in South Australia, to the effect that a smelter is being erected at Port Augusta at a cost of £5,000, and another telegram that the output will be 30 tons a day. In order to meet the requirements of this field, a smelter of a similar kind is in the present case suggested. I can confirm most emphatically what has been said by the member for South Murchison (Mr. Rason) in regard to the vast amount of gold-bearing iron ore in the Magnet district; and, apart from that district, there are large quantities much nearer the coast. In one case in which I was concerned, we put down a shaft 60 feet, and tested by drilling all the way down. We put in a drive 60 feet to 70 feet across, tested by drilling, and found gold-bearing ore. We put in a costean 70 or 80 feet, and found stone all along. There is in that district a mountain of ironstone which it will take the next 50 years to remove. We can see it is gold-bearing all the way through, yielding from about 7dwts. up to 18dwts. It is utterly impossible to treat that ore by sending it to Fremantle, or to deal with it upon the ground, and the peculiar circumstances in which this plant would be erected, right in the very centre of all necessary sources of supply, would conduce to its success. The ore would come by water; the fluxes are on the spot, the lead is at Northampton—all within an easy radius, and I am certain that the smelter proposed by the hon. member would be a good thing not only for the district, which is important, but a reproducing, self-sustaining undertaking, and that in a very brief time. I have pleasure, therefore, in supporting the motion.

MR. DARLOT (DeGrey): After the able manner in which hon. members have dealt with this subject, I cannot say more than they have said, and do not wish to waste time; but I can confirm from my own experience all that has been said, and I may also state, as a proof of the fluxes being on the spot,

that some years ago I have actually seen lead smelted on this very site on which it is proposed these works should be erected.

MR. HIGHAM (Fremantle): I regret I should be the first to oppose this motion, more especially as at Fremantle we have the benefit of works of a similar nature; but when we are told that such works as these can be erected for £5,000, I begin to wonder where the hon. member (Mr. Hutchinson) got his information, or whether I heard him aright, because the statement is absolutely absurd and incorrect. If a nought were added to the figure, it would be nearer the mark; and, though I am not an expert, I should say £50,000 is the more likely cost. Apart from this, the question arises whether smelting should be worked by State enterprise; and I maintain that the State is not justified in working a smelter for the benefit of the public, because though it is easy to work a battery and give the results on each parcel, a smelter has to be worked continuously, and the ores have to be purchased on analysis, and not on the actual result. I contend that no Government would be justified in undertaking such a speculation. I do not dispute that in the Murchison district there are sufficient quantities of ore and flux to carry on the smelter; but I maintain that private enterprise should step in, and I would support any reasonable proposal for assistance from the Government to such private enterprise. The mover said a great deal about the quantity of lead ore taken from the Northampton district between 1872 and 1878.

MR. HUTCHINSON: I quoted the figures of the department.

MR. HIGHAM: I grant that, but the hon. member misled the House to the extent that he only quoted the value and not the tonnage, and the value of lead was two and a half or three times higher than it is at the present time. If the figures were worked out on the tonnage rate, as compared with the tonnage at the present time, it would be found that even the large figures quoted do not represent such a total quantity of lead as the hon. member would induce the House to believe.

MR. HUTCHINSON: They do.

MR. HIGHAM: Even granting they may, although I dispute that, we have no recent results from the district.

MR. HUTCHINSON: There is £47,000 worth.

MR. HIGHAM: It would have been far more candid on the part of the hon. member to have quoted figures for the last few years, and it would have been just as well to have taken into consideration the expenditure on machinery in the development of the Fremantle smelting works. But with all the expenditure of money on the newest possible hauling machinery, and with all the money expended in the development of the mines, sufficient lead has not been obtainable, although these were picked mines, to supply the smelting works already in the colony. I have no desire to prevent Geraldton having smelting works; but I maintain these should not be a State undertaking, though if there were a proposal for the State to subsidise the establishment of such an enterprise, I would support the motion.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): The question of smelting works at Geraldton has already been before the House this session. The member for Geraldton (Mr. Hutchinson) submitted a motion asking the House to approve of a subsidy or bonus being given for the erection of smelting works, and the matter was discussed, and I think the House agreed that the Government might take the matter into consideration; but there was nothing said at the time about the Government undertaking the work themselves, and starting a State smelter at Geraldton. I am surprised that the hon. member who has moved in the question should not have realised that phase a few weeks ago, when the matter was before the House, but should have waited until public opinion had been expressed in the districts affected, advocating the Government going further than the House had already decided. The member for Geraldton at that time appeared to be perfectly satisfied that the Government should go no further than give a subsidy, and the Government are already taking the matter into consideration, and propose to do something in that direction. I would like to point out that there is more in this proposal than, perhaps, hon. members may be

inclined to realise at first sight. There is a very important principle wrapped up in the motion. The hon. member does not ask the Government to take into consideration the advisability of erecting a smelter, but starts off with an expression of opinion that a smelter should be erected by the Government at Geraldton. I hope, however, hon. members will be careful before they commit themselves to such a principle, because if we go too far, there is no knowing where we may find ourselves. We have already admitted the principle by erecting public batteries throughout the goldfields, and so far financially that system has not been a success, though I think it has indirectly been of very great advantage in assisting the development of mining districts. The member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) said that these public batteries had been worked at a loss of about £10,000 last year; but that I may say is not the case. The loss sustained in the working of public batteries, not taking into consideration the interest on capital, was £6,000.

MR. WILSON: £8,278.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I do not know where the hon. member gets his information.

MR. WILSON: From the Estimates.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: But the information I have from my own department is that the loss sustained was £6,000 during the year ending 30th June last. I think a little error has crept in, because a certain amount of liability incurred during the previous year was paid during the past financial year, and consequently an amount of something like £10,000 was paid over and above working expenses; but a portion of that expenditure was incurred during the previous year, so that the actual loss on the working of the batteries during the past financial year, not taking into calculation the interest on capital, was, as I say, £6,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Does that include extra officers?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: That includes all expenses in connection with the working of the batteries, at the head office and everywhere else. Public batteries have crushed a large amount of gold, something like 130,000 ounces, and that has done a great deal of good, but

we ought to be careful before we enter too largely into these sort of schemes. If we establish a State smelter at Geraldton, persons engaged in other industries in other portions of the colony might very well ask for similar assistance. For example, those engaged in the cultivation of vines might ask the Government to start State wineries, and those engaged in dairying might ask the Government to start State butter factories.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: These have been asked for by both industries.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: And those engaged in the meat trade might very well ask the Government to start frozen meat works at Wyndham.

