

intentions to introduce measures which may prove important; but when the measures in question are placed before us will be the proper time to discuss their provisions. Nothing should be done to disquiet Her Majesty's Ministers without due cause, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the safety of the country is the supreme law for our guidance. Having thus briefly expressed my views as to my responsibility as a representative, I have much pleasure, Mr. Speaker, in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, so ably moved by the hon. member for Perth. There will probably be no adverse action, and the House will probably, without delay, be asked to deal with measures of importance likely to assist in advancing the prosperity of Western Australia.

MR. LEAKE: I move that the debate be adjourned to the next sitting of the House.

Motion put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the next sitting was fixed for the following day at 4.30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 4.35 p.m. until the next day.

### Legislative Council,

Thursday, 14th October, 1897.

Question: Correspondence re Petitions of Right—Paper Presented—Address-in-Reply: second day of debate, conclusion—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

#### QUESTION—CORRESPONDENCE RE PETITIONS OF RIGHT.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I beg to ask, without notice, if the Minister of Mines will kindly favour the House with copies

of the correspondence that has taken place between the Government and the Secretary of State, with reference to the presentation of petitions of right.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM): I shall have much pleasure in getting them, and placing them on the table.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

THE MINISTER OF MINES laid on the table the annual report of the Mines Department (1896).

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### SECOND DAY OF DEBATE—CONCLUSION.

HON. H. BRIGGS: I think I may fairly congratulate the Government on the great amount of work done during the past year. As regards paragraph 4 of the Speech, which refers to the Federal Convention, I shall content myself with one observation. When we consider that the population of the colony at the present time is 160,000, and when we remember that two-thirds of that population come from the larger colonies of Victoria and New South Wales, it shows clearly that the present inhabitants of this colony are made up of much the same sort of people as inhabit the larger colonies; and this ought to do away with all feelings of antagonism and bitterness which I found at the Convention were supposed to exist between the populations of the larger and the smaller States. The report on the goldfields is very reassuring and satisfactory, especially when we consider how this colony was spoken about; how everything was attributed to the "boom," and how, when a depression occurred, it was said that the boom had given way. The increasing gold production shows that the colony is making great strides in a forward direction. The estimate made by the Government that the value of the gold production of the colony will this year amount to 2½ millions is, on all these accounts, most satisfactory. It will create confidence in the markets of the world. It will create confidence amongst capitalists, and we shall thereby gain, not only capital, but a steady stream of population flowing into this colony, which we so much want. As regards the Royal Mint, I anticipate

that it will be a direct loss at first, but there will be an indirect gain attached to it, as we are promised the establishment of metallurgical works, which will afford an opening to many of our young colonists, where openings are so few, to learn the mining industry. At the present time the control of our great mines is in the hands of people not born in this colony. I shall therefore be very pleased to see these metallurgical works established, as they will offer another outlet for native talent. Great work has been done in the colony, as regards water supply and building tanks. I see that 352 trial bores have been put down. It has been stated by cavillers against the Government, that these bores should have been persevered with to a greater depth, or at least that they should have been sunk at greater intervals from each other. I have been told that some were put down at no greater interval than a few hundred yards from each other, and that they were not pursued to a very great depth. Another paragraph shows that a bore has been put down at Coolgardie to a depth of 2,700ft. with no good result, except that it will show the public that every effort has been made to obtain artesian water, and it will give strength to the scheme mentioned in paragraph 8—the Coolgardie water scheme. It has been said for some time that this scheme is not necessary. We hear of water being found on the fields, and in some cases we are told that the mines have been flooded out; but that water is not potable water. Much of the opposition to the scheme at first, at any rate in my own mind, arose from the fact that the goldfields did not look upon it favourably. That was, perhaps, on account of vested interests; but now that I hear Mr. Morgans, the member for Coolgardie and an eminent authority, state that he has undoubted faith in the scheme, and that he believes it to be an imperative necessity, I feel sure that the Government and this House did wisely in supporting it. While I regret that we have not funds at present to go on with that scheme, I think it would be wise on the part of the Government to use every means and every opportunity to prosecute that great work. Paragraph 9 speaks of the great national work closely connected with the West Province, namely, the Fremantle harbour works. During the

