

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

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

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

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Motion put and passed.

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

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 18th August, 1897.

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

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

PRAYERS.

BUSINESS DAYS AND HOURS.

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

PRECEDENCE OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

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

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

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

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

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

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

mittees; to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for Printing Returns and Papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members, and all Papers laid upon the table, whether in answer to addresses or otherwise.

REFRESHMENT ROOMS COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wood, Mr. Simpson and Mr. Monger; with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess.

MOTION: GOVERNMENT HOUSE BALL-ROOM EXPENDITURE.

MR. GEORGE, in accordance with notice, moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is not expedient to proceed with any expenditure in connection with the Government House ball room until the new (or present) House has had an opportunity of discussing such proposal.

He said he was aware this motion might appear to be trespassing against precedent, and that it was a somewhat new procedure to bring up for review in this Parliament an unexpended vote for a work which had been discussed and passed in the last Parliament. But, if correctly informed, the apprehensions which had disturbed him in the last session, in regard to the large cost of this work, were likely to be borne out by later facts; for if £15,000 had been then understood to be the limit of the colony's extravagance in the building of a ball-room at Government House, he now believed the actual cost of carrying out the proposal of last session would be more likely £30,000 or even £40,000. Therefore he asked this House to pause before sanctioning, in the present state of the colony's finances, an expenditure which would be warranted only in the case of this colony having a population of at least half a million or more. He wished it to be distinctly understood that it was from no want of respect for the present Governor, nor of any possible representative of Her Majesty in this colony, that he was renewing his objection to a large and wasteful expenditure in building a ball-room in connection with Government House; but he based his objection on the fact that the members of this Assembly, as representing and legisla-

ing for the people, had a right to consider whether the moneys of the people should be wasted in an extravagant manner. He had, since last session, inspected the existing room which had been described as a miserable kind of ball room, and he conceded that it was not adequate to the requirements and to what might be the dignified expectations of people in the colony at the present time; but, while conceding this, he must also object that it was not expedient or right that an expensive building which was to be paid for out of the savings of the people should be constructed for only such occasional use, and for only such few favoured persons, as this scheme contemplated. The city of Perth, with some 30,000 inhabitants, had no municipal building suited for the needs and dignity of the chief city of the colony; and there being a probability of increase to perhaps 50,000 in a short time, he suggested that this sum of £15,000 which had been voted for a new vice-regal ball-room should be applied, as the nucleus of a larger fund, for the erection of a building which would be suitable and available for the occasional vice-regal balls, as well as those municipal purposes to which the present Town Hall was ill adapted. If a scheme could be brought forward for combining these two purposes, thereby applying a vote of State money towards the erection of a suitable Town Hall, which could be available also for those social entertainments that might be considered requisite for the Governor's dignity and position, he (Mr. George) would support the vote as a right and necessary expenditure for a public purpose. He must say that if, in this new Parliament, extravagant expenditure was proposed, such as had been put before the last Parliament, there should be, and he thought there would be, on the part of many members, something more than a mere barking opposition. Not knowing what support he might receive for the present motion, he felt no shame in asking this Assembly to disapprove of extravagant expenditure in the erection of a ball-room at Government House.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) suggested that this matter could be better discussed when the annual Estimates came before the Assembly; as any sum previously voted for the erection

of a ball-room, and neither expended nor pledged in the form of a contract, so far as he was aware, would have to be re-voted by Parliament before it could be expended.

MR. GEORGE said a contract might have been entered into by the Works Department.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL said he felt pretty safe in stating that no such contract had been made. If, however, it was found that a contract for erecting the building had been made, then there might be necessity for an expression of opinion by this Assembly as to whether the work should be stayed. He suggested that the hon. member should defer the matter until the next day, when the Director of Public Works (then visiting Albany) would doubtless be in his place, and be able to give definite information as to whether a contract had been entered into, and whether the estimated cost of the work was to be increased.

MR. GEORGE said he would accept the suggestion.

On the motion of MR. SIMPSON, the debate was adjourned until the next day.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. PENNEFATHER desired to make a personal explanation. He said that in his speech of the previous day, on the Address-in-Reply, he had referred to the great loss of life caused by the war of secession in the United States of America, and had stated, inadvertently, that a hundred million lives were lost in the conflict between the Northern and Southern States. Of course, this slip of the tongue would be apparent; and what he meant to have said was that the war of secession in America had cost that country one million lives.

MOTION: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SECOND DAY'S DEBATE.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison), in resuming the debate on the motion (by Mr. Kingsmill) for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's opening Speech, said: In moving the adjournment of this debate, at our last sitting, it will be sufficient to explain that I did so, from this part of the House (the Opposition cross-benches) at the request of the leader of the Oppo-

sition (Mr. Leake). In listening to the debate which has been so ably opened, I would first of all like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your re-appointment to the high and honourable position in which we are all pleased to see you to-day. We all know how arduous have been the services which you had rendered to this colony in days gone by, when there was no Responsible Government, and when you, sir, occupied something like the position which some of us occupy to-day, that of being supposed to be extremely Radical. We are glad, however, to find that the good sense and the intelligence of this country have grown up to the views which you held in those days, and that you have lived to see the fruits of your labours in the days past, and that this country has been pleased, through this Legislative Assembly, under the new Constitution of Responsible Government, to confer upon you the only honour which is in their power to confer, that of placing you in the honourable position of Speaker in this House. Now that we have the pleasure of seeing you in this honourable position for the third time, we are perfectly satisfied that the choice which has been made is the best possible choice. I think hon. members will mostly agree with me in saying that the hon. the Speaker is the only gentleman in our Assembly who could be Speaker; for just as we have only one man in the colony who can be Premier (some laughter), so we have only one man who can be Speaker. Next I would like to congratulate the Works Department, together with the Speaker, upon the improved appearance of this chamber. Since the prorogation, there seems to have been a complete change in the seating arrangements of the chamber, and I consider it is a very great improvement. Speaking now on the Address-in-Reply, we are met with this peculiar difficulty, that His Excellency's Speech contains nothing past, present, or future; and consequently, I am the more pleased in being able to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address-in-Reply for the very able manner in which they have placed their views before this House. The hon. member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill), who meets us for the first time and whom we are pleased to see, gave us a clear, clean cut-address—almost, I would say, academical. But when

he was speaking, it did seem to me that if he hoped or expected to get those reforms upon which his heart seems to be set, he has a very poor chance of obtaining them from the Government of the day. Certainly the questions which he touched, and on which he seems to have set his mind, are questions which, if carried, will give the greatest satisfaction to hon. members sitting on this side of the House, at any rate, and we shall be pleased if he can succeed in inducing hon. members on his side of the House to vote for them. The seconder of the Address gave us a most eloquent speech, mainly upon federation, and I am sure this House is indebted to him for the clear way in which he has expressed his views, and pointed out some of the difficulties which lie in our path in that direction. But what I wish particularly to say is simply that if the two hon. gentlemen who have spoken are to be taken, as I trust they are, as an earnest of the new blood which is coming into this House, then some of the old members—including myself—will have to watch and take care of our laurels. Since we last met, there has been the usual change in the kaleidoscopic Ministry. In fact, it has come to be almost a standing thing, now, that every new Parliament sees a new Ministry. It seems to me that, if this can only go on, our worthy Premier—who unfortunately is not in his place to day, but whom we hope to welcome to-morrow—will not only do what he has already done, that is succeed in out-living the longest date of any Premier in Australia, but will also bid fair to come into competition with that leading politician in Canada who was known as the great Canadian Premier, who held office for twenty years, and then gave up only because he could not live longer. But, as I said, there has been the usual change in this Ministry; and allow me to congratulate the Ministry on its changes. There is one thing, at any rate, that is satisfactory about the Ministry. It keeps on changing and changing for the better, and increasing the importance and ability of its *personnel*. I suppose that if we canvassed this colony throughout, it would scarcely be possible—with the limited knowledge, at any rate, I possess—to name any gentleman better fitted to occupy the position of Minister of Lands

than the gentleman who now occupies that honourable office. By the reforms which have taken place during the time he has held the position the Ministry has been strengthened, because it has dealt with one of the most important questions for this colony—the settlement of people on the land. I am glad to see that progress going on. That progress is most important to us sitting in this corner, and to others on the opposite benches who are in any way connected with the goldfields. There is nothing more urgent to us than to see full and complete settlement on the land. We want the time to come when we shall be able to draw our supplies for the goldfields from our own soil; and the Minister of Lands has taken several important steps during recess which tend in that direction. I am glad to be able to compliment the Government upon its latest change. For the last two sessions I, and other hon. members with me, have advocated the desirability of increasing the number of Ministers. We have now six Ministers; and, inevitably, the other "sixth Minister" will have to go up one higher, and we shall have to call him the seventh Minister. We have great expectations that the number of Ministers will be increased in intelligence, and in ability, in the same proportion as it is increased in numbers. It is whispered about town—I hope it is not correct—that we are to have another change in the Ministry at a very early date, and that our highly-esteemed Attorney General, now the leader of the House, talks of taking a rest. The Attorney General has worked hard for the country and deserves a rest, perhaps; but, at the same time, I am not sure that the House is prepared to give him that rest. It does occur to me that if this change should take place, the Premier will stand, like Campbell's "last man," the only man in the original Forrest Government. Now, coming to the assembling of Parliament, the first thing I have to say is that it either comes too early or comes too late. We would have all liked to meet the hon. the Premier—the right hon. gentleman as we must now call him—in his place at the opening of Parliament. If it was deemed desirable to meet before he arrived, it certainly ought to have been desirable to meet two months ago. If

it was the intention of the Government to ask this House to discuss the great question of the Commonwealth Bill, they certainly ought to have taken the same steps the Parliaments of the other colonies have taken and called Parliament together, giving it a sufficient length of time to deal with this vastly important matter. It is too much to expect that this Parliament—some of the members of which are new from the country—can, with vast arrears of work to attend to and financial questions to face, give anything like adequate consideration, within the limits of time which now remain, to a question of such great importance to this country and to Australia at large. The Government have not been just to themselves, and certainly have not been just to this House, in leaving this question to be discussed at so late an hour of the day. We ought to have had a couple of months in which to deal with the federation question, and it is altogether beyond the powers of this House—I say this with all deference—to discuss adequately the Commonwealth Bill, with all its important issues, in the time that now lies before us, even though we were to sit every day for a week until the departure of the delegates. It rather seems to me as if the Government were endeavouring to defeat federation, and that they have brought the question up at this stage as a matter of compliment. The Government cannot possibly suppose that this House proposes to deal with the question at length, and if the House does not deal with it at length, where is the use of dealing with it at all? There are in the Bill issues which took the Victorian Parliament nearly three weeks to deal with, and then only a single section had been considered, and for this Parliament to deal in a few disturbed days with the whole of the questions in the Bill—which is, perhaps, more important to this colony than to any other part of Australia—is quite impossible. It does seem to me that the Government are courting defeat rather than success in this matter. Then there is other urgent and important business requiring the attention of the country, and Parliament might well have been called together to deal with that business in the absence of the Premier. Pledges were given by hon. members, who sat on this side of the House during last session,