MR. VOSPER: Is that argument not true of public batteries also?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I think all these things might be done if we are to erect State smelting works at Geraldton. I merely wish to point these matters out, because there is a principle in the motion which requires very careful consideration. This is a matter which ought to be considered more from a national standpoint than from a local standpoint, but I notice that local members advocate the establishment of this State smelter. I have no doubt they are quite right from their point of view in the interests of their constituents, and I would be only too glad to see a smelter established for the advancement of the mining industry at Geraldton and of the goldfields east of that town. Such a proposal would have my support if I thought we were not entering on the realisation of a principle which we might be sorry for afterwards. All these things have to be very carefully considered. The hon. member asks the House to express a straight-out opinion on the subject, and to say distinctly that a State smelter should be erected at Geraldton. At the same time, the hon. member points out that he does not wish the Government to do anything unless they are satisfied there is sufficient ore to keep the smelter going. The motion is almost an instruction that the Government should erect a State smelter, and if the motion be carried in its present form, the Government will have to look on it as an instruction, and endeavour if they possibly can to find the money for the work. Hon. members, in dealing with a question like this, are always very

ready to instance the public batteries. The State, in the interests of mining, has established these public batteries, and has run a large amount of risk in consequence. We know that in many instances public batteries were erected where there were the greatest hopes in the future of localities; but as events turned out afterwards, the batteries had to be removed, because those districts proved not to be so rich as anticipated; or, in mining phraseology, proved to be "duffers."

MR. VOSPER: But a great deal of money was saved, anyhow.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I admit that; and although the batteries may have failed in particular districts, I do not know whether they have failed generally in the work they are supposed to do. But we ought to be very careful in discussing a matter of this kind. As I said before, I would be only too happy to see some means of enabling people to smelt their ore economically at Geraldton or elsewhere; but even if the House did decide the Government should enter into work of this sort, we ought to have the fullest information on the subject. Some hon. members say that a large amount of ore is required to keep smelters going, but I was always of opinion that there was a large amount of ore in the neighbourhood of Mt. Magnet and Coolgardie. A deputation which waited on me the other day informed me that the ore did not want smelting treatment, but could be dealt with by means of the cyanide process. I mentioned to the deputation that a great deal of this ore, I thought, required treatment; but they said I was under a mistake in thinking so, and that the ore did not require treatment. Therefore I say all these things need to be inquired into before the State should enter into expenditure on a matter of this sort, so as to be sure that the expenditure shall be on a sound basis, and that the smelter is likely to be kept going when erected. If the smelter were erected at Geraldton, and it proved to be payable, that would be a good thing for the country. But before we engage in work of this sort, every inquiry should be made, and we should not rush hurriedly into expenditure and establish a principle which may carry us too far. We have done a great deal during the last ten years in assisting

private enterprise, especially in the mining industry; and in many instances the assistance has been given wisely and with advantage to the country; but I believe the time will come when we shall have to stay our hand at this sort of work, and leave the development of mining and other industries to private enterprise in a larger degree than we have in the past. I do not think we can compare the erection of a smelter at Geraldton or elsewhere with the railway system of the colony, as justifying the expenditure of public money; for I do not think the cases are analogous, though the mover treated them as being so. It is a recognised principle throughout Australia that railways should be under the management of the State, for railways are used practically by everyone; whereas a smelter erected by the State would be used by only one industry. I would like hon. members to consider that point well, in dealing with this question. The Government, I am sure, have no desire to look altogether unfavourably on the question of assisting the people of Geraldton and Northampton by the erection of a smelter to develop the mining industry. But the Government propose to offer a subsidy in aid of this work; and we hope that someone will come forward, at Fremantle or elsewhere, to avail themselves of the subsidy and start a smelter in the Geraldton district. I may say the Cabinet have decided, after the expression of opinion from this House, to offer a bonus for the erection of a smelter at Geraldton. At the same time the Government have no objection to going further and making full inquiry into the question; but I do not think we can agree to the terms of the motion, because the House would be committed to the erection of a smelter at Geraldton, without having made proper inquiry into the matter. I hope the question will be fully thought over and discussed before coming to a decision. If hon. members are of opinion that something should be done in the direction asked for in the motion, then the terms of this motion should be altered so as not to make it so committal to this House and the Government. The hon. member informed us that a league has been formed in the district for the purpose of gaining information with regard to the erection and working of a smelter; and he said he does

not desire that the Government should enter on the work, or to even consider the erection of a smelter at Geraldton, until thoroughly satisfied that the work can be carried on satisfactorily. But the motion does not say anything of that kind, and I hope that when a decision is come to by this House it will be expressed in such a way as not to bind the Government to the erection of a work of this sort, without full and careful inquiry. I do not desire to convey an impression in my remarks that I wish to do anything detrimental or that would not be of assistance to the mining industry, but rather to do this in a careful and legitimate way, or we shall enter on dangerous ground and may get into trouble hereafter. It goes without saying that the advancement of the mining industry advances every industry in the colony—we all recognise that; and, as far as I am concerned, I am always prepared to do whatever I can on legitimate grounds to assist in developing the mining industry. But we should be careful in dealing with matters of this sort, and I am sorry that when the motion was before the House a month ago, the hon. member did not express himself as he has done this evening with regard to the State taking over the erection of a smelter, instead of offering a bonus as was first proposed by the member for the Murchison (Mr. Mitchell).

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): I was not present when the mover was addressing the House, and am not aware of the figures he brought forward to support the motion; but from what I have heard from him during the last few weeks, he has given me to understand that plenty of ore could be obtained in the Geraldton and Northampton districts to keep a smelter going at Geraldton. But I agree with the Minister of Mines that it would be wrong to pass the motion in its present form, as it would be a distinct instruction to the Government to erect a smelter at Geraldton. Before any action is taken, it is desirable that a report should be made by officials of the Mines Department with a view of finding out whether the erection of a smelter at Geraldton would be warranted. We should try to encourage the development of lead and other mining in that district, the same as we have encouraged

the development of gold-mining in the colony. Therefore I will give the hon. member all the assistance I can in carrying out his intention. I move, as an amendment on his motion, that all words after "desirable" in the second line be struck out with a view to inserting the following words (amended on the suggestion of the Premier):

That the Government take into consideration the advisability of erecting a smelter at Geraldton, for the purpose of smelting ores of gold, copper, and lead.

This will leave the matter entirely in the hands of the Mines Department; and if the officials of that department do not consider the erection of a smelter will be warranted, the department can take such action as may be deemed best in the circumstances.