absence of the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. C. Y. O'Connor), much of the credit and of the success of that work depended on the Acting Engineer (Mr. J. A. Macdonald), and notice ought also to be made of the able assistant he had in Mr. Royce, who was followed afterwards by Mr. Johnston. Living in the neighbourhood as I do, I know how constant they have been in their attention to the work, and both the Government and the colony can be congratulated on having selected such able men. The harbour works at Fremantle now afford great accommodation for shipping. We have one berth on each coast of the south mole, and another on the north mole, and there are six berths on the South Quay fully occupied. The most pleasing sight which I saw last year was that of five barques and one large steamer in the river. On the north bank a slip, for vessels up to 14ft. draught, has been made. This has not gained much attention, but it is of eminent service to the vessels coming to the port, because that slip can be used as a sort of graving dock where vessels can be cleaned and repaired. It is one of the most useful aids in connection with the great work of harbour conservation at Fremantle. The harbour works branch has also built and launched a steamer of 60 tons, and dredged a new channel whereby all our lighters can go up the river very well. It is true they have been impeded by sandbanks. Now there is a channel 17ft. in depth, so that all these light steamers can go up the river. I hope soon to see it actively used as a great means of traffic between the port, and the city. I consider Fremantle and the metropolis as one. One is the port and the other is the seat of Government and the centre of civilisation. Between the two there is the greatest harmony existing. We have our work as a port to do and the metropolis has its work, and I should be very loth to see any bitter spirit of antagonism arising between them. We are working together for our common good and for the good of the colony. On September 18th, the last report I have of the work done in the harbour, there were 3,445ft. of wharfage piled and 2,010ft. completed. When we consider that all this great work was done out of the grant of £800,000, it is very satisfactory. We hear that en-

gineers, and men of that class, always exceed their estimates. It must be most gratifying to this House and to the country that up to the present time all this great work has been done under the estimated cost, and of the large sum of £800,000 only £500,000 as yet has been expended. I will mention two items to show the comparative cheapness with which it has been done. All the material used—the rubble and the stone—has been done for 10d. per cubic foot.

THE PRESIDENT: I must point out to the hon. member that he is somewhat exceeding the latitude usually allowed in a debate on the Address-in-Reply.

HON. H. BRIGGS: I bow to your decision, sir, and I will say no more on that matter. However, I think the people of Fremantle and the colony generally must be congratulated on the great work that has been accomplished. The next paragraph speaks about authorised railways. Six are now in course of construction, and these are being constructed with a view to the general good of the whole of the colony. Three of these are branch lines opening up and developing our goldfields; three other lines are what we call agricultural railways, to bring the producer and the consumer into close contact, and these must be of great benefit to the colony. Paragraph 11 speaks of a number of public works. When we consider how many works were promised last year by the Government in that long Speech to which I had the honour to propose an Address-in-Reply, and when we see what has been accomplished, I think the Government are to be congratulated. A great amount of surveying has been done throughout the colony. It is most necessary for settlement. An immigrant here likes to know his boundaries. He enters heartily into his work when he knows his exact boundaries, so that he can settle down on his block and begin to work. Then we have what is of infinite importance to the travelling public—means for promoting the comparative safety of travelling, such as signalling and interlocking apparatus, and a duplicate line from Fremantle to the Midland Junction. Then there are numerous public buildings, such as 7 hospitals, 36 police buildings, 57 post and telegraph offices, and 7 court-houses, all of which are either completed or in course of construction.

This is an immense amount of work for the Government to have accomplished in so short a time. The Collie coalfield, I am pleased to see, is receiving attention. I think that, with greater development and more attention, it might add to the mineral resources of the colony. During my absence I had the pleasure of seeing the great coalfields of New South Wales at Newcastle and its neighbourhood. If a tithe of what has been done for New South Wales by the Newcastle coal industry will be done for Western Australia by the Collie coalfield, whatever the Government do in this behalf will not be lost. I also congratulate the Government on the improvements made to the harbour at Bunbury. It has been said that I, as the member for the West Province, looking after the interests of the port of Fremantle, ought to check the development of other ports in other places; but I am pleased to say that no such feeling enters my mind. If the harbour at Bunbury can be completed, it will do a great deal of good, and be of great utility to open up that valuable country, whence the timber and agricultural productions, and ultimately the coal, can be distributed throughout the colony. The active endeavours of the Commissioner of Crown Lands have done a great deal towards land settlement. The Government are also to be congratulated on acquiring the Great Southern Railway, the Albany to Beverley line, though it has been said that somebody must have blundered in the way the Treasury bills were put on the market. It was a disappointment to find the interest value went up to 4 per cent. when we expected it to go only to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; but, notwithstanding that, I cannot refrain from congratulating the Government on taking over that great work. The Mining Commission has been wisely chosen. It is composed, not simply of mining experts and miners, but of merchants, mining managers, and others, and has been a fully representative Commission. I think it is too large and almost too unwieldy as a Commission; but still, perhaps that is an error in the right direction. I do not think Commissions do much good. They are a kind of safety valve, and every one who has a grievance can vent it, and so by that means they may do good; but the general results of Commissions are, as a