that they would act honourably by the Government in the absence of the Premier, and a large amount of important legislation might have been dealt with and settled by this time. A calm debate might have taken place on the federation question had the Government called Parliament together a month or six weeks, or even two months ago. So much for the peculiar management of the Government in connection with bringing Parliament together. And now we have a Speech remarkable, of course, for its brevity. A report was about that the Government were going to give us no Speech at all, and the Government have given us the next thing to nothing. And yet, to show that it is utterly impossible for any Government to begin to speak about public affairs without touching matters of importance, there are clauses in the Speech which open up questions for serious consideration. First come the congratulations on the increased representation in this House. No one in the House is more gratified than I am at this increased representation. Hon. members know that we on this side of the House have for a considerable time fought for increased representation or a re-distribution of seats. When we look around and see gentlemen who have been returned to this House for districts which were by no means adequately represented before, it can only be a matter of congratulation to the House itself, and to the country at large, that an increase in the representation has taken place. But there is always a fly in the ointment, and the increased representation is not without the usual defect. I have to-day obtained a return from the the Registrar General on the subject of representation in this House. I will not trouble the House with items, but will ask hon. members to take a note of the result and of the conclusion to which those figures lead. Out of 44 members returned to the House only 26 are returned by election. [AN HON. MEMBER: The others went by default.] For the balance of seats over the 26 there was no contest, and that means that the electors in those districts have no voice in this Parliament. We simply do not know what are the opinions of the electors or the people in those districts. We can, however, take it for granted that the gentlemen

returned were the best who could be secured and that, consequently, they represent the electors. And we may go further and say that those gentlemen not only represent—as some of us do against whom a great number of people voted—a proportion of the electors, but that they represent everybody in their electorates. That every individual in each of those electorates is perfectly satisfied with his representative we have no reason to doubt. But there was a dispute about the qualities of the other 26 members, as shown by the fact of the contested elections. Now, supposing, for instance, that at the last election every vote on the roll had been cast, not only for the contested but also for the uncontested districts, we should then have had the voice of only 14,715 people in this colony. At the present moment there are over 112,000 males in this country, 90,000 of whom are over 21 years of age. We are living in a country which has for its policy manhood suffrage, and yet, such were the defects of the electoral system and its defects during the last election, that upon the roll there only appeared 14,715 names, in respect of which only 8,800 votes were cast. I have much to congratulate the House and the country on in the matter of increased representation, but I very much regret that that representation is so inadequate as a reflex of the public opinion. So far as we know, 70,000 people who had no opportunity of voting—70,000 able-bodied men who are paying taxes and doing work in this country—may be utterly opposed to the measures which this House is disposed to pass. And amongst those measures is that of federation, on which the opinions of those 60,000 or 70,000 men cannot possibly be voiced. While we regret this, and hope something will be done in the future to secure a better representation of the people, we rejoice that at last some increased representation has taken place. A casual glance at the figures supplied to me shows very great inequalities. I find one member sitting as representing 90 votes, and another member as representing 2,080 voters. Hitherto the action of Parliament—as was that of the Government in the session passed—has been to meet the difficulty of increased population by increased representation. The time has come, I think, when a different

policy will have to be pursued, and when we shall have to treat this question from a different standpoint. We can never continue to increase the number of members of the House. If new districts spring up, and there is a change in the location of the people of the country, we cannot keep on meeting the circumstances by giving increased representation. If we do so we shall overcrowd the House; and at present the average representation here is greater than in any House in Australia. Hence, if the difficulty has to be met, we shall have to deal with it by a redistribution of seats and so bring about a greater equality in the representation. To have one member representing 90 votes and another with 2,080 votes behind him, and each having the same power as to the expenditure of money and in the settlement of the laws of the country, is an intolerable position, which calls loudly for alteration. [MR. A. FORREST: It is a question of intelligence.] That is rather a pleasing suggestion. We now know, on the authority of the hon. member for West Kimberley, that the proportion of intelligence between the North and South is as 90 to 2,080. I hope hon. members will consider the suggestion made when we are dealing with some of the important questions which will come before this House, and settle them on the basis indicated by the hon. member. The question of federation also crops up in the Speech. I might give a three hours' speech on this topic, but I have not the slightest idea or intention of doing anything of the kind. The Attorney-General, as leader of the House, made a very valuable suggestion yesterday, that we should defer, to some extent at any rate, our remarks on federation until the Commonwealth Bill is before the House; and I propose to take that course. Consequently, I pass over the clause of the Speech which deals with the question of federation, and come to the important matter of finance. The Speech informs us that the finances of the colony are in a satisfactory position. That is a piece of information I am very pleased to receive, because I had an idea that the finances were not in a satisfactory condition. I am inclined to think that, despite the assurance of His Excellency the Governor, the finances are not in a satisfactory position. We are told that the financial

year closed with a surplus of £312,000, and that the Government have now £96,226 available. The excess of revenue for this year above the Treasurer's estimate of the expenditure—and beyond that estimate he cannot possibly have had any authority from the House to expend—is something like £300,000. The Treasurer has £312,000 in hand, and the two sums make £612,000. Of that £612,000 there is something less than £100,000 available. It is important we should know what has become of the £500,000. It may be explained, perhaps, that this money has been used for authorised loan works and will be recouped out of loan moneys. If that be so, no objection, I presume, will be taken; but I am very much afraid that when the returns are laid on the table of the House, we shall find a large amount of money has been expended by the Government without any authority from Parliament at all. During the whole period of what has been called Responsible Government in this colony, there has been a growing tendency on the part of the Government to spend large sums of money without the authority of Parliament. There have been exigencies, I know, which have warranted such expenditure, and the House has justified it; but a principle is involved which hon. members should guard and watch over with great care and interest. If the Government can in recess, without the authority of Parliament, spend upwards of half a million of money, there does not seem to be much reason for Parliament to meet at all. By such action the Government seems to be usurping to itself an authority and power which belongs to Parliament as a whole—not to this House alone, but to both Houses of Parliament. If the tendency to unauthorised expenditure grows as it has been growing I, for one, will feel it my bounden duty on every occasion to enter my protest. Of course, we are at present working somewhat in the dark; and it may be, as I have said, that the expenditure will be explained by advances to loan accounts, to be recouped out of loans when we get them. Then, there is the statement in the Speech that the Government are not indebted to any of the financial institutions of the colony. We ought to have had some little fuller statement on this point. We know that

the Government a little while back issued Treasury bonds to the amount of £500,000. We do not know how, or when, or where—or whether at all as a matter of fact—those bonds have been taken up. Perhaps the Government will give some information in the matter. But if the bonds have not been taken up, then we have still to count with £500,000 of Treasury bonds. Now I come to the statement in the Speech that the Savings Bank accounts are steadily increasing each week, and now stand at £240,650. Well, there is no better index to the prosperity of a country than the Savings Bank deposits, which are those of the workers. But there is something in this question which has another side to it. In a short return published in that most reliable paper, the *Morning Herald*, a little while ago, it is stated that for the month of January, post office orders amounting to £61,000 were sent to other colonies. In that month our population was estimated at 137,000. In February the amount similarly sent away was £62,000, and in March it was £71,000. In April our population was estimated at 152,000, and in that month post office orders to the amount of £74,000 were sent away; in May the amount was 87,000; and in June it was £74,000, when the population was estimated at 157,000. In July the amount sent away was £82,000. These figures show the important fact that just as people are coming to this country, so they are sending out of the country their earnings, and that with increased population there is an increased drain by the export of money to the other colonies. The figures I have quoted represent over £1,000,000 a year going out of the country, being first put in the Savings Bank and then sent away to support wives and children dwelling in the other colonies. Parliament will have to deal with and settle the question as to whether this drain cannot be stopped. Parliament will also have to consider whether the drain is not in consequence of the excessive food duties imposed in this colony. Whatever the cause, it becomes the bounden duty of this House to look this financial fact fairly and squarely in the face, and see whether it be possible to stop the drain. It is clear we are treading on thin ice. If men are working in this country and

sending away £80,000 per month, we may take it for granted that if there comes any reverse or check in our apparent prosperity, those men will leave our shores when other prospects call them, and we shall be left with the responsibilities which this and previous Parliaments have incurred. These facts seem to me to show that, despite the optimistic view that is taken in His Excellency's Speech, there are matters of grave consideration from a financial standpoint which this Parliament will have to deal with at the earliest possible moment. There is another question arising out of this, and that is the loan policy of the Government. Since I have had the honour of sitting in this House, I have steadily opposed the loan policy, which has been the only policy—the borrowing and spending policy—which the Government have ever put before this House. Sometimes they spent the loan money well, and sometimes they spent it ill; and some of the works, especially railways—[AN HON. MEMBER: Nauru Railway, for instance.]—have not been built yet, and, what is more, you have taken the money that was voted for them and have put it into something else. We have to face now some important financial facts. When the Government asked Parliament last session to authorise the raising of large sums of loan money, the 4 per cent. bonds of this colony stood at 112 in the London market; and when this colony appealed to the market for money, the lenders offered five or six times as much as we asked for. But a change has come, for when we asked the London market to lend us a million of money, a little while ago, we had to be content with £750,000, and that at a very great discount off par. Yet only a few days after that loan had failed to float, the South Australian Government floated a large loan, and was offered four times the amount required, and at a more favourable price than lenders wanted from West Australia. It is no use our living in a fool's paradise. These are simply straight facts, and for this state of things there must be a cause. I have no hesitation in saying the cause of the failure of that loan, and possibly also the delay which exists concerning another loan of which we have heard nothing, lying at the root of this failure, is that

the Government are asking the London people to advance two and a half millions for the Coolgardie water works—a scheme in which not one man out of a hundred thoroughly believes. I say that, if a poll of the people in this colony were taken to-day, there is not one man out of a hundred who fairly and squarely believes that the Coolgardie water scheme ought to go forward; and it is because there is an impression in London that we are wasting our substance; that those persons who have money to lend have stated, quite coolly and calmly, “We will lend our money in other quarters.” There is no scarcity of money in the London market, for on the day when our last loan was put on the market there were 34 millions of gold in the Bank of England; and the proof that there were lenders about was seen in the success of the South Australian loan. Another thing in which the Government are greatly blameable is the handling of the £1,100,000 of bonds which they gave for the purchase of the Great Southern Railway. There is no question now that the Government made a great financial mistake when they allowed those bonds to go out of their hands, to be hawked about by a railway company. The Government could have borrowed the money directly, at 3 per cent., say at 97 at least if not at par, and could have paid in cash for the railway; but, instead of that, they allowed £1,100,000 of bonds to be hawked about the London market, to the depreciation of their own credit; and the disastrous results of that mistake were shown when the Government afterwards tried to raise a million loan on behalf of this colony.