MR. HUTCHINSON: I accept the amendment.

MR. WILSON (Canning): If a vote of £5,000 would bring to the Geraldton and Northampton districts all the prosperity anticipated by the mover of the motion as the result of erecting a smelter at Geraldton, I think every member would support that expenditure; but what we want to see is finality in these matters, and I say there is no finality in the proposal now before the House. The first outlay may be only £5,000, as estimated for the erection of a smelter having a capacity of 30 tons a day; but I doubt whether a smelter of a capacity of 30 to 50 tons per day could be erected for that sum, or, if erected, I am certain the working expenses would far exceed the revenue received. It should be remembered that a smelter of that capacity would mean that an expert who understands this special business would have to be engaged to manage it; and you cannot get men of this description, with the knowledge and expert experience necessary for successful working, without paying a considerable salary. I take it that the management of this smelter would cost, exclusive of labour, something like £1,500 to £2,000 a year at least, and therefore I anticipate that a work of this description would result in a deficit for each year that it was worked. With regard to the amendment, I am quite in accord with it that the Government should take the matter into consideration; and I do

hope the Government will also consider the result of their experiment in regard to public batteries. The Minister of Mines has stated here that the loss on public batteries last year was about £6,000. I turn to the report of the Mines Department, and find that during the years in which we have had public batteries, from 1898, the loss on the year's working was £3,487. I turn up the annual Estimates, and find that during the year 1900 the Government estimated the revenue receivable from public batteries to be £30,000, which if received would cover all expenses; but they actually received a revenue of only £19,468; and the working expenses of that year were £27,746, thus showing a net loss, without taking into consideration interest and sinking fund, amounting to £8,278.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No, no.

MR. WILSON: These are the figures shown in the printed Estimates. We find that for two years the loss on working our public batteries was over £13,000, without considering interest and sinking fund; and if we add 4 per cent. on the total outlay of nearly £60,000, the total loss of working for two years amounts to £16,000.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: You are wrong in your figures.

MR. WILSON: I hope the Minister will show where I am wrong. I defy him to do so. The Estimates show that for this year the public batteries are to cost £26,175, and they are estimated to earn a revenue of £23,000, so that this year we estimate a loss of about £3,000, without taking into consideration interest and sinking fund.

MR. DOHERTY: That does not matter if the country benefits by it.

MR. WILSON: But if we are to do all our public works on this principle—

MR. DOHERTY: This is not a public work, but development work.

MR. WILSON: I object to the expenditure of public money in assisting commercial undertakings which can be carried on by private enterprise. Let us grant bonuses to establish industries of this description, and no one will vote more readily than I shall for the granting of such bonuses. I recognise that the mining industry is the greatest industry in Western Australia, and anything we can do to assist it on a commercial basis

ought to be done by this House. But the Government should not rush into these speculative undertakings, which I am sure cannot be run on the present basis. We voted £40,000 in the first instance for the erection of public batteries, and what is the result? The Government have expended £60,000, and still the batteries are being worked at a loss. If we vote £5,000 for the erection of a smelter at Geraldton, the cost will soon run up to £10,000 before we know where we are. It is not only the cost of erecting the works, but also the depreciation and the loss on the management we have to take into consideration; and I do protest that no Government can run these works and make them pay, because the people who are interested in these works being carried on will not allow the Government to make a profit, and as soon as a profit on the working is shown, there will be an agitation to reduce the rates, and so the thing will be worked at a loss. If we are to erect these smelters as we have erected public batteries, then every industry in the country can come to the Government and make the same kind of request for State assistance. We ought to depend upon our private enterprise and our energy for the development of the country, and not come running to the Government for every work we want. If a vote for £1,500 or any sum up to £2,500 will insure the erection of a smelter at Geraldton, I will vote for it so long as I know that is to be the end of our expenditure. But I must point out that the successful working of a smelter does not depend only on the smelting, because in the case of the smelting works at Fremantle the manager does the greater portion of his work by purchasing the ores, which he values and buys outright, and that is how the company are enabled to make a profit. The Government could not do business in that way, for whom could we trust to buy ores, to purchase them outright and make a profit? Let us rely on private enterprise for these things.

THE PREMIER: Good old private enterprise!

MR. WILSON: It is the best friend Australia has had. It has built up the British Empire, and has made Great Britain what it is to-day. Private enter-

prise has made Australia what she is to-day.

MR. GEORGE : It kills such barnacles.

THE PREMIER : It is a wonder it has not killed you.

MR. GEORGE : I never was a barnacle.

MR. WILSON : I shall support the amendment, inasmuch as I feel sure, after the remarks of the Minister of Mines, that the Government will never seriously entertain the erection of such smelters. They will offer a bonus and give grants of land, and will provide railway communication, as has been done at Fremantle ; and if the people cannot get the works established by such means, then I say the works should not be established at all.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie) : I intend to support the amendment, in the interests of the best base-metal district in Western Australia. The amendment simply says the Minister shall make inquiries during the recess, and that those inquiries be made in a systematic manner ; and there is no doubt the feeling of the House is in favour of erecting works which would open up a big lead-mining and mineral district. I think that is what this Parliament exists for. In matters of this sort, I think we have got slightly beyond the private enterprise stage. I am a great believer in private enterprise ; but private enterprise has had any amount of scope at Geraldton for 50 years ; he is getting grey in the head, and has done nothing hitherto. He did draw something ; he had a bonus offered him, and all sorts of things.

THE PREMIER : He got the bonus.

MR. MORAN : And I never knew a private enterpriser who would not take a bonus, or anything else he could get.

THE PREMIER : He has left a chimney there, and his 25 acres in Geraldton.

MR. MORAN : He got 25 acres and £10,000, and has left a chimney !

MR. HUTCHINSON : That was Mr. McGuire, near Northampton. He built two furnaces, and never got a charge in them.

MR. MORAN : He built two ovens, and got £10,000. That only shows what private enterprise will do. The State has to step in, if there is any possibility of developing an industry. I am sorry indeed that my commercial friend, the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson)

so strongly objects to public batteries. The hon. member is straightforward and consistent in his opposition to public batteries, but I would point out to him that it was not alleged by any hon. member, in advocating these public batteries, that they were going to be commercially successful.

MR. WILSON : It was said they would pay.

MR. MORAN : Who said so ?

MR. WILSON : The Premier.

THE PREMIER : They have taken £50,000 worth of gold out of the ground.