rule, unsatisfactory. I am glad to see that a Bill has been promised to check undesirable immigration. I do not feel so strongly about alien races as some people do. I look upon it as one of the evils attached to the magnitude of the great empire of which we are a part; and, while our great empire has so many different coloured races who all acknowledge the same Queen, and have almost as much rights as ourselves, I do not look upon it as such an atrocious thing to admit them in our midst. But, still, I do desire to see this great land of Australia become the home of the white race, because the less disintegrating forces we have, whether of race, religion, or blood, the more harmoniously we shall work together. Thirteen Bills are promised to be brought in, and many others. I think it would have been to the advantage of the colony if a draft of those Bills could have been laid before the House or before the country during the recess. If there is a method by which this could be done, I believe it would tend to more thoughtful legislation, and more careful consideration of those subjects which are to be brought before us. Perhaps there are good reasons why it is not done; but I see among these Bills a measure dealing with public works, which I think—I stand open to correction—was thrown out last session. It is a Bill copied principally from the New Zealand Act. I am told it will be a very serviceable Bill. If the draft of this measure had been laid before the House and the country, we should have had the benefit of a public opinion, and of the discussion that would have arisen, and we should not enter on the consideration of Bills in the hurried and unprepared state in which we often do. The next paragraph says the Government have decided to make provision in isolated districts for public quartz crushers. I think it would be a very good thing indeed, because there are many men without capital who are working hard and cannot afford to get crushers, and are so far removed from mining centres that they get disheartened. I have been told lately that in South Australia this system has worked well and economically. So long as we do not interfere with private enterprise, so long as you confine it to the isolated districts, I think it will do an immense deal

of good. It will be encouraging a very worthy lot of explorers. Even if it is not of any direct benefit it will be an indirect one. It will bring many reefs and claims to light which otherwise would not be exploited. The Government have brought in, with regard to education, a very strange and novel proposal for this colony; but, as it has met with approval in the other colonies after great debate, I suppose we shall have to try it here—that is, free education. Education has always occupied an important position in Australian life, and so long as we make it compulsory it seems to me a natural sequence that it should be free. There is a wave of socialism spreading over the land, and this is one of those kinds of socialism wherein the State attempts to do for a person what that person cannot do for himself. That is a moderate view of socialism that we can all appreciate. Communities united together can do a great public work cheaper and better than individuals can, and therefore I think the State ought to step in. No doubt the State steps in, in that way, because it looks on the instruction of citizens as beneficial to the State: if such instruction is neglected, the State will suffer grievous loss. That has been the universal experience in all these new colonies. There are no doubt objections to free education, and one objection is that it lessens the parents' responsibility. What we get cheaply or without pay, we are apt to think very little of. Some of the brightest lessons that a man receives are those of self-sacrifice. In many cases a parent denies himself and lives a frugal and careful life simply in order to give his children a good education. Those children see the struggles of the parent, and on their part do all they can to improve their position. I have great confidence in the Minister of Education, and in the enthusiastic Inspector General of Schools. I am perhaps talking longer on this subject than the paragraph warrants, but I hold it to be a person's duty to speak most fully on that with which he is most conversant. As we have such an enthusiastic and capable Inspector General of Schools, I hope that his enthusiasm may not be chilled or damped by any red-tapeism, but that he will have as free a hand as is compatible with the public service. We have a