MR. MORAN: It was not the water scheme that spoilt the loan.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There are many reasons, sometimes, that affect finance. These are two cardinal difficulties of the Government in connection with this loan, and there is another. For a colony with 150,000 people to coolly go into debt to the extent of twelve million pounds is more than London financiers are prepared to support; and this Parliament, I take it, in dealing with questions which come before it, and knowing as we do that there are many important works—my friend the member for Dundas will be asking us, by and by, to make a

railway to Esperance Bay—that there are many important works which we would like to see undertaken, should ask itself what hope there is of these being undertaken, in the present financial position of the colony. But if we take some steps to curb this excessive borrowing, and make a clean breast of the difficulties of our financial position, then we shall establish our credit, and can go on with necessary public works. To do this, the first thing that will have to be sacrificed is the Coolgardie water scheme. [MR. MORAN: No.] Another question which requires some consideration from this House is that for weeks past we have been expecting to hear something about a further loan to be floated on the London market. What has become of that expected loan? Is the Premier bringing the gold in his pocket back from London, or what is really being done? I take it that this House and the country, on a financial question like this, have a right to know, and ought to be taken into the confidence of the Government. If there is any information, good or bad, the Government ought to allow the financial men of this country to understand the real position. The daily strain which comes upon a country, through any difficulty in its interwoven finances, is known to most of us; and if the Government have any information on the subject, they ought to place the country in possession of it. If they have no information, then it follows that, up to date, we have no assurance that the British public are prepared to lend us more money at present. If the Government have the information, then simply to keep it back for some dramatic effect is the action of a mountebank—to say the least of it. This country has a right to know if there are any financial questions that affect every man in it; and any information which the Government have ought to be at the disposal of the financial persons in this colony. If the Government are going to borrow more money, why should their intention be covered with secrecy about a matter which the country has a right to know? Another question I want to say a word about is as to any important action taken by the Government in connection with the labour covenants on our goldfields. A motion was tabled in this House, before the last Parliament closed, dealing

with this labour question; and when it was seen that the motion could not be carried, it was carefully withdrawn, upon a sort of general understanding—I think the last words of the Premier's Speech on that motion show there was a sort of general understanding—that no action should be taken in connection with the labour covenants until the new Parliament was elected and could deal with the question. Also, when the Premier afterwards delivered his great speech at Bunbury, he conveyed exactly the same impression to the country, that it was not intended by the Government to alter the labour covenants in any way until the new Parliament could meet. Members returned to this House at the elections were returned, whether as supporters or otherwise of the Government, with this piece of information in their minds. Yet immediately after the elections were over, the Government took on themselves to reduce the labour covenants one-half. I say that was a breach of faith with this House, and with the whole of the mining constituencies. It was a breach of faith as far as the House itself was concerned, and I am not sure also whether the results of the elections might not have been different, if the Government had boldly and fairly declared that they intended to reduce the labour covenants. At any rate, one effect on the fields has been to throw many men out of employment; and a second effect has been to interfere materially with the storekeepers and others in business; and a third effect has been a rebound on that centre of trade, the city of Perth and its financial institutions. A Government can, by a mistake of this kind, do a serious injury to the country. This question is one which seriously affects hon. members who sit for goldfields constituencies; and another question connected with it is that we were promised the appointment of a Commission, or some consideration during the recess, for the amendment of the Mining Act; and now we hear, just incidentally, that the Government are doing something about appointing a Commission, but upon what lines, when or where, or whether this Parliament is to have an opportunity of dealing with the important amendments of the Mining Act which are desired, we are not informed. But a Commission appointed by the Govern-

ment for this purpose, unless its members be selected with the full knowledge of the mining districts and the mining members in Parliament, cannot possibly give satisfaction to the country or to this House. It becomes a question as to the *personnel* of that Commission; for it would be easy to appoint a Commission that should recommend an amendment of the labour covenants in a direction desired by the Government, as it would also be easy to appoint a Commission that should recommend exactly the reverse. What this House has a right to expect is that every branch of the great mining industry of this country shall be fairly represented on the Commission, that not only the mine owners and the speculators, but the workers in the mines and all persons connected with them, shall have a proper and fair representation on that Commission, so that justice may be done to all, and no injustice be done to any. In the face of the fact that twelve new members have been returned for the mining constituencies, it becomes a question whether the Government should now take upon themselves to deal with this question at all; for the expectation was that the Government would appoint a Commission in the recess, and that the Commission's report would be laid before this Parliament to be dealt with. It was certainly not contemplated that the Government should, during the recess, alter the labour conditions, and be free to conduct our greatest industry upon any regulations they might make *in camera*. I protest against this action, and also protest against the rumoured appointment of a Commission without this House being properly consulted thereon. This is an important question to people on the goldfields. Three things stand out prominently in connection with the mining industry. One is an amendment of the mining laws, on a basis equitable to all parties concerned. The other is a reduction of the food duties, so that men may be able to live and work under equitable conditions in this colony. The third is that people on the goldfields shall have such a reform in the Electoral Act as will enable them to express their views at the poll on the great questions that come before electors. As it is the desire, not only of the Government, but also of all members in this House, to press on with the business, I will now conclude by

thanking hon. members for the patient hearing they have given me.

A pause ensued, and Mr. ILLINGWORTH interjected that there was a "conspiracy of silence." No other member rising to continue the debate, the SPEAKER said he would put the question.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie) said: Before the debate is closed, I am desirous of making a few remarks on the Address-in-Reply. I may say, at the outset, I was not anxious to speak during this debate at all; but, as was just now remarked by interjections, there appeared to be something like a conspiracy of silence, and it does seem that this is a very modest Parliament. I certainly think it is the place of a new member to exhibit some degree of modesty, and I was prepared to exhibit that modesty to the fullest extent. However, it is necessary for some member to step into the breach. The Attorney General suggested yesterday that it was advisable for members to confine their remarks to the subjects mentioned in the Governor's opening speech, and not to discuss federation until that subject came before us, at a later stage, on the motion of the Premier for the House going into committee on the Federation Bill. I regret to say I am unable to agree with the Attorney General on that point, for I think the time that has been allotted by the Government to consider the important question of federation is too short already; and, if we are to have an additional day taken off at the beginning, as well as other days taken off at the end, it will mean that members will have to sit here and pass clause after clause of the Federation Bill without the slightest consideration of their importance or their merits. I think nothing which can be said by members either on the Address-in-Reply or when discussing the Federation Bill itself can be regarded as in any degree superfluous. Giving my own opinion on the whole subject of federation, without attempting at this stage to go into details, I think the colonies of Australia generally appear to have gone into this matter with a very light heart. There is something in what the member for Greenough said yesterday when he suggested that the motive of personal ambition may have influenced some of those who, in other colonies, are ardent

federalists. It does seem to me that there has not been sufficient consideration given to the subject hitherto, and the sole result of the Federal Conventions has been to prove to us the tremendous difficulties which lie in the way of Australian federation. That is the only good work which the discussion of federation has done or will do under present circumstances. One common error in connection with the federation movement, so far, appears to me to have been that an idea has got abroad that it is possible to take human nature and prepare a mould for it, and then expect it to fit the mould in every part. Yet I think the past history of the world has shown that attempts to mould a constitution by any process of pressure have resulted in ignominious failure. Some persons seem to conceive of a State as a building; and we are accordingly told there are constitution builders—that there are certain gentlemen in other colonies, as I suppose there also are in this, who are desirous of going down to posterity as constitution builders; but I would rather have them constitution cultivators than constitution builders. The old idea of a State as an edifice which can be added to stone by stone is pretty well an exploded one. The modern political economist regards the State, not as a body that can be added to or taken from at the will of any generation, but rather as a plant that must be placed in a soil suitable to its growth, and be tenderly nurtured afterwards. That is the position that may be taken up in regard to federation. There is no doubt federation is in the air, or the germs of it are there; but I think we are as far to-day from attaining to a perfect idea of what federation may be as we were six or seven years ago when the first Convention met in Sydney. I would remind hon. members of the fact that in the past history of the world those constitutions which have been built or manufactured to order, to suit the stress of circumstances, have been, in almost every case, failures; and that, on the other hand, those constitutions which have been permitted to grow and be evolved out of natural conditions have been successful. We have conspicuous examples of the latter kind in the cases of Great Britain and Switzerland; and, as to the case of Switzerland, I may remind members that

although the Swiss constitution, in its present form, has existed only from 1848, yet it has been in operation, in some respects, in several cantons during seven or eight hundred years. It is only where a constitution has grown from small beginnings, and been added to bit by bit—as in the case, especially, of the British constitution—that it is capable of withstanding the severest exigencies of time. Then as to the other kind of constitution-making, we have instances in the United States of America, in the Dominion of Canada, and in South America. I suppose the founders of the United States Constitution have succeeded in producing the most perfect paper constitution which was ever evolved in the human brain. But we have seen, during the course of the hundred years or so of its working, that it has failed conspicuously on a great many points. For example, it was the failure of that Constitution which brought about the great civil war between the Northern and the Southern States. And, in considering the case of the United States, there is one fact we should always bear in mind in that connection, and it is that the United States have been governed not in accordance with their Constitution, but in spite of it. It failed, for instance, when the necessity arose to extirpate the heresy of polygamy, and the Constitution was consequently broken. It failed again when they dealt with the invasion of Canada, and they found it necessary to break the constitution then. In fact, whenever a time of exigency or emergency has arisen in the States, it has been found necessary to throw the constitution overboard in order to save the ship.

MR. W. JAMES: That means that people are human, and cannot foresee contingencies.

MR. VOSPER: Exactly.

MR. W. JAMES: And when we cease to be human, we are to have federation?

MR. VOSPER: It is because the Federal Convention in Australia has been endeavouring to do things that are superhuman that the work has been a failure. I contend that, if the intention is to cast a perfect constitution in a rigid mould, it is almost certain to prove a failure. Still, I am an ardent federalist, and I believe honestly that Australia would be a great deal better under a federal system of

government than it is at present. I do not agree with the member for Greenough when he says we should be surrendering a portion of our present authority as a State by establishing a federal government; for, on the contrary, I think it would be enlarging the scope of our authority as a self-governing unit in a confederation. At the same time, while I believe in a form of federation, I also say it should be allowed to grow naturally rather than that anyone should attempt to create it by pressure; and on this point I am about to offer a suggestion to this House which, I trust, may lead to some debate. I think we should have been acting more wisely in the past had we endeavoured to approach federation by a somewhat more devious route. I think the best way to approach the federation of the colonies is through the medium of a confederacy. To make myself clear on that point, I will explain roughly the distinction between a confederacy and a federation. In Freeman's work on Federal Government, he describes a federation as—

Any union of component members, where the degree of union between the members surpasses that of a mere alliance, however intimate, and where the degree of independence possessed by each member surpasses anything which can fairly come under the head of merely municipal freedom.

The characteristics of a confederacy differ rather considerably from that, and are given by Mr. Garran, son of Dr. Garran, of Sydney, in a recent work published by him on this subject. Mr. Garran says:—

The characteristic of the Confederation or Staatenbund is that the Central Government deals only with the Governments of the several States, not with individual citizens. Its authority is chiefly legislative. It confines itself to giving orders to the States to do its bidding; to supply men or money for federal purposes, or perform other tasks required of them. So long as these demands are such as the Federal authority can properly make, it is the duty of the States to obey. Failing this, the only remedy for the Central Government is to use coercion against refractory States.