MR. MORAN : The Premier is allowed a little poetical license, which he uses, on occasions, with great freedom ; but no goldfields member expected, nor did the bulk of the House expect, that public batteries were going to be commercial concerns. Why, if they were commercial concerns, the private enterpriser would take the opportunity to "rook" the public if he could. But it was expected public batteries would open up, and make or break, certain goldmining centres.

MR. GREGORY : They have made one centre.

MR. MORAN : They have made one good centre, and have broken several others, which are just as well broken ; and they are doing a lot of useful work. They have returned a lot of gold to Western Australia, and even if there has not been a profit on the transaction, surely the State looks beyond that. The State looks to the enlivening of mining enterprise, and to the fact that, perhaps, thousands of men are being supported by means of these public batteries.

MR. WILSON : Why do you not run the railways at a loss ?

MR. MORAN : Because there is no occasion to do so just yet. We run them at the lowest rates in Australia ; and if we are not running them at a loss, we are getting fairly close to it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : You are running three of them at a loss.

MR. MORAN : Here is a district round Geraldton, well known for a good many years as a good copper and lead-mining district. It is to the great benefit to the country to open it to some other industry besides gold-mining. Look at the coal industry. The State opened up the Collic coalfield at its own expense, sunk a shaft

and did the mining, and private enterprise, in the shape of the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), stepped in when the Government had built a railway; and private enterprise will make a good profit, I am perfectly certain, thanks to the Government for opening up the coalfields and building the railway. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] If £5,000 or £10,000 can be spent in Geraldton in this way, it is our duty to open up the country's resources. I want to point out to the member for the Canning that it will be quite possible to erect a suitable furnace for £5,000, or even for £500; it is purely a question of degree. It all depends on whether you want to smelt a button, or wagon-loads of ore; but £5,000 would be quite enough to start with. These furnaces are not all put up at once; other furnaces are added as they go along; and the ore could, in this instance, be smelted in the form of matte, and exported to England to be refined. The whole question is: We have a Mines Department with experts in it competent to investigate this case, to get estimates, and to submit them to us next session; and I trust the result will be that we shall find the work can be done, and shall have the money to give this district the start it deserves. Is the Minister of Mines perfectly certain he can give a bonus for the smelting of lead and iron and such minerals, under federation?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Not for smelting.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: We can for mining.

MR. MORAN: I deny that you can do so for mining. I think I know more about the Commonwealth Bill than the Minister. I say mining is excluded, except in the case of gold and silver. By the Act the Minister cannot encourage by bonuses the production of coal; and I question whether he can encourage lead mining. The Act says we can make an exception in the case of gold and silver, and I suppose the only way to drive a coach and four through the Act would be to say we were looking for silver. Every day in this House we are feeling the tightening of the reins of federation. Recently we had to withdraw a Bill proposed by the Government, to give bonuses of 5 per cent. to industries. There is no more direct form of bonus in the world than a guarantee that persons will not

lose any money in going into an enterprise. And we shall have, in talking about this question of bonuses, to be careful to see that we are not going outside the corners of our present powers. And by the same token, if we cannot give bonuses for looking for lead, iron, and coal, is it not a moot point whether we can erect a smelter at a cost to the State? That is a point to be fought out in the future; but it is just as well for the State to look into these matters, and go cautiously and carefully. What is the difference between giving a bonus to an industry and running it yourself? I would suggest that this be looked into, and the powers of our Parliament ascertained; and I am perfectly certain the Minister will give us a report upon the possibility of this scheme, and the feasibility and advisability of it, next session.

MR. CONNOR (East Kimberley): I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment, and I should have supported the motion as it stood, but the amendment is more practical. This is purely a prospecting vote, to encourage the development of a mining industry, and also, if necessary, to help some places which have not had their fair share of the loaves and fishes when we had the good times in this colony. And I am sorry to say, when one leaves Fremantle to go north, the first port one touches is Geraldton; and probably Geraldton has not received the consideration to which it was entitled. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Nonsense!] In any case, I hold it is absolutely necessary there should be help given by the Government for the purpose of developing and fostering the production of lead and copper, if they are present in that district; for at present we depend almost entirely for our prosperity on the production of gold. We have been told we have these metals in abundance, not only at Geraldton, but further up the North-West coast of this colony; and I say it is the bounden duty of this Government in every possible way to encourage this industry, so that we shall not depend on only one source of wealth. I was rather disappointed at the remarks of the Minister of Mines when speaking to this motion, because the effect of his speech was: "I would help you if I could, but I will not do so." I should rather hear the Minister give a definite answer to this

motion by saying: "I do not agree with you; I cannot do it." But as to this half promising—this saying: "I believe it is all right, but I will not help you"—that is not the policy which should be adopted by any Minister in this House. He should either give his opinion that the work is not justified, and say he will not support it, or else he should leave it severely alone.

MR. HUTCHINSON: We will satisfy him.

MR. CONNOR: The member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), to whose superior wisdom, foresight, and business capacity we all bow, is not in sympathy with the action of the Government in this matter, nor with a vote passed three years ago introducing public batteries into this colony. Although I am not interested in gold-mining, I have had a good deal of experience; and I have no hesitation in saying that was absolutely the best vote ever passed by this House: a vote whereby prospectors were enabled to go into the outlying districts of this colony, and in many cases to prove, and in some cases to develop, their claims. That was the most judicious, the wisest, the best, and the most popular vote ever passed through this House; and if the Government had spent ten times the amount they have, they would be justified in continuing that particular line of development by giving more public batteries to the miners.

MR. WILSON: They will lose more money.

MR. CONNOR: Personally, I do not mind if they do, if this is to be a means of opening up the country sufficiently. If it do no more than that, the money will be well spent. The member for Geraldton (Mr. Hutchinson) told us he could erect a smelter for £5,000. I do not think that is possible. I hope I am wrong. [MR. HUTCHINSON: You are wrong.] I do not think it is possible to start this work for £5,000, though I think a suitable smelter should be erected there. Another matter which requires serious consideration before this project is entered upon is the fact that it is necessary to have fuel of a certain class, in large quantities, before starting the smelter. There would be required, I should say, quite £5,000 or £10,000 worth of coke, before starting. We cannot always get coke when we want it.

When the furnace of the smelter has been "blown in," it should not be allowed to stop for from six to twelve months.

MR. GEORGE: If you stop it, you are losing money.

MR. CONNOR: These are some of the difficulties which may arise. I am not opposing the motion; but this is why the expenditure will be much larger than that suggested by the mover. If the cost would be that suggested by the hon. member, I should not mind being one to give a vote to cover the whole of the work, even if the cost were three times as much, provided our action would have the direct effect of developing this industry; so I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I cannot support this motion, because I consider the information placed before the House is altogether too meagre to warrant my doing so.

MR. MORAN: The amendment seeks for information.

MR. GEORGE: When the hon. member has finished speaking irregularly, I will try to address the House in a regular fashion. This is a different question from that of public batteries. If a public battery be erected in any place, and does not show a profit, it can, at a comparatively small expense, be shifted to some locality where it can be made to pay. The case is altogether different with anything like a smelting plant; for, as was pointed out by the last speaker, when once smelting furnaces are started, they must be kept going. If they are not kept going, and the fires are allowed to go out, the enterprise becomes very costly. Though I have no experience of smelting gold-bearing ores, I have had some little experience of iron furnaces in the Midlands of England. It has been estimated and proved that from £500 to £800 is the cost entailed upon the owners of a smelter in case the fires should be allowed to go down; and I would point out another difference in this matter, which places smelters in quite a different category from public batteries. The public batteries simply crush stone for a customer, at so much per ton, whether the quantity be 5 tons or 50 tons, or 100 tons. But how are we going to do that with regard to ores? We cannot smelt 5 tons of

ore for any particular man, and then clean out the furnace and give him his return. We cannot do that with 10 tons or 100 tons, or 1,000 tons. We might do it with thousands of tons. Therefore, the only practical method of working these smelters would be by having some system of purchasing the ores.

MR. MORAN: That is always the system.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member should be a little more steady in his demeanour. It would be necessary for the ores to be purchased; and purchased by whom? By the Government, who run the smelter. Therefore, instead of the £5,000, which I understand has been stated to be the cost of these smelters, £5,000 would not be noticed in this connection; and probably from £20,000 to £25,000 would be required to establish a smelter as it would have to be started; and then we should have to provide considerable working capital to purchase the stock of coke and other material required, together with a large sum to purchase the ores; so that the Government would be practically in the position of a trading company, and not in the same position as they are in regard to public batteries, which were instituted for assisting small people in the troubles experienced in proving their shows. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), whose exuberance it is impossible to suppress, has stated that it will not be necessary for the Government to purchase any ore. Perhaps it will not be necessary for the Government to pay money down on the nail, but the Government will be responsible for the payment, and will have to give the assay value of the ore. If a man brought a parcel of some hundreds or perhaps thousands of tons, and the return did not give him satisfaction, he would always be open to make the suggestion that the gold, or silver, or whatever the metal might be, remained inside the smelter. In the case of a public battery, however, if a man be dissatisfied with the crushing, he has an opportunity of inspecting everything, and I believe can even take away the tailings, which could not be done with regard to a smelter. The Government can carry the motion, if they like; but it is necessary for hon. members to raise the voice of caution, because

we can see clearly that if any industry is likely to be payable private enterprise steps in. It is a pretty clear guide as to how matters stand, if Geraldton has been left alone by private enterprise, even after 20 acres of ground have been given for the purpose of a smelter.

THE PREMIER: That was twenty-five years ago.

MR. GEORGE: And yet nothing has been done. If this were a simple matter of expending even £10,000, and if the thing proved a failure, the whole plant could be removed to some place where it would be a success, the House might take the proposal into favourable consideration; but the cost of shifting smelters is far too big to be practicable. If the House entertain the matter at all, we decidedly have a right as stewards of the country's money to have the best possible evidence brought before us, and I am not agreeable that we should vote this money without proper information.

MR. HUTCHINSON (in reply): As to the private enterprise argument, the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) made a great deal of the question of bonuses, but for his information I may say that before responsible Government was instituted, the then Government offered £5,000 as a bonus. A Melbourne company came over, and were given several acres of land on which two furnaces were erected, and the men brought over for that company were so brilliant that they were not able to draw one solitary charge from the furnace, although from one of these mines £60,000 of lead has been sent in a raw state, and that mine has not been worked to more than 170 or 180 feet deep. The result was that private enterprise failed with these smelters. The 25 acres referred to were given on which to erect a smelter, but the company who took the work in hand could do nothing with it.

THE PREMIER: They got the fee simple, all right.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Yes; and the National Bank holds it now. Another small furnace was started without much capital, but before more than two charges could be drawn, that company failed. Another smelter on the Upper Murchison was started, but private enterprise there resulted in turning out slag, which a few months ago yielded 40

per cent. of lead. The Government of South Australia are now building a State smelter at Port Augusta, which is expected to be finished in December, at an estimated cost of £5,000. I am satisfied with the amendment, and I say that with regard to Geraldton and Cue, sufficient facts and figures can be brought forward to show that the outlay asked for is legitimate, and will develop not only the mining industry, but the farming industry in the district.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (in explanation): I wish to put this matter clearly before hon. members, and to state for the information of those who seem to imagine this question may be shelved, that if the House decide the erection of these works should be taken into consideration, every possible attention will be given to the matter, and all inquiry made to see whether the colony will be justified in entering upon the scheme.

Amendment put and passed, and the motion as amended agreed to.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message received from His Excellency the Administrator, assenting to the Customs Duties (Meat) Repeal Bill.

FREMANTLE TRAMWAYS BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. B. C. Wood), in moving the second reading, said: I take this to be a mere formal matter. There has been no protest by the ratepayers, and the provisional order has been applied for and granted.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADMINISTRATION (PROBATES) BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Preliminary :

MR. JAMES moved that after the word "Act" in line 2, Sub-clause 2, "1880" be inserted. When this Bill was introduced an amending Supreme Court Bill was also brought forward, but as the latter was not to be proceeded with this session, one or two alterations were necessary in the present measure.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 2—Repeal :

MR. MONGER said he would have liked, had he been in order, to move that the Bill be considered in Committee this day six months, seeing that at the close of the session it was proposed to rush through this Bill, which consisted of 85 clauses. There was no lawyer present with the exception of the gentleman in charge of the measure, who was cognisant of what the principal clauses referred to. Under the circumstances he moved that progress be reported.

MR. JAMES : Better not report progress now because the Bill had been on the Notice Paper since the first day of the session. It was merely a consolidating Bill, and so far as he knew contained no new provisions. The Attorney General and other lawyers in the House agreed that the Bill was necessary, because the law at the present time was unsatisfactory.