Now believing as I do that the way to federation lies through confederation, I think it is possible to establish a confederacy which would deal with the individual rather than with the State; and, therefore, it would not be necessary to use coercive force against any particular State. I think it should be possible that we have statesmen in Australia who are capable of for-

mulating a scheme, whether for a unicameral or a bicameral legislature, elected on a population suffrage, very much the same as at present; a scheme for electing a Federal Parliament, and giving it a lease of power lasting, say, for eleven years though I would not suggest that the same members should occupy seats in that House during the whole of that time. We might have the Parliament elected triennially or at any other period agreed upon. I think it would be possible to give this Parliament the power of deciding the various points of the constitution, and to confine the Parliament to that power and to the enforcing of the measures as these were passed. Beyond that a federal Parliament should not go in the first ten years. First of all the Parliament might take into consideration the questions of federal quarantine and federal defence. These questions might reasonably, in such a Parliament, occupy one session, there being, of course, one session per annum. In the second year the Parliament might deal with the question of the exclusion of Asiatics and other undesirable aliens. We must remember that in dealing with the question of alien exclusion we have a great number of States to consider, States with various climates and other local conditions. Every member in the House will agree with me when I say it is desirable that inferior races should be excluded altogether. But we have to consider ways and means—to consider what course would be most effective in carrying out that design. If the Federal Parliament succeeded in arriving in the course of one year at some definite and permanent conclusion which would have the effect of causing all aliens of the class to which I have referred to be expelled or prevented from coming into the country, that Parliament would have done excellent work. The third year—or perhaps the first, second, or third year; I am not attempting to lay down any arbitrary position—might be devoted to the question of the establishment of Federal Courts. And after that the telegraph and postal services might be dealt with, and finally, the vexed questions of the railways and finance. All these are questions which, before the Bill became law, could be submitted to the referendum, and in that way the voice of the people might be got on each point in the Australian

Magna Charta. Each point would be clear and distinct, whereas now we are offered a cut and dried constitution which has been talked to death in some parts, and in others—as may probably be the case in this Parliament—hurriedly rushed though and scamped. Then this constitution, which has been only half considered, will be submitted to the people. Take my position, or that of any hon. member as an elector, and see what this procedure means. A man may believe in federation and yet disapprove of three-fourths of the present draft constitution. But when the question comes before him on the referendum, he is obliged to vote for the whole Bill or sacrifice federation altogether. That is not the way in which to put an important measure before the public. The public are incapable of giving an accurate judgment on all the points of the constitution in a simple "Yes" or "No," as provided in the proposed machinery. But if the public could deal with each question separately, you may depend upon it the decisions arrived at would be much more intelligent, much more suited to the circumstances, and, therefore, a great deal more lasting. Another advantage would be that in the course of the ten years it would be possible to discover the weaknesses and also the strong points in the system. We should be able to discuss the merits of each point separately; and, finally, we should be giving continual object lessons on the advantages of federation. As each institution was federated the public would see the advantages of having other institutions federated; and the contrast between the federated institutions and those not federated would be so great, there would be a desire for haste in the federal work. But I don't think it is advisable that any sentiment for haste should be indulged in or encouraged. I contend that of all questions in Australia this requires the most care and deliberation. I am extremely sorry indeed that the Government should regard federation as a matter of such slight importance that they expect Parliament to deal with it in a three or four hours' debate, because that is what the present arrangement amounts to. It is quite impossible, as the hon. member for Central Murchison has said, to do justice to the subject in so short

a time. We might very reasonably take into consideration, to some extent, the suggestions I have made here this evening. Even if we are not prepared to send delegates to the Sydney Convention, it would be far better to have no delegates there than to send them with crude and half-formed ideas to do no good, and no credit to the country.

AN HON. MEMBER: The delegates will get their ideas from the House.

MR. VOSPER: If that is the case they will have a very scant stock of ideas.

MR. JAMES: They will; I agree with you there.

MR. VOSPER: I will say no more on federation. I trust that when the Commonwealth Bill comes on for consideration we may be able to debate the question at greater length. The hon. member for Central Murchison has already dealt pretty exhaustively with the subject of the Premier's action in connection with the labour covenants. I would like to endorse, in a very great measure, what the hon. member said about the depression in trade on the goldfields having been largely caused by the departure from the pledge given by the Premier in reference to the labour conditions. Whether it be right or wrong to alter the labour conditions, is not the point I propose to debate at present, but, I do say that, after granting wholesale exemptions for long periods all over the Coolgardie fields, to then alter the labour conditions was a most disastrous stroke of policy. The effect of the exemptions was to encourage men living on the fields to remain there in the hope of getting work. Those men did remain, and to a very large extent storekeepers and other business people gave them credit, hoping for the time when the exemptions should cease. Instead of that taking place the labour conditions were altered, and large numbers of men were thrown out of work. The result is that a large number of dishonoured bills are found about Perth at the present time. I can only describe the action of the Government in this matter as one of political perfidy. Hon. members on the Government side seem to object to the term of perfidious, and I would like to explain that in using the term, I am using a journalistic adjective. But if I am challenged to give my own opinion of the proceed-

ing, I say it appears to be an instance of atavism that seems to have taken the Ministry back to the period when the divorce between morals and politics was even more complete than it is at the present day. But the Government, apparently, have not been content with forgetting or neglecting their pledges in this particular, and have gone a little further. The Premier, when speaking at Bunbury, was kind enough to promise the country at large that public batteries should be established, mainly for the use of prospectors. In that speech the Premier emphatically said that as private enterprise had failed to do the work, it was now the duty of the Government to take the matter up. I entirely agree with the Premier. The advantages of public batteries would be very great. Batteries would, for example, do away with the undesirable mining expert class, a class which to a very large extent consists of quacks and well-dressed vagabonds. Mine purchasers would not find it necessary to go to a person who simply annexes three-fourths of the profit, and the purchaser would be able to put better returns before the public. The working miner would be put in a much better position, because he would not depend on the so-called expert, but, on the contrary, would have the advantage of being able to prove his mine and make a profit out of it for himself. These are a few of the advantages which would arise from the establishment of public batteries. But we have since been told by the Minister of Mines that the Premier had nothing of the kind in his mind when he made that speech.

MR. A. FORREST: The Minister of Mines never said that.

MR. VOSPER: The Minister of Mines distinctly said that it was only proposed to erect a few small batteries in out-of-the-way places, and there was no intention of interfering with private enterprise—that he did not mean to carry on the work, but to refer the matter to the Royal Commission. That statement on the part of the Minister of Mines is different from the statement made by the Premier. If the term “perfidious” can be applied to one action of the Government, it can with equal, if not greater, force be applied to their action in regard to public batteries. There is a feeling of profound disappoint-

ment throughout the goldfields as to the policy of the Government in regard to public batteries. If the Government wish to retain the small modicum of confidence it ever enjoyed on the goldfields they will amend their policy. I know hon. members will smile at that, owing to the fact that certain members who represent the goldfields are sitting on the Government cross-benches. But that is simply caused by those hon. members having mistaken their geographical position. By-and-by they will know they are out of place in a denser atmosphere than that to which they are accustomed. I am glad after all this to be able to congratulate the Government on something; and I do willingly congratulate the Government on the change in the Regulations. The change in Regulation 5 means an increased area for prospectors. It is, in my opinion, a wise and valuable change; and I hope the policy the Government has initiated will be carried a little further. I hope that we shall be able to get, not only increased prospecting areas for men who go into the far bush to look for reefs, but shall also have large rewards for the discovery of new fields, and that when new fields are proclaimed they will not be allowed to cover vast areas of country so as to preclude people from winning similar rewards. An area extending from Murchison proper almost as far as the South Australian border, is sufficient to preclude a man winning a Government reward. Again, when the Estimates come on for consideration, I hope a sum will be found there for the assistance of prospectors, and that a bonus for deep sinking—which is now confined to the East Kimberley goldfield—will be allowed in various parts of the colony. Just by way of showing that the gold industry thoroughly deserves some such encouragement, I will point to the case of one very small town in my own district. I choose this place mainly because the people there have public spirit enough to send me the figures, and also because it is one of the smallest places which relies on absolutely no assistance from outside capital. I refer to a place bearing the euphonious name of Ballagundi. The men working in that district have sunk shafts to the total depth of 1,991, or nearly 2,000 feet. [An

HON. MEMBER: What is the average depth? The minimum depth is 100 feet, and the maximum depth 208 feet. The number of tons at grass is 5,730, and to my certain knowledge, the men there have been holding on for the last two years by all sorts of contrivances. The storekeepers, I suppose, have helped to a great extent; but at any rate, the people there have held on without any outside assistance. It is to such men that the prosperity of the country is largely due, and the Government should give them every encouragement. I would, therefore, be glad to see some small encouragement extended in the way of increasing the area of prospecting ground, and by going back to the original pledges of the Premier to establish public batteries and give outlying districts a prospecting vote. I would now like to refer for a moment to the question of the labour conditions. I only want to refer to this in order to show the great contrast between the action of the Government in this colony and the action taken by politicians in other parts of Australia. As hon. members are doubtless aware, a deputation from the Australasian Chamber of Mines recently waited on the Premier of this colony in London, and the answer he made to the deputation was to the effect that he would be prepared to give certain rights in exchange for the expenditure of certain capital. The Right Hon. Charles Kingston, the Premier of South Australia, gave a different answer.

MR. A. FORREST: There are no gold-fields in South Australia.

MR. VOSPER: True, they have not; but if they had, the probabilities are they would be better managed than ours have been. Mr. Kingston, in reply to the deputation, said:

We do not exact much in the shape of rent for the occupation of mining properties, but we do expect, having fixed the working conditions sufficiently low at the time they were made, that they should be complied with; and we are not prepared in South Australia, except under special circumstances, to relax those conditions. We are not asking anything unfair, and we are only asking what is reasonable to prevent shepherding mining speculations rather than mining developments. If hard cases are shown, where the liberal conditions we have arranged are thought to be too severe, we are always happy to consider the case on its merits and act accordingly. Some-

thing has been said about the amount of capital sent to Australia for the purpose of mining development. No doubt a good deal has been sent. I wish it had been more, but I wish it had borne a larger proportion to the share capital of the various undertakings than it does in England.

I contend that in these few remarks Mr. Kingston put his finger on the spot and cause of all our troubles and difficulties. The troubles of the mining industry are not so much due to bad laws or geological and other local conditions of the country as to the large share which the mining shark takes of the profits made in the mine market at Home. When you consider the amounts for which properties are sold in this country with the amounts received for the same properties in London—and also consider the enormous amounts spent in advertising and the small proportion which share capital bears to working capital—the wonder is not that there are so few payable companies, but that there are any companies which pay at all. [A MEMBER: It is all on paper.] Exactly; and what we require here is less paper and more cash. Then, the alteration which has been made in Regulation 102A does away practically with jumping. The regulation provides that in every case where a man wishes to obtain the forfeiture of a lease, he must pay £25 to cover the costs. The result is that only a wealthy man can jump. A poor man, who may be a *bonâ fide* jumper, is debarred legal rights he formerly exercised, while the professional jumper with capital is granted more facilities than he formerly possessed. That is the sole result of the Government's attempt to amend the jumping regulations. Men are also prevented from taking up abandoned leases. In cases where the rent may have been paid three or four months in advance but the lease thrown up, a man going to the Warden and applying for a lease has to pay £25 in the ordinary way. A case of that kind occurred only last week. Leases thrown up by companies are very often taken over and made a success. Wherever a lease is known to be abandoned there should be some provision by which a man, whether he be rich or poor, can take over the ground and work it. It is not to the interest of the country to have the ground or men idle when there is useful work to do. The

effect of the regulation, so far as it has gone, has been distinctly mischievous. It would have been far better if the Government had carried out the original pledge and left the matter to the consideration of the goldfields members and the House generally, and had not attempted to tinker with things they do not understand. If there be any faults at all in our mining laws, it is entirely due to the fact that attempts have been made by a Parliament which consists of gentlemen who, for the most part, were not acquainted with mining, to pass a code, and the result is worse than the evil intended to be remedied. We have been going from bad to worse until now, when a chance of some remedy is offered by the presence in the House of members who understand mining, if they understand nothing else. For the Government to go back on its pledges and interfere in matters of this kind was extremely—I hardly know what term to apply to the action, but certainly it was an action which I think neither myself nor any hon. member for the goldfields districts can approve of. I notice that in the course of the Speech it is stated :

The monthly output of gold is satisfactory and well maintained, with every appearance of a substantial increase as additional machinery is erected.