Motion (progress) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Connor	Mr. Darlot
Mr. George	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Monger	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Moran	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Piesse	Mr. D. Forrest
Mr. Sholl	Mr. Hall
Mr. Quinlan (Teller).	Mr. Higham
	Mr. Holmes
	Mr. Hubble
	Mr. Hutchinson
	Mr. Illingworth
	Mr. Kingsmill
	Mr. Lefroy
	Mr. Moorhead
	Mr. Pennefather
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Vosper
	Mr. James (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

MR. MORAN : Clause 2 proposed to repeal the existing legislation on the subject. But before we repealed these Acts he wanted to take this opportunity of returning thanks to the *Perth Morning Herald* for having watched this Bill and given a digest of it in a careful and exhaustive manner. Members must honestly confess that we did not examine legal Bills brought before this House: being technical matters, they were usually brought up late in the session, and members seldom examined them. But that newspaper had assisted members in this case by showing something that was, to say the least of it, pretty strong on the part of the member for East Perth (Mr. James), who brought in the Bill. We found that it was

practically a copy of legislation on the subject in New South Wales, with important differences; one difference being the omission of a section which provided that up to a certain value a poor man's estate might be administered without the aid of a lawyer. That provision had been omitted from this Bill.

MR. GEORGE: Why?

MR. MORAN: And it had been omitted by the foremost democrat on the Opposition benches. Secondly, we found that in every case where fees were mentioned in the Bill they were about 33 per cent. higher than the fees in the New South Wales Act from which this was taken. The hon. member did not deny that, and his action in this case showed how important it was that members of this House should watch carefully legal measures as they were going through. None of the solicitors who were members of this House took the trouble to point out these things to us, probably because they did not think it worth while to look through these Bills, or had not time to do so.

MR. MOORHEAD: The Bill provided for a deduction on the present scale.

MR. MORAN: Why not copy the lower scale of New South Wales?

MR. MOORHEAD: We must creep before we walked.

MR. MORAN: The members of one profession in this colony had been not merely creeping but stalking abroad and walking on people, for years past. Legal fees here were higher than in any part of the British dominions. But in saying this he was not speaking of Perth, the capital of the colony, but speaking of the practice of lawyers in distant parts of the colony where he had been. He knew for instance that there were two scales of legal fees in existence in Kalgoorlie; that by agreement between solicitors in a case, the Supreme Court scale of costs were in some cases increased 100 per cent. over the authorised scale. There was no reason why law should be dearer in this colony than in New South Wales; for although there was plenty of competition amongst lawyers here, yet a person could get as much bad law, and at as dear a cost, in this colony as anywhere. Competition had not affected the lawyers' fees, at any rate, and it was the only

"close borough," the only absolute monopoly in the colony. He would like the member for East Perth to copy Charles Kingston, who, while Premier of South Australia, brought in a Bill which made law cheap and reduced the cost very much. Consequently law there was cheap and nasty, and nobody made use of it, much. Another lawyer in New Zealand did the same thing—made law cheap, so cheap that one might turn it on like turning a tap, letting the legal water run at so much the yard or the thousand gallons. He would like to have seen the member for East Perth, as a reformer, introduce a thorough Legal Reform Bill. What would it do? It would not hit great planets of the law, like the members for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) and East Perth (Mr. James), but would hit members of the law who in this colony stooped to all sorts of legal thieving and robbery. There were too many solicitors here, but of such quality that some would not be employed to black the boots of competent lawyers in other parts of the world. He hoped this Bill would be watched by the legal members, now that particular attention had been drawn to it; and he hoped also the fees would be made the same as in New South Wales, and that the section left out which he had referred to would be inserted in this Bill.

MR. MONGER: Clause 2, for repealing a long list of existing Acts, was one he could not support. The member responsible for the Bill had not explained, as he ought to have done, the nature of these sections it was proposed to repeal, nor why they should be repealed. He moved that Clause 2 be struck out.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member might vote against it.

MR. JAMES (in charge of the Bill): If hon. members who had spoken against the Bill wanted information on any particular clause, they should ask for that information when the clause was reached. As to the fees, this rule of court was copied from the rules of court in New South Wales, though not there embodied in the Act. In fixing the fees here, which were higher than in New South Wales, these fees represented the amounts actually charged in practice here; but if they were thought to be too high or not to be fair, they could be

reduced. He assured members that the profession here would prefer not to have a scale of fees fixed; therefore, the complaint of one hon. member on this point was not justified, for the fees had not been fixed at a higher rate to suit the profession. He, as a lawyer, would certainly prefer that no scale should be fixed in the Bill.

THE PREMIER: Were not the fees in the Bill higher than those in New South Wales?

MR. JAMES: Yes. The rule of court in New South Wales which embodied the fees was not a part of the Act; but this Bill proposed that a certain scale should be the rule here, and the Judges were empowered to alter it at any time.

THE PREMIER: Could they alter the scale, notwithstanding that it was fixed in the Bill?

MR. JAMES: Undoubtedly. The Bill provided that the Judges could alter or lower the fees at any time. As to the curator, the Bill provided that he could take charge of the administration of an estate when requested to do so; and this was desirable in this colony, though such a provision would be less applicable to colonies in a more settled condition, where agents were well known. The Premier had referred to the death duties. The sliding scale relating to death duties was copied from the Victorian Act, though he must say the scale appeared to him to be much too high, and of course it could be amended if the committee desired.

THE PREMIER: Was this charge in addition to that provided by 59 Vict., No. 18? If so, that would be twice as much as the present charge. On £100,000, £20,000 must be paid.

MR. JAMES: Under the Death Duties Act, when probate was taken out a certain duty was payable, although the curator did not administer the estate. But if the executor or administrator wished the curator to administer, the Bill would make such parties pay this extra duty. The present charge of 5 per cent. was sufficient, he thought, though a larger fee was allowed elsewhere. If the next-of-kin would not take the responsibility of administering, why should they not pay the State for so doing?

THE PREMIER: But not an exorbitant rate.

MR. JAMES: The scale in the Bill was that of the Victorian Act. If thought too high, let it be amended.

MR. GEORGE: This Bill should be taken up by the Attorney General's department. Surely the object of the measure was not to "rook" the people? The charge for administering an estate of £100,000 was £10,000, and the Government could claim a sum of almost similar amount for probate duty. This was too strong.—[**MR. MORAN:** Democratic!]
—In this colony it was rapidly becoming a crime for a man to possess property. Better be logical, and pass a law that when a man died, the Government should seize everything he had.

MR. MORAN: Impose an absentee tax.

MR. GEORGE: This was an absentee tax; for though the deceased's body was here, the spirit had flown. In the old country he had known of cases where the property of widows and orphans had to be sacrificed to pay probate duties.

THE PREMIER: It was frequently awkward to find such moneys.

MR. GEORGE: The high rates in the Bill meant that if a man of property had the audacity to die, the accumulations laid up for his wife and children must revert to the State. Then let the State be logical, and institute homes and schools for the widows and orphans. Why not "go the whole hog"? This was a Bill of which the Attorney General should take charge.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member evidently had confidence in the Government.

MR. GEORGE: Yes; in the Attorney General, if that Minister would shut his ears to the Premier's requests for revenue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There was evidently a mistake in the schedule regarding the duty. In none of the colonies had £8,500 to be paid for administering an estate of £15,000. He moved that progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

CONSPIRACY AND PROTECTION OF WORKMEN AND PROPERTY BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Short title:

MR. EWING (in charge of Bill) moved that the words "and protection of work-

men and property" be struck out. This title was used only when the Bill was quoted, and it was advisable that the title should be as short as possible.

THE PREMIER: From what Act was this Bill taken?

MR. EWING: The Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The second part of the Bill was as important as the first, and though it was desirable to shorten the title, it ought not to be so short as to hide the real meaning of the Bill, of which the object was to repeal the old law relating to conspiracy, and to protect property.

MR. EWING withdrew his amendment.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The words "workmen and" were foreign to the Act from which this Bill was taken. He moved that they be struck out.

MR. MORAN: There was evidently a reason for inserting "workmen and," because the Bill contained clauses foreign to the parent Act.

MR. MONGER: At the second reading he had not been present. This socialistic legislation had gone far enough.

MR. EWING: In this Bill there was nothing socialistic.

MR. MONGER: The Bill had been on the Notice Paper since the beginning of the session, and had only reached the committee stage now. Why had it been kept back? It must contain some intricacies requiring more than an ordinary legal brain could grasp. Better leave things as they were, instead of foisting on the people legislation of which the lawyers seemed to know little, and on which they were unwilling to express decided opinions. Under the circumstances he moved that progress be reported.

Motion (progress) put and negatived.

MR. GEORGE: This Bill might be called a socialistic Bill. He did not mean anything disagreeable by that, or anything that might be wrong, but if ever a Bill could be called a democratic one, this could. Yet the arch democrat, the member for East Perth (Mr. James), was conspicuous by his absence when this Bill was being dealt with. One did not like to say behind a man's back what he would not say to his face, but what he

now said he would say to that member's face as soon as he could. We had just now to do with a Bill which related to fees connected with the honourable profession to which that hon. member belonged; and here was a matter which belonged to the profession of the arch-democrat in connection with large centres of this colony, and the hon. member ran away! This sort of business required considerable watching in the House. We had passed the principle of payment of members, and one hoped that when the Bill came in there would be some way by which members could be made to earn their pay.

MR. MORAN: These were not matters which private members should bring before the House. He would like the Attorney General to say whether this Bill was copied *en bloc* from legislation in some other part of the world, or whether there was anything new in it against the interests of working men, because, if there was, he was not going to vote for it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: When the Bill was read a second time, it was distinctly stated by himself that the measure was, with certain modifications, a transcript of the English Act of 38 and 39 Victoria.

MR. MORAN: There was something new in it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes; two clauses, which were the subject of debate. When this Bill became law, it would be possible for workmen, like any others, to enter into companies. At present it was illegal for men to join a union. As he pointed out before, this amendment should have been adopted here 20 years ago.

MR. MONGER said he did not believe in unions.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Act should have been adopted here nearly 20 years ago.

MR. MORAN: With these alterations?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The alterations were the subject of debate. They were matters which had cropped up since.

MR. EWING: One of the alterations was the legalising of trades unions.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The main provisions of the Bill were eminently good and salutary for working men.

MR. MORAN: Why did not the Government introduce the Bill?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Government had so many Bills, and could not deal with all of them at once. When a member brought in a good Bill, there was no reason why the Government should not assist him.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We had this session passed the Arbitration Bill, and without the Bill now introduced, this Arbitration Bill would be absolutely illegal in some of its parts. We arranged that arbitration should come from trades unions, and at the same time the law as it at present stood made a trades union illegal.

MR. MORAN said he was entirely in sympathy with legislation of this kind. A moment ago he asked what effect this measure would have on the Arbitration and Conciliation Bill. The leader of the junior bar now told us that Bill was illegal without this Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What was said by him was that the associations referred in the old Act were illegal.

MR. MORAN: The words used by the hon. member were that unless we passed this Bill, some of the clauses of the other Bill would be illegal. He would like to hear the Attorney General's opinion. Was it true that this Bill was a concomitant of the other; and, if so, was it absolutely necessary they should be coincident?

MR. EWING: It was hardly seemly that members should behave in the way they were doing to-night. The member for the Murray (Mr. George) had treated this House to some extraordinary performances, and the Premier had laughed at his jokes in such a way as showed clearly that the right hon. gentleman in no sense appreciated the position he held here. The Premier was ably seconded in his want of appreciation by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Moran). Both these hon. gentlemen—

MR. MORAN: Might one ask who was the member for Kalgoorlie?

MR. EWING: The hon. member for East Coolgardie. To his mind, both these hon. members showed distinctly they had no appreciation of the duties they were called upon to perform here.

MR. GEORGE: Oh, I'm blest!

MR. EWING: No appreciation of the duties they were called upon to perform.

MR. GEORGE rose to a point of order. Under the Standing Orders, no member had the right to reflect upon any other member; and the member for the Swan had now said that certain members in this House did not understand their duties. In his (Mr. George's) opinion, that reflected upon those hon. members. He asked for the Chairman's ruling.

THE CHAIRMAN said he did not think there was anything objectionable.

MR. EWING: The hon. members referred to appeared in no sense to appreciate the duties they were called upon to perform.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member was wasting time.

MR. EWING: Of course, if members thought it was seemly in a Legislature to act as a corner-man in a minstrel troupe would act, no doubt those members were performing their part with ability. In his opinion the interjections and conduct of the member for the Murray were unseemly in the highest degree.

MR. GEORGE: Oh, I'm blest!

MR. EWING said he did not think there could be any doubt about the question. If hon. members were not prepared to behave in a seemly and proper manner, the best place for them was outside the Chamber. He was prepared to discuss with members seriously, reasonably, and fairly the provisions of this Bill; but he was not prepared to enter into a burlesque competition either with the member for East Coolgardie or with the member for the Murray. When we were considering the Bill, we should realise that we were endeavouring to put something on the statute book which was for the benefit of the community; and it was no part of the proper conduct of any member of the House to play such political antics as we had seen by the hon. members in question.