I heartily congratulate the Government on that position of affairs. No doubt the fact that the output of gold is being maintained "with every appearance of a substantial increase as additional machinery is erected" is largely due to the fact that the Premier is on his way back to the colony. But leaving matters of banter entirely on one side, I would like to ask in all seriousness—What have the Government done to maintain and increase the monthly output of gold? [An Hon. Member: The Government have constructed railways.] Exactly, for which three times the value has had to be paid. That is the general experience with railways on the goldfields. Then, what facilities are given at the goldfields for the working of the railways? In the old days people on the fields had to pay double rates, because, they were told, there was no back loading. Now that there is back loading, it seems the policy of the Government to prevent that back loading being carried. [An

Hon. Member: That is not a fact.] I allow that a great deal may be said on both sides. The Minister of Railways has asserted that the Government cannot afford to carry the ore and take the risk of pilfering, at the rate of 16s. per ton and that if the various companies desire to have the ore carried they must get it carried at the ordinary rates; that is to say, the companies must get the ore insured. As is usual with Government changes, this change was made very suddenly and its effect was very marked. The output of gold for May, according to the published returns, was 59,111ozs., and for June 53,348ozs., while for last month the output was only 48,811ozs. Why was that? With all due deference to the hon. member for West Kimberley, I submit that the decrease was largely due to the absence of smelting returns. For May and June the official figures show 10,000ozs. per month of gold from smelted ores, while for July the return is only about 1,300ozs. That is a considerable diminution in this branch of industry, and it is largely due to the system of railway carriage. Coming to matters of detail, I have here a paragraph from the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, which is an organ favourable to the Government, and is regarded as largely reliable. In that newspaper it is asserted that a certain company, which operates very largely in Kalgoorlie, made application to the Railway Department for the erection of a siding there. The Department told the company that they would have to erect the siding at their own expense. [Mr. A. Forrest: Is that all?] I have no objection to the company being told they must erect the siding at their own expense; but the department afterwards said the company would be charged £125 a year for the siding.

An Hon. Member: The Department does the same down here in connection with timber sidings.

Mr. Vosper: Then such charges ought to be abolished. [Mr. A. Forrest: We all object to them.] If the hon. member will voice his objection he shall have my support. The Kalgoorlie company, after paying the rental of £125 a year, had to pay 3s. 4d. per ton for the conveyance of the ore from the mine to the railway station, a distance of less than four miles. This charge was in addition to the 16s. per ton which they had to pay

for the transport of the ore by train from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle. It is not surprising that the companies should have declined to export the ore at all; and consequently the gold returns have gone down. To do anything which has the effect of reducing the gold returns is a reprehensible and disastrous policy. The credit and confidence of the people in the colony depend entirely on the gold returns. But for the late increase in the gold returns our credit would have been at a very much lower ebb, and whatever little financial prospects the colony had would have vanished. It should be the policy of the Government to do everything in their power to encourage the export of ore. If it be true that the Railway Department cannot afford to carry ore at 16s. per ton and take the risks of its carriage, surely it would be possible to raise the rate 1s. or 2s. per ton and appoint a responsible custodian to look after the particular trucks. If that were done I think it would meet the case. I do not think the mine owners would greatly object to paying 1s. extra for the carriage of ore, and the department would make enough profit to, at all events, pay the wages of the custodian. Even if a few bags of ore were lost, it would be better to suffer that loss rather than lose the benefits of the export of gold. Those constant interferences by the Government with the progress of goldmining are doing a considerable amount of harm. This is our principal industry, and it should be the policy of the Government to protect and nurse it rather than do anything likely to cause it damage. [Mr. C. HARPER: The Government wish to protect the industry.] It has been said that a certain place, remarkable for its warm climate, is paved with good intentions. That seems to be the case with the Government. Whenever we complain we are always told it is the wish of the Government to do considerable good.

At 6:30 p.m. the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30 p.m. the SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

MR. VOSPER: When the House adjourned for tea, I was criticising the

Railway Department in relation to the transport of ore from the Coolgardie goldfields, and it may be well to mention that I understand the Government have already granted a lease to a company at Fremantle for establishing smelting works there on a large scale. I certainly approve of that action, and think it is a wise idea to endeavour to retain that kind of work in the colony as much as possible. But most of the errors which the Government have committed in regard to mining administration are due to their ignorance of the subject; and as the country in general, and Fremantle in particular, are likely to be landed in considerable trouble in relation to their solicitation for the establishing of smelting works at that port, I will point out that the general effect of establishing smelting works in other places has been to kill vegetation within a certain radius of the works, and that therefore the effect of this scheme may be to make Fremantle to a large extent uninhabitable, with the consequent risk of an injunction being applied for and granted by the Supreme Court against persons who establish these works. If such injunction be granted, I hope that under no circumstances will the Government be induced to give the owners of these works compensation for being dispossessed, as a result of any order from the Supreme Court. The Government might surely remember their own solicitation for the Bunbury district, and establish these smelting works at that place, as being much nearer to the Collie coalfield; and as members of the Opposition, and the goldfields party particularly, have a very keen affection for Bunbury and its neighbourhood, we certainly for the most part are in favour of smelting works being established there, rather than at Fremantle. (General laughter.) The member for the Greenough (Mr. Pennefather) remarked that the agricultural interest will always prove a true friend to the goldmining industry; and I may say his remarks on that point will be fully reciprocated from all who sit on this side of the House, and more particularly the mining group of which I am a member. If, however, it comes to a question of defending the mining industry, or the necessity arises for combating the erroneous ideas which agriculturists in this colony particularly

possess, of course we shall then have to fight them on the various points. In the meantime I wish to call attention to a grievance that affects the agricultural interest rather than the goldfields, and I allude to the errors which are frequently made by the Railway Department in dealing with the transit of fruit and timber, and things of that kind. A controversy recently took place in the newspapers between Mr. Jacoby and other producers on the one side and the General Manager of Railways on the other side, with reference to the transit of fruit and other produce; and a discussion also took place at the Producers' Conference, in relation to the same matter, all which was reproduced in the "Journal of the Bureau of Agriculture," for the information of cultivators in particular. Three resolutions were passed at the Agricultural Conference, censuring the Railway Department for its blunders in these respects, and that condemnation was very severe indeed. It thus appears the same errors which the department commits on the goldfields are committed frequently in connection with agriculture; and while I agree it is necessary that agriculture should be promoted in every possible way, yet we are prohibiting the free importation of fruit from the eastern colonies, thus depriving the goldfields of a sufficient supply. It should be remembered that people on the goldfields are in this position, that if they cannot obtain fruit from local growers in sufficient quantity, the question becomes very serious for the goldfields population, because their health depends entirely or very largely on a sufficient supply of fruit, which has not hitherto been obtained from local growers. It was shown during the discussions I have mentioned that in one instance Mr. Clarkson, the late member for Toodyay, sent five cases of fruit to Coolgardie, only one case arriving there; and other instances of a similar kind were given. The Government, while excluding foreign fruit, should take care that the goldfields are supplied with local fruit as far as possible; and therefore I shall join with the agricultural members in trying to induce the Government to do something more for them, by making a better use of the agricultural railways for the transit of produce. The excuse given is that, by importing apples from other colonies, we

shall be introducing the codlin moth. Well, the other day I overheard a conversation to the effect that in New South Wales people can get apples for about twopence a dozen, and there the codlin moth is very rampant; so that if the effect of the codlin moth is to reduce the price of apples to twopence a dozen, then I say the sooner we offer a bonus for introducing the codlin moth into this colony the better. I wish now to allude to a painful case which recently occurred in connection with the escape of certain prisoners from the gaol at Fremantle. I have taken the trouble to go to Fremantle and examine the gaol; and, as far as I could see, in the superintendent's staff of that establishment the Government have a set of excellent officers; but they are surrounded by architectural and legislative difficulties, which prevent their duties from being carried out properly. The prison regulations are considerably out of date, and the sooner they are amended, the better for the convicts and the public generally. In reference to the escape of those prisoners, it appears the men were just released from the cells in the early morning, and they had somehow torn up their sheets, making ropes of them, and had smuggled these into the yard, and having done these things they had next to climb over the first wall, then over a second wall, then proceed along a terrace, and finally crawl over the outer wall; all these actions being, or supposed to be, within view of the sentry stationed there. This sentry has since been very properly dismissed. Now as those prisoners had to manufacture ropes out of the torn bed-clothes, and had to smuggle them out of their cells, it appears to me that if these men had been properly examined when released from their cells, such facilities for escape would have been impossible. I have received a long letter from one of the prisoners at Fremantle, expressed in language much stronger than I care to use; and although one hon. member invites me to read it, I am not going to quote any statements in that letter, nor do I intend to reveal the name of the author, because I do not wish to see another case of flogging. But I was going to point out that the fact of this letter reaching me shows that a pencil must have been smuggled into the prison,

together with several sheets of paper, and the letter, when written, must have been smuggled out of it, before it could reach me. As to the sentence of flogging, it was thought at the time that this sentence for prison breaking was unduly severe, and a number of us endeavoured to get the sentence revised. The matter was referred to the Attorney General, with the result that we were unsuccessful in our application. Now I say the magistrate was wrong in imposing such a sentence for prison breaking; a sentence which should be imposed only in a case of some sexual offence or of violent garroting, and certainly should not apply to men who were using their natural instinct to get out of gaol. I think also that the censure in reference to that flogging should be far more severe against the Minister who confirmed it than against the magistrate who ordered it. To inflict a punishment of this kind was brutal and inhuman, and I contend that no law and no society can possibly be benefited by such barbarous punishments. I say it was not the vindication of the law, but of an obsolete prison regulation passed in a draconic and barbarous age; and even if it were a vindication of the law, I say it is simply the revival of a barbarous law. It is no use to argue in this age that old laws of this kind should be maintained in their entirety. This revival of flogging has caused this colony to be described in eastern journals as "Lashland" and "Lagland," a kind of epithet we should endeavour to avoid. For anyone to defend flogging by saying an old statute says this or that, is simply farcical; and any attempt to justify this as being in accordance with an obsolete law passed by brutal and half-educated ancestors is reviving the legislation of the grave to justify the torments of hell. I hope no such punishment as this will be inflicted again. I have, in conclusion, to heartily thank hon. members for the great patience with which they have listened to me, and for the courtesy they have extended to me as a new member.

MR. MORGANS: It was not my intention to intrude myself on the attention of this House to-day; but after listening to the speeches of hon. members, especially that of the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), I felt it was necessary to say something in reply to the remarks

he made with reference to the water scheme for Coolgardie. I have the honour to represent I believe the largest constituency on the goldfields, and so far as I understand the feeling of my constituency, it is decidedly in favour of that water supply scheme. The hon. member for Central Murchison stated that he believed if a census were taken of the population of this colony you would not find more than one person in a hundred who would record his vote in favour of that scheme. I beg to differ from my hon. friend, and to assure this House that, so far as the Coolgardie water scheme is concerned, it has the approval, and the absolute approval, of a majority of the men on the goldfields. It is not for me to-night to enter into the merits of this scheme—I shall have opportunities at a later date of doing so—but I hope I shall be prepared to show this House, when the proper time comes, that the scheme possesses many merits of great importance to the development of the goldmining industry, and I believe therefore that in the promulgation of that scheme the Government acted wisely and well. I believe also it has received the approval of the majority of those investors in the great city of London who are interested in our mines. I have had an opportunity to measure, from correspondence with various large houses in London, the effects of the promulgation of that scheme, and, so far as I have been able to judge, it is unanimously admitted, at least by the majority, that some such scheme is necessary for the rapid development of the goldmining industry. I do not for one moment say the introduction of water on the goldfields for the purpose of extracting the gold from the ore is necessary, for it is quite true that the development of the mines has had the effect of proving the existence of a large amount of water; but my contention is that this scheme is necessary, not so much from the mining point of view as from the point of view of the inhabitants of the goldfields, who require a domestic supply, which they cannot obtain now at reasonable rates. At the present moment, all the working men outside of a few of the principal centres, have to spend a large proportion of their earnings in purchasing water, and especially those who have brought their families from other colonies;