MR. GEORGE: After the diatribe which had been delivered by the member for the Swan, a diatribe which would be recorded in the archives of this House long after that hon. member's bones had mouldered into dust, it would perhaps be as well if hon. members addressed themselves to the Bill. The member for the Swan had wasted exactly $7\frac{3}{4}$ minutes and a few seconds in an attack upon three distinguished members of the House. The right

hon. the Premier of this colony, the member for Bunbury, had been called a cornerman! The only thing to make the simile complete would be for the member for the Swan, with the skill which his profession brought about, to get some blacking and put it on the right hon. gentleman's face. His (Mr. George's) opinion of the hon. member was expressed by that (a snap of the fingers), which could not, under the Standing Orders, be considered either disrespectful or be dealt with in any other way. Let us deal with this Bill, and ask the hon. member for the Swan "what the dickens" he meant? One hoped that was a parliamentary expression, but if not, he would withdraw it. He would ask what the hon. member meant. How was it the hon. member stood up in his place and told the House that this Bill was a transcript of another Act, and omitted to tell the House, until it was forced from him by the Attorney General, that there were fresh clauses.

MR. EWING: Nothing of the kind was done by him.

MR. GEORGE: There were clauses which had been added by the hon. member, and on that point no denial by the hon. member could be accepted.

MR. EWING rose in his place and addressed the Chairman by name.

MR. GEORGE: Was the hon. member rising to a point of order?

MR. EWING: Yes.

MR. GEORGE said he would sit down, then.

MR. EWING: Was the hon. member in order in stating practically that he (Mr. Ewing) said what was not true? He had told the House, when moving the second reading, that there were other clauses in the Bill besides those of the English Act. In this the Attorney General could bear him out.

MR. GEORGE said he had nothing whatever to do with the fact that a few days, weeks, or years ago the hon. member for the Swan digressed from the ordinary course, and told the truth to this House. The hon. member had not told the truth to the House to-night, but had told the House, in plain English, that this Bill was an absolute transcript of another Act, and omitted to tell the House, until forced by the Attorney General, that there were two new clauses.

MR. EWING: That was not correct.

MR. GEORGE: That denial he must also deny. This unnecessary heat displayed by the hon. member for the Swan was hardly likely to conduce to seemly debate. The member for the Murray (Mr. George), like the member for Bunbury (the Premier), was a peaceable man; not a man of wrath, for his words were more like those of a sucking dove.

MR. MORAN: Sucking pig.

MR. GEORGE: Yet his hon. friend there (Mr. Ewing) had tried to-night to rouse him; to arouse those feelings which were experienced by every Englishman; to arouse that battle-spirit which had descended to us from long lines of ancestors, whether they were savages in the colonies or not. He (Mr. George) found that Standing Order No. 32 stated it was highly disorderly for an hon. member to cast imputations on other hon. members. He always bowed to the ruling of the Chair, and he did not know of a single instance in which he had defied the Speaker or the Chairman; but if it were no personal reflection on a member to tell him that his behaviour was unseemly, and that he was fit to be a cornerman of a comedy party, then it would be parliamentary to say those remarks were, at any rate, a personal reflection. He did not personally reflect on the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) in saying the hon. member's statements were inaccurate. He said deliberately that the member for the Swan had distinctly omitted to inform the Committee that he had added two clauses to the Bill.

MR. EWING: Nobody took any notice of the hon. member.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member was taking notice of him now. The less the hon. member had to do with the Bill, the better for this measure and for the people of the country. The Attorney General had said that unless this Bill passed, there would be no legalisation of trades unions; therefore he (Mr. George) was sincere in desiring that the Bill should pass, and unless the Bill did pass he agreed with the leader of the Opposition in the remarks which that hon. member made in regard to the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill. We had passed a Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, and did not want to throw any obstacles in the way of that Bill being carried out thoroughly; but at

the same time he refused to be led by the nose by the member who accidentally represented the Swan: he believed the hon. member represented a minority in that constituency. He would be glad if the Attorney General would give the Committee some kindly advice as to this clause. He did not believe that the Premier, the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), or himself deserved to be burlesqued in the manner in which they had been by the member for the Swan. The only member who was burlesquing was the member for the Swan, who went out of his way to insult people. The member for East Perth (Mr. James), who was looked upon as the leading democrat of the House—the member for the Swan could not “drop” him—was conspicuous by his absence when a Bill affecting his constituents was before the Committee.

MR. CONNOR: This Bill required more discussion. The members who had spoken to it said there were some clauses that required further debate, and there were some clauses which perhaps should not be in the Bill. He moved that progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.20 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 25th October, 1900.

Question: Dredging at Fremantle—Leave of Absence—Streets Closure Bill (Victoria Park), first reading—Perth Electric Tramways Lighting and Power Bill, Report on Standing Orders—Public Service Bill, Council's Message—Patent Acts Amendment Bill, in Committee, reported—Leederville Tramways Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Fremantle Tramways Bill, in Committee, reported—Annual Estimates, postponement—Goldfields Act Amendment Bill, second reading, in Committee *pro forma*—Noxious Weeds Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Killing of Kangaroos for Food Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Lands Resumption Amendment Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Kalgoorlie Tramways Bill, second reading (postponed)—Health Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, progress—Criminal Law Amendment Bill (protection of females), second reading—State Aid to Manufacturers Bill, discharge of order, Statement by Minister—Police Act Amendment Bill, postponement (Division)—Cottages, etc., Electric Lighting and Power Bill, Report adopted—Council's Resolution: Railway towards Norseman, to construct 25 miles, Speaker's ruling (out of order)—Motion: Railways, Control by Commissioners, debate further adjourned—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

MOTION—DREDGING AT FREMANTLE.

MR. SOLOMON asked the Director of Public Works: 1, What is the cost per yard of silt raised by the dredge “Governor” and discharged into punts, which are towed out by the tug “Pelican,” and deposited outside the North Mole, Fremantle, at present time. 2, What was the cost of silt raised by the same dredge and discharged outside the North Mole without any assistance from punts or tugs.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS replied:—1, The average cost at present is 5.14d. per cubic yard, of which 4.38d. is for working expenses, and 0.76d. for depreciation and interest. 2, The average cost formerly was 3.92d. per cubic yard, of which 3.47d. was for working expenses, and 0.45d. for depreciation and interest. Although the cost is greater with the use of barges, the average amount of work done per week is very much larger, and therefore the completion of the work is hastened accordingly.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On the motions by the PREMIER, leave of absence for the remainder of the session was granted to the member for