and I contend that, as far as the working men on the goldfields are concerned, so long as they have to pay 12s. to 18s. and even up to 22s. per thousand gallons for water for domestic use, it is not to be expected they will bring their families from other colonies to settle on our goldfields. What we desire is to induce the working men from the other colonies to bring their families to this colony and settle down on the goldfields. We do not want the working men to go on the goldfields, earn a large rate of wage, spend a very small amount of it in the colony, and send the larger portion away to some other colony. It is to avoid this that the Parliament of this colony should find some means of inducing the workers on the goldfields to settle down and spend their money here. With regard to the strictures of the member for Central Murchison, I may say I do not believe the promulgation of the water scheme has had any effect whatever on the question of the floating of the last loan in London. I know something about the financial men in London, and can speak with some authority of them, because I have to some extent mixed myself up for many years past with those people who are interested in the flotation of loans. I have also had something to do with the flotation of loans with reference to certain States of Central America. My experience has been that the financier in London does not look into the question of what the money is to be spent for, but what he looks at is whether or not the rate of interest he is to receive for his loan will be sufficient, and whether the security offered is good. That is all he has to look at, and I should regard it as an act of impertinence on the part of any financier in London who attempted to dictate to the Government of Western Australia, in the event of a loan being placed by them on the London market, as to how that money should be spent. If the Government of Western Australia can show the financier in London that he will have a sufficiently good security in his hands, and that the Government can offer a security that will justify him in lending his money, then the financier will lend it, provided he is to get a proper rate of interest for it. The same hon. member, with whom I agree in many respects while differing from him in these details,

stated that the Government of South Australia had been able to place a loan in London of over a million, and that the amount had been subscribed several times over. I do not know all the circumstances connected with the subscription of that loan, but I do know that one-half of that loan was subscribed inside South Australia itself. I do not think that is an analogous case in any way, and I therefore question the premises of the hon. member in bringing that forward as a case analogous to this colony. There is another element in regard to the flotation of the South Australian loan, and that is that the loan was raised for the purpose of paying off another loan, and that places it in an entirely different position as compared with a loan which is being raised for new works. I yield to no hon. member in my desire to see the colony of Western Australia doing the best it can in borrowing money and getting it at the lowest possible rate of interest, but I am bound to say that I consider it is absolutely impossible to expect that a new colony such as this can go into the London market and borrow money at 3 per cent. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was done.] Yes; but under ordinary circumstances I am bound to say that this colony ought not to expect to borrow money at so low a rate of interest as 3 per cent. The position in London, from the financier's point of view, is that in the case of a Government going to borrow money the lender has, firstly, to depend very largely on the population of the borrowing colony as the real security, and I contend that the population of this country does not justify the London financiers in advancing an amount of two millions at 3 per cent. If the Government of this colony can be successful--and I only hope the Premier has been successful--in raising money in London at a low rate of interest, and if he has been successful in raising two or three millions at 4 per cent., he must be congratulated on his efforts, because I think it would be a most difficult operation for any man to undertake at present, in view of the opportunities that investors have in other directions, to raise such a sum of money for this colony at the low rate of 4 per cent. interest. There is one thing that must be borne in mind. If the Government desire to borrow money, they must compare their

position with that of other borrowing States and must pay interest in proportion. The Government of China, which we must all admit is a much stronger Government than the Government of Western Australia—[A MEMBER: Oh, no!—pay interest in London at the rate of 5 or 6 per cent. China is one of the strongest Governments in the world, with a very big population and mighty resources, and the credit of that country in London at the present time is far better than the credit of Western Australia. I do not say that in disparagement of Western Australia, but simply to show that China is a country able to respond to any debt it may incur in financial circles in London. The facts being as I have stated, no surprise need be created at the failure of the loan for Western Australia. I regret the necessity for asking for the loan, but if a loan is necessary, I am not at all surprised that the Government of this country has not been able to raise it at 3 per cent. I would like to refer for a moment again to the Coolgardie water scheme, and say that if the Government are not disposed to invest £2,500,000 in the development of that important section of the goldfields, then they must have serious doubts as to the merits of the field and its probable future. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Government refused £30,000 for the Murchison.] The hon. member for Central Murchison, who, with his experience as a debater in this House, has an advantage over myself as a newcomer, applied to the Government for £30,000 for the purpose of establishing a water scheme somewhere on the Murchison. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was local water.] It was local water, and I applaud the effort then made and deplore the result. Had I been a member of the House when that question was brought up, I would have given my warmest support to the hon. member's endeavour to carry the scheme through. Unless the mining population have a sufficient supply of water for domestic purposes, the fields can never go on and reach that stage of prosperity we all desire for them. I said at the beginning that I would not enter into the merits of the Coolgardie water scheme. Were I to do so I should occupy five or six hours; and I think we are already tired of the debate. I hope,

however, the time will come when I shall have an opportunity of placing before hon. members some important facts in reference to the scheme. I know perfectly well I am speaking in the presence of hon. members who are not in sympathy with this great scheme; and I profoundly regret, from a knowledge of the views of the Speaker, that those views do not conform with my own. But as one who has studied thoroughly the whole of the details of the scheme, I hope an opportunity will be afforded me at no very distant date of laying some important facts before the House. I am one who believes that the enormous export of money from this country is caused by the absolute want of a cheap and constant water supply for the goldfields. About 70 per cent. of the earnings of the workers on the goldfields is going out of the colony. The hon. member for Central Murchison has clearly shown us that this export of money amounts to £1,000,000 per annum. That is a very serious position for this colony to be placed in. It means the export of money equivalent to the total revenues of the colony. This question requires careful consideration; and before hon. members condemn this water scheme, or attempt to oppose it, it behoves them to inquire further into its merits. [AN HON. MEMBER: Have a Royal Commission.] A Royal Commission would be rather a cumbersome method of dealing with the matter. If we look into the merits of the scheme, I am perfectly certain that, when all the practical facts have been brought before the House, it will be seen that it is a matter of vital importance to the continued prosperity of the goldfields.

MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley): Sir, although I rise on this side of the House to speak on the proposed Address-in-Reply, I do not wish hon. members to understand that I take the part of the side on which I sit. I had anticipated that some other hon. member on the front benches on the Government side would have followed at this stage of the debate, but as hon. members in that part of the House seem disinclined to do so, it somewhat devolves on some gentleman in this part of the House to address himself to the question. I must first congratulate you, sir, on being again elected Speaker, and I must also congratulate members, collec-

tively and individually, on your election. Old members know that although your decisions may, sometimes, be very fast, they are always just. No hon. member could at any time have said that any decision given by you was either unjust or unfair. I must also congratulate the House on the accessions to the ranks of members. The presence of the new members will, I am sure, add weight to the debates, and help hon. members through some difficult questions which will come before them. The assistance of the new members will, I am equally sure, be readily given, and, as I have said, their presence is a matter for congratulation. But while on this subject, I wish, in a few words, to draw the attention of all hon. members to the fact that, outside the Standing Orders, there are certain customs and a certain etiquette—a code of unwritten laws—which, since I have had the honour of being a member, have been rigidly adhered to in this House. One of those laws received rather a rude shock the day before Parliament assembled. When gentlemen who had sat in the House before came to the chamber, they found to their great surprise that seats, which some of them had occupied, not only for sessions, but for Parliaments, had been ticketed off in names other than their own. It is necessary that every hon. member should conduct himself properly in accordance, not only with the written laws, but with the unwritten and recognised laws that have been observed and should be observed in this House. [A MEMBER: They do not know those laws.] I will not particularise any hon. members, but simply ask them to recognise the customs and etiquette observed in all Houses of Parliament. I will not detain the House at any length on the general questions involved in the Address-in-Reply, but there are one or two points to which I cannot help referring. The hon. member for Central Murchison has indicated the necessity for a Redistribution of Seats Bill. In that I cannot agree with the hon. member. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not expect you would.] I am somewhat under the leadership of the hon. member for Central Murchison in a party formed in this House, called the goldfields party, and of that party, in all matters relating to the welfare of the goldfields, I will be

a loyal member. But I cannot commit myself to support a Redistribution of Seats Bill. I will, however, support any measure brought up with the object of making registration more easy for all the people of this colony. I admit that the regulations which govern the courts of registration, and the facilities given for registration, are absolutely and utterly insufficient, and up to the present have been a failure. I am not referring altogether to the goldfields constituencies, but quite as much to the cities and large centres of population. We have heard a great deal in reference to the £1,000,000 per annum which leaves the colony through the post office, and all the blame is laid on the high tariff, and particularly on what are called the food duties. That the blame can be laid on the tariff has yet to be proved. It is never taken into consideration that a large amount of the money which goes away is sent for the purpose of paying debts contracted in other colonies, and is sent by people who came here broken and have since earned money. It is not taken into consideration that a great deal of the money is sent to pay debts contracted in free-trade countries where money could not be earned with which to pay. That is a phase of the question which has not been presented before. In anything that will tend to give the people more liberty and to a free democratic spirit I do not bow even to the hon. member for Geraldton. It has been said that to an Irishman a grievance is better than a good argument. Well, I have a grievance. I had the honor last session of submitting a motion to the effect that it was necessary, in the interests of the country, to legislate with a view of restricting the influx of Asiatics to this colony. That motion was supported very strongly indeed by the Premier, and, after it had been debated, no dissentient voice was raised. The motion was passed; but the result has been *nil*. In Perth alone the best of the city sites have been taken possession of by Chinese. For the absence of any action on the motion some blame must be attached to somebody. It is time something was done, and I hope some other hon. member will move in the matter, although he cannot move with more success than I did, so far as support in the House is concerned. If a similar motion is passed

this session I hope something will be done to give effect to the decision of the House. There are three great questions now before the House. Federation I will not touch upon, because I will have an opportunity later on when the Bill is before us. The other two questions are the Coolgardie water supply and the tariff. When the question of the tariff comes on we shall, I suppose, have to fight it out, and one argument hon. members will have to take hold of is that the money sent out of the country is not purely for the keep of families on the other side. As to the Coolgardie water supply scheme, I shall be very proud and pleased to give it my absolute and unconditional support, if the finances of the colony at the time warrant my doing so. Unless it can be shown and proved to me more fully than it has been that the finances of the country justify such an expenditure—that we can borrow money at a fair rate of interest to construct this particular work—I cannot say I shall be a supporter of the scheme. Other works can be taken in hand and carried out which would be of much greater benefit to the country than the Coolgardie water scheme. We want more railways, and the hon. member for Pilbarra has urged that more inducement should be given to prospectors and others who go into the country to open up new goldfields. That, in my opinion, would be of even greater benefit than the £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 which it would cost to get the water scheme through. All the same, given that money can be borrowed, I will be a supporter of the scheme; but in the present state of the finances of this colony, I am afraid it will be a step which, in a very short time, we will find not to be to the benefit of the colony generally. There is another matter which I think should stand over, and that is the proposed new Houses of Parliament. New Houses would cost a quarter of a million (£250,000) in order to build them properly, and I should be very sorry indeed to see such works otherwise than properly carried out. If we cannot afford to do the work well, we ought not to do it at all. I do not see why we cannot carry on the business of the country in the present buildings as well as in the new Houses, which are not required, and the cost of which would cripple other industries of the colony.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): It was not my intention to speak on the Address-in-Reply; but after the remarks that have been made by the hon. member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor), it is necessary I should do so. A statement has been made by that hon. member in regard to etiquette in this House, and I wish to explain my position in the matter. On Monday I was informed that certain members were marking off seats. The hon. member for Fremantle, who is an old member of the House, told me that if I would come into the chamber he would assist me in picking out a seat for myself. He showed me the seat which I at present occupy, telling me it was his seat during the previous session, and that he did not intend to occupy it during the present session, and he said if I desired I might have it for myself. I put my card on the seat, and some time afterwards I heard some impertinent remarks made in a room outside about certain new members jumping seats. I think I am fairly well known, and if the gentleman who made those remarks had come to me and told me I had taken a seat which he imagined was his by any etiquette of the House, I should willingly have given up the seat to him. Instead, however, of coming to me in that way, that honourable member placed his card on the seat I had chosen, and the remarks to which I have referred as to new members jumping old members' seats were afterwards made. As the honourable member chose to be what I might perhaps call arrogant in the matter, I declined to let any old member use dictation to me in this matter. I wish to explain my position, because Tuesday morning's newspaper published a version of the occurrence. Referring now to the Address-in-Reply, I do not intend to speak of federation at all—that can be discussed in Committee—but in regard to the requirements of the goldfields, I think that, now I have risen, I may as well make a few remarks. I would like first to deal with the food duties: and I wish to do nothing in this House to injure the agricultural industry. I will do my best always to foster that industry; but, at the same time, notice must be taken of the moneys which are being sent out of the country through the post office every month. We are told that last month

some £82,000 was sent away by this channel, and that this month the amount is £72,000. Those facts present a grave situation, which must be faced by the House at a very early moment. I trust we will have a very short recess, and that as soon as the House meets after the conclusion of the Federal Convention, an endeavour will be made to find some means of preventing that money leaving the colony in the way it is now doing. The export of that money is, no doubt, owing to obstacles placed in the way of working men making their homes in the colony. On the goldfields, owing to the regulations, it is difficult for a working man to get a piece of ground for himself. Every obstacle is placed in the way, and I hope that the Royal Commission to be appointed to deal with these matters will take this point seriously into consideration. As to the Coolgardie water supply scheme, it is absolutely necessary there should be a good supply of fresh water on the goldfields. The food duties realise a very large proportion of the customs revenue. If the agricultural districts could supply sufficient products for the wants of the country, there would be no objection to those duties as a sort of protective tariff. But at the present time the tariff is actually an imposition, and I hope the Government will make some concession in the matter. Dealing with mining generally, I would urge on the Government the necessity for considering the desirability of providing public batteries. The Premier stated at Bunbury that he thoroughly agreed with a proposal to that effect, adding that private enterprise had not grasped the position, and it was time the Government stepped in. If the Government do take this matter in hand and construct batteries on the different goldfields, their action would not only prove a great boon to the country, but would pay handsomely. It is not desired that the Government should make a large profit out of the public batteries. The Government might charge 10 per cent. on the working cost, which would give 4 per cent. on the cost of construction, and 6 per cent. for sinking fund and depreciation of plant. Public batteries would no doubt increase the returns enormously, and give practical help to men in the back regions in realising the stone pro-

duced from their mines. The miners are not afraid to have the public batteries tested on the goldfields, and if such batteries were provided we would hear less outcry against the company-monger and the present mining regulations. We want an amendment of the Electoral Act as soon as possible. I would be quite content to resign my seat and go back to my constituency if a reasonable Bill were passed through the House, giving every man on the fields, and all over the colony, the right to vote. I want a re-distribution of seats on a somewhat different principle from that of the present distribution. The hon. member for Central Murchison has given the House some figures in reference to the voting powers in various constituencies; and we learn that while the one member is returned by 2,080 voters, another is sent to the House by 90 voters. [MR. DOHERTY: What about the territory represented?] We have been told that in the old times a donkey might have a vote in England. I, myself, represent 750 voters, but if every man on the goldfields could have a vote, there would be something like 2,000 or 3,000 persons on the electoral roll for North Coolgardie. [MR. CONNOR: Are you in favour of a re-distribution of seats here?] I am in favour of a re-distribution of seats, and hope we shall soon have a new Electoral Act that will give all classes the right of representation in this House. I hope honourable members will excuse my somewhat disjointed speech. But for the remarks of the hon. member for East Kimberley, I should not have addressed the House, and I trust that my explanation has been satisfactory.

MR. GEORGE: Before proceeding to deal with the federation question, I wish to draw the attention of the House to an evil which I have pointed out during the last two sessions of Parliament as being a danger which this country has been drifting into, and which will soon land us pretty nearly in the same state that the colony of Victoria was in some years ago. I refer to the accumulation of railway stores at Fremantle. If my information is correct, on April 30th of this year there were nearly £750,000 worth of stores lying unused on waste ground at Fremantle, the great bulk of which was exposed to the weather or to

pilfering. It was stated during the last session that a lot of these goods which were indented were for immediate needs; but it is a strange thing that a lot of valuable machinery, which must have cost thousands of pounds, has been lying at Fremantle nearly three years, and is still rusting and rotting away. In a period of grave financial necessity, despite the roseate hue placed upon it in the Governor's Speech, we are accumulating, day by day, and adding to those stores, until, before a couple of months are over, something like a million pounds' worth of stores, which are not needed, will be lying there, rotting and rusting and uncared for. [MR. HUBBLE: That is not true.] Another matter I wish to briefly refer to is the fact that in the South-Western district there has been a lot of land thrown open for timber leases; and I am sorry the Commissioner of Crown Lands is not in his place to-day, for I know that in this matter he is fully in accord with me. A number of those leases have been taken up and others applied for merely for speculative purposes; and I take it that if, in regard to our goldfields, we insist that leased ground shall be worked, then I say that if we let out by leasing what I consider a source of wealth not much inferior to our Eastern goldfields, we should shackle those leases with the condition that they must be worked, and not be held for speculative purposes. The hon. member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) made some remarks on a question about jumping seats in this House, which matter might well have been left alone, although I may say someone jumped my seat, and the Press, in their kindly manner, made some joking remarks about me. I do not mind them, for I know they did not mean any harm, and I know there was no intentional discourtesy on the part of new members in taking seats which might have been appropriated by other members in previous sessions. Referring now to federation, I will ask hon. gentlemen: Do we meet here to show that we want federation, or have we met to shelve it? It seems to me the delegates who went to the Federal Convention last time practised what I will not call a conspiracy of silence; and I will not even say, as an hon. gentleman did in the other chamber last evening, that they went to

the Convention as students, for I take it that if this colony sends men to the Federal Convention it sends them, not as students, but as representatives. If we do want federation, for goodness' sake let us go straight at it, and show what we really mean. It is no use our sitting here a few days to play with federation, for that would be merely wasting the country's money and our time. Whether we want federation or we do not want it, let us grasp the nettle, and show at once that we are in earnest in dealing with this great question. [AN HON. MEMBER: What do you say about it?] When the federation debate comes on, I shall be prepared to say what I have to say. But this is the proper time to ask hon. members to be earnest in this matter, and make up their minds as to whether they want federation or not. It may be said that it would be undignified for this colony to withdraw from the federation movement now by taking no part in the next Convention; but I say that if this House decides that it does not require federation, we shall stand far higher in the estimation of the other colonies by declaring at once that we believe in federation as a theory, but that in practice we are not ready for it at present.

MR. HUBBLE: The object for which we are assembled, as the Attorney General told us yesterday, is first to dispose of the Address-in-Reply, and afterwards to deal with the Commonwealth Bill, and with the granting of supplies. I have risen now to contradict some remarks made by the hon. member for the Murray (Mr. George) in reference to a certain amount of Government stores, which he says represent nearly a million of money, lying on open ground at Fremantle, exposed to the weather and going to rust. Although not myself a representative of Fremantle, yet it is well known I am closely connected in business with the Fremantle district, and I cannot allow the remarks of the hon. member to pass uncontradicted, when he says there is a wasteful and unwarranted expenditure there. As a matter of fact, being myself in the iron trade, I may say the material now exposed to the weather at Fremantle is not any article which will depreciate in value to any material extent. [MR. GEORGE: What about the engines?] Those engines are out in the open air from

the first of January to the last day of December, and they have only to be cleaned and treated as engines are treated in the ordinary course of engineering work. The bulk of the material one sees lying on the outside at Fremantle is composed of wheels and iron frames for carriages, and so on; and it is no great detriment for such material to lie in the open air before being put together for use. Referring to the Address-in-Reply, I have to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, as other members have done, on your being re-appointed to the honourable position of Speaker of this House; and I feel certain you will do all you can to assist new members; and if at any time I, as a new member, should need your kindly guidance, I feel sure you will readily put me in the right way. The main object of the Address-in-Reply is to pass a vote for supplies during September and October; and this, I feel no doubt, will be brought forward and settled to the satisfaction of the House. In reference to the Commonwealth Bill, I regret that so much time has been taken up to-night in discussing it in advance, seeing that we have to go into committee upon its clauses in a day or two, and then we shall have full opportunity for discussing the whole measure. Too much time has been taken up in referring to it and to other matters which might be better dealt with at some future time. I have very much pleasure in supporting the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

MR. OLDHAM: From the remarks of the Attorney General, I understood that Parliament had been called together particularly for the purpose of sending delegates to the Federal Convention. Therefore, I intend to take a somewhat unusual course—if it is not very unusual for a new member to enter into a subject of a congratulatory nature—and congratulate ourselves on the fact that the occasion which calls forth our maiden effort in this House is a subject to which no one can say the least sign of party politics attaches. In venturing to address a few observations which I consider to have some bearing on this important subject, I recognise that my inexperience may lead me to commit some errors which would be avoided by hon. members having a better knowledge of the methods of procedure and usages which govern

debate in this Chamber. I feel also that I may possibly, for the purpose of eliciting some information on this subject which I think is necessary, ask some questions of the hon. gentlemen who occupy the Treasury Bench, which seem to me to be pertinent ones, but which after all, may only serve to show that I possess, in common with some other members of this House, a good deal of ignorance on the subject of federation.

MR. DOHERTY: On which side of the House do you mean?

MR. OLDHAM: On both sides.

MR. DOHERTY: Speak for yourself, then.

MR. OLDHAM: I recognise, in venturing to say a few words on this subject and expressing my ideas, that the ideas which I do express will not probably receive the same credence or notice that would be given to speeches coming from hon. gentlemen who occupy seats on the front Ministerial bench; for by virtue of the position they occupy it is generally understood that in speaking on a constitutional question, Ministers are entitled to greater credence than may be given to any ideas I may put forward. I am not egotistical enough to believe that the opinions that I may express will be received with greater credence than the opinions of hon. gentlemen who have had the honour and advantage of occupying seats in a previous Parliament. I do not propose to set myself up as an authority on a constitutional matter, for to do this it would be necessary to have had some legislative experience, and that I have not. But I believe I possess a knowledge of the fundamental principles of the British Constitution, and I believe—and I hope the House will believe me when I say so—that the position which the House has been led into by the Government on this question of federation is altogether a false one. I believe the Government are playing shuttlecock with the cause of federation, and I believe that they have violated the principles, or at least the ideas of a majority of the people of this colony as to what are the principles of the British Constitution, as affecting the rights of the people. We have been told by an eminent authority that there is a great deal of ignorance existing in the colony and in this House with reference to this question, and I have

been struck, during the course of this debate, particularly in regard to the remarks which have fallen from hon. gentlemen opposite, with the consensus of opinion which seems to have been adopted with regard to the position of this colony relative to federation. It is stated as a fact that it is not advisable for this colony to join in the federal movement at present, and straightway upon that basis is created a fabric which runs a very great risk of being entirely falsified by events which are continually happening. I know that it will be easy enough for hon. gentlemen to point out that in consequence of the large amount of revenue which is derived from the Customs duties in this colony it is not advisable for Western Australia to join in the federal movement at present; but it is a very open question indeed, and one upon which a large number of people even in Western Australia do not agree, as to whether it is or is not advisable at the present time for the colony to join in the federation of the States of Australia. It appears to me, however, that these statements, which are made clearly and decidedly, before they can be accepted by the people of this colony as indisputably true, will have to be proved with a bit of really good argument, which hon. gentlemen opposite do not seem able to put forward. While admitting there may be a large amount of ignorance in this colony, and even inside this House, on the subject of federation, it seems to me that for this ignorance in the country, at any rate, there is someone responsible; and I should have thought that the hon. gentlemen who are Ministers of the Crown would have recognised their responsibility in this respect, and would have shown the people of this colony clearly and concisely the advantages and the disadvantages which attach to federation, or to the position of isolation which the Government of this colony intend to take up. But there are reasons for this, and I was very much struck by the remarks of my hon. friend, the member for Greenough (Mr. Pennefather), when he stated that if any person made a proposal to us it would be well for us to examine the motives of the proposer and see whether they are honourable or not. Now, I am going to examine the motives, not only for the conspiracy of silence which has been displayed to-night on the Govern-

ment side of the House, but the conspiracy of silence in reference to federation and the position which the Government have seen fit to adopt. There are reasons for their silence in this matter, as you will find on examining their motives, and as the country will also find in reference to the hon. gentlemen opposite, particularly those hon. gentlemen who occupy those seats which are entrenched with all the privileges of Ministers of the Crown, and who are not without some little political acumen. The appearance of the well filled benches opposite proves this, and proves also that my hon. friend, the Attorney General, has some little political acumen, which has displayed itself to its fullest advantage in connection with the administration of the Electoral Act. There is one thing which stands out clearly and prominently with regard to federation, and it is that federation and the present Ministry cannot exist together. There is one little item in the programme of their internal policy that proves this clearly and concisely, and that little item is that we are collecting through the Customs duties a very large amount of revenue from the food supplies of the people, and when federation comes about, that source of revenue, that support of our agriculturists, will disappear. [MR. DOHERTY: Not necessarily.] With the disappearance of the agricultural support in this colony will disappear the Forrest Ministry. [MR. DOHERTY: No fear.] I do not mean to say for one moment that the removal of the food duties would clear all the obstacles out of the federal track, for there would still be the difficulties of finance, the difficulties of control of the various assets of the colonies, and there would still be those imaginary difficulties which were mentioned yesterday by the member for Greenough; but there is one thing which appears to me to be past all argument, and it is that by the removal of these duties on the food supplies of the people we should be brought one step nearer to federation. Let me ask the House to consider this question: remove these food duties, and then say what would be our position with regard to federation. Would we not be relatively in the same position in regard to federation as any of the other colonies. [MR. DOHERTY: No.] If federation means anything at all, it means that by

sweeping away these border duties we should be able to increase our trade and commerce, and doing that would necessarily mean that we should develop the resources of this colony and of every other portion of this great continent. That is, apart from the sentimental view of the matter, and it is for this House to consider whether the sacrifices which the member for Greenough mentioned, and seemed so afraid of, would not be more than counter-balanced by the advantages which we should receive from a federal compact with the other colonies. I do not say that we should federate immediately, but I say it is a matter for consideration even at the present moment, and that the subject should not be dismissed as a foregone conclusion. Even looking at the matter from a selfish point of view, it is worth while considering whether we should not be able to justify all our ambitions which we have in regard to ourselves, and whether under a system of federation we should not be able to realise far more happily all the anticipations we have for this great and wondrous colony in which we live. The proposals of the Government are not before us with respect to federation, and I think that while it may be said we are indifferent on certain clauses of the Federation Bill, yet I feel so strongly upon this matter that before this Bill goes through, before we pledge ourselves to the principle of federation, it is necessary to direct the attention of the House to the sort of proposals the Government intend to bring forward. I am not in their secrets—far from it—but after reading the reports of debates in the Federal Convention, it is easily enough seen that an altogether new principle is about to be introduced into any federal system of Government that is to include Western Australia. Let us examine that principle. It is proposed—and I am speaking within the knowledge of every hon. gentleman who has read the speeches which the Premier of this colony made at the Convention—to invest the Senate with equal powers as compared with the House of Representatives. This introduces an altogether new principle, and one that is entirely foreign to the instincts of any English-speaking community. It was brought forward ostensibly for safeguarding the interests of the smaller States, or at least those States

which have the smaller populations, and, this being the case, I cannot for the life of me understand the attitude of our delegates upon this particular question. If it had been proposed on the part of this Ministry to join in federation at once, then the proposal would have been an intelligible one; but it is not so. It is proposed to wait, and, in the words of the hon. member for Greenough, "When the time comes that this colony has obtained a much larger population, and is not subservient to any other colony, then we may throw in our lot with the other colonies." And yet in spite of this we propose, or rather the Ministry proposes, or Sir John Forrest proposes, at the Federal Convention, to introduce into the constitution of the Federated States of Australia a provision that might suit us as a smaller colony, which would suit us now perhaps, but which does not take into consideration those circumstances which would tend to make us the great and glorious colony about which one hon. member so earnestly spoke.

AN HON. MEMBER: You forget the House of Representatives.

MR. OLDHAM: I took down what the hon. member said very carefully. It is contended on the part of hon. gentlemen, judging from the interjections they are making, that the colony has more to gain by standing aloof. The intentions of the Government are simply these. It is necessary, they say, that we should take advantage of those sources of revenue which we at present possess for the purpose of developing our own internal resources. That may be so, but surely it must have been contemplated at some period of our history what would be our position, and what would be the proper time when we should join the federation of Australia. It must have been contemplated either that we should join during the course of our development or when we had developed; or perhaps hon. gentlemen had in view joining the federation of the States when the policy of the present Government had brought us to nought. Is that the object of the Government? It appears to me that it is so, and it is a natural conclusion to come to, since we are asked to insert a provision, not which would suit us as a large and prosperous colony, but one which would suit us as a smaller State, a provision which

would suit us if we fell down to the level of poor little Tasmania. The proposition to insert this provision is, to my mind, like crying "stinking fish;" it certainly is at variance with the ideas so often expressed by hon. gentlemen who profess to have so large an amount of faith in this colony. Taking these things into consideration, where then go all those indications of prosperity? What of the returns from our gold mines? They are good enough. We are compelled to speculate as to the time when we are going to join this federation. It is a speculative subject. It depends on the point of view from which you look at it. It is not intended to join at the present time. Then I suppose it is intended to join when our resources have been more fully developed. I hope the House will make provision for joining on terms that will suit us at that particular juncture of our history when we are ready to join. What comes of the prophetic vision seen by the right hon. the Premier at the Bunbury banquet—the forests of masts, the gold mines, the great forests, the teeming agricultural lands? What comes, then, of our great and glorious industry? Surely all this points to a large and continued increase in our population, and yet it is intended to insert a provision in the federation compact which will not suit us as a large and growing colony with a large and prosperous population, but with a population and with industries and resources on a par with those of poor little Tasmania. Now the point I wish to make is this. Since there is no definite proposal on the part of the Ministry to join this federation at the present moment, is it advisable on the part of this colony to insert conditions which will kill the federation of the other colonies? Is it advisable to insert a provision which will not even be accepted by the people of this colony when the proper time comes for them to join the federation? Now, with regard to the constitutional principle which underlies this proposal. Let me ask the House this. I said when I got up to speak that I did not pretend to be an authority on constitutional matters, but just let me ask the House to consider this: How would a proposal—fair enough if coming from this House, but emanating from the other Chamber—be

regarded by this House if the members of the other Chamber asked for equal powers with us over the tax bills, relating to this colony? Would such a request be received with any amount of consideration? [AN HON. MEMBER: No.] Has it not always been the boast of Houses like this that they alone are responsible for the taxation of the people? I ask the House to seriously consider this matter, and not to allow the insertion of such a dangerous principle into the constitution of this colony? Now, associated with this idea of control on the part of the Senate, on the part of the Upper House, is the idea that it is necessary to safeguard the interests of minorities. This is exactly the position which should be taken up by the Senate, and no more power should be given to the Senate than the powers which are already possessed by the Upper Houses of the various colonies. The colonial Senates have efficiently answered their purpose, if there is any virtue whatever in it. I have finished the few remarks I intended to make on federation, and I only just wish, by way of conclusion, to mention one or two matters which seem to me to be before the House at the present moment. The first is in reference to the Coolgardie water supply scheme. My hon. friend, the member for Coolgardie, stated that it would be an impertinent question on the part of financiers if they were to ask to what use a borrower intended to put the money that he wanted to borrow. I know nothing of finance myself, but my impression is that moneylenders generally enquire how their clients propose to use the money they desire to borrow, because the use they intend to make of the money affords sometimes the security of the money-lender. My objection to the Coolgardie water supply scheme is this, that it would be impossible to give these people a domestic supply for two and a half millions of money, apart from the supply to the gold mines. Bear in mind that I am discussing this question without any prejudice whatever, because I firmly believe that it is the duty of the Government in this colony to supply the fields with water. But as far as this question is concerned, it is questionable whether it is advisable on the part of the country to allow the expenditure of two and a half millions of money for the

purpose of taking water to the top of Mt. Burgess. As I understand the scheme, it can only be carried out for the cost named provided the water can be taken to the top of Mount Burgess. Is there no further expense attached to the scheme?

AN HON. MEMBER: Nothing of the sort. For the amount named the water would be taken to the top of Mount Burgess.

MR. OLDHAM: Does the hon. gentleman mean to say that the Engineer is so foolish as to believe he can reticulate, pump water to the top of Mount Burgess, and then over 500 square miles of country, for 2½ millions of money?

AN HON. MEMBER: The Murchison people have their own supply.

MR. OLDHAM: I believe that is the proposal, and that is as far as it goes. Really the proposal is to supply the railways with the water, and is the country prepared to spend two and a-half millions of money? Just one word in conclusion. The hon. member for East Kimberley stated that it was necessary to prove that, in this colony, we had a very high tariff. Just allow me to remind the hon. gentleman of a very eminent authority on agriculture. The hon. member for Beverley stated before his constituents that the price of a sheep at Cossack was 6s., and the amount of duty on that particular sheep coming from another colony would be 2s. 6d. Upon a 50lb. sheep the amount would be 7s. 6d. [MR. SIMPSON: That is if it is dead.] I think you know what I am talking about in this matter. To show whether this tariff is high or not I just mention these facts. The duty on frozen meat is 1½d. per lb. The same thing applies with respect to the price of a bullock. According to the hon. member for Beverley, the price of a bullock is £4 17s. 6d., the duty on that bullock coming from another colony dead would be £5 7s. 6d., and yet we are asked by the hon. member for East Kimberley to believe we are not, in this country, subject to a very high tariff. Allow me to thank the House very sincerely for the kindness and consideration which it has shown me during the course of the few remarks I have made.

MR. RASON moved the adjournment of the debate.

Put and passed, and the debate adjourned until the next day.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved—"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 7:30 to-morrow evening."

Put and passed.

The House adjourned at 9:20 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 19th August, 1897.

Report on Commonwealth Bill—Question: Loss of Colony's Revenue re Federation—Question: Expedition to Discover Remains of Explorers—Question: Hawking of Goods—Motions: Sessional Committees; Sitting Days of Council—Appointment of Chairman of Committees—Commonwealth Bill: Debate on General Principles—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 7:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

REPORT ON COMMONWEALTH BILL.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom), in laying on the table a report re the draft Commonwealth Bill, said: This report will afford hon. members a great deal of valuable information. It has been compiled by an actuary, and it shows the probable loss of revenue that will accrue to Western Australia for several years. It also contains an estimate by the actuary of the probable population for the next seven or eight years. I will not move that it be printed, as hon. members will no doubt like to have it here to refer to it.