great object lesson in the late Inspector General of South Australia (Mr. John Hartley), who was enthusiastic in his way, and raised instruction in South Australia to a very high pitch indeed. Cobbett, radical as he was, three years before Her Majesty began her reign, opposed the first education grant. He said it was encouraging schoolmasters, who were a race of idlers. I think the schoolmaster has been "abroad" so much that we in the Australian colonies consider that sound instruction is the birth-right of every child. At this point it would be proper to say that the salaries of good teachers should be raised in a most liberal manner. When we consider the high price of living and other circumstances, I think that it would be money very well spent indeed. The teachers of our colony, both men and women, have a very monotonous work. Theirs is a very hard task, and they lead isolated lives, and all we can do to brighten their lives would be of infinite benefit to the children of the colony, while it would encourage those who are active and stimulate the indolent. As has often been said, the children who are in the schools of this generation will in the next generation be the electors and have the moulding of the destinies of this colony. As regards the children of the colony we should not forget one thing, and that is that the children are not all in State schools. We know very little of the number who are not in State schools, and I can only take data from New South Wales in 1895. In that colony, of the 236,000 children of school age—say from 6 to 14—186,000 were in public schools, 38,000 in other schools, and 12,000 received home teaching. We know that in this colony the same proportion will obtain. Divergence of religious views keeps many children out of the State schools. Then there are some children of delicate temperament, whose parents think they are not strong and robust enough to face a great public school, and who are educated privately. As our compulsory clauses are in force, and all the waifs and strays of the streets get drafted into the State schools, there will be found a still greater reluctance amongst well-bred and cleanly parents to let their children mix up with those other children who are not so well cared for at their

homes. That tends to swell the number in other than State schools. If that be so, I am of opinion that private schools ought to be registered. It would be wise for the Government to bring in a Registration Bill, just to show that the teachers who opened those private schools are competent to teach, and also that they have got buildings which fairly comply with obvious rules of sanitary science. It is due to the community at large that those things should be looked into. It would not be looked upon as a system of espionage by any honest teacher, if the Registration Bill was passed. Secondary education is referred to in the Speech in regard to the Perth High School. For many reasons I decline to go into that subject, though I was very sorry to hear from such an educational expert as the Hon. G. Randell, who has had to do with education in Perth for many, many years, that that school was not fulfilling the expectations of its friends. A great deal of that is not on account of the school. If you look at the school staff you see able men who work hard, but there is a time in a boy's life when he may get bad associates, and his parents think they will give him a change. We must remember that the hours in school are very short, probably only 30 or 40 hours a week, and many parents think that the rest of the week their boys are receiving an education if they are put in the way of making friendships, and getting what is far better than instruction, breeding and good manners. The mover of the address said he hoped there would be a university founded in this colony. I hope so too. Then educational matters will be thoroughly complete. It may be said that this is not a time for the founding of the university, but any fresh movement is met with such remarks. So soon as we make a ladder by which a boy from our State schools can climb to the highest point, then the educational scheme will be perfect. This has been done in England, and I am talking no fancy views. The last senior wrangler, Mr. Austin, was proud to say he started from a Birmingham board school and obtained the highest honours Cambridge could give him. I may say that three of the ablest delegates to the Sydney Convention, men occupying high positions, were school teachers, and I feel sure they would

not scruple if I were to mention their names. These gentlemen were the Hon. F. W. Holder, Treasurer of South Australia; the eminent Q.C., Mr. J. H. Symon, and the Hon. I. Isaacs, Attorney General of Victoria; all of whom laboured in state schools and worked their way up to their present position. That ought to be an encouragement to others to go on with their studies, and try and improve themselves. I am afraid I am trespassing too much on the time of the House, but I should like to refer to paragraph 22. I was very sorry indeed to find that the revenue of the colony prevents the Ministry in their wisdom from reducing the tariff in any way. I, as a representative chiefly of a population of wage earners, know that the cost of living is intensely high. Of course I know that revenue has to be provided, and so, with my present lights, I can say no more. The Ministry know more about the matter than I do. I simply state as a fact that there is a very deep-seated feeling that the duties should be slightly remitted on some things. I will just mention one thing which provokes a good deal of angry comment. People cannot see why the duty on dead meat should be 1½d. a lb., while the live animal comes in at a much less duty. Still I am not a financial expert. The Government have shown such wisdom in other things that I feel sure they have sound and just reasons for not reducing the duties at this time; but the country should have some assurance that it is possible for the duties to be lessened. It would do a great deal of good if the Government could reduce those duties slightly. The arrangements in regard to the Aborigines Board are most satisfactory. The colony has now been trusted to look after its own helpless blacks, but it behoves us to all the more carefully see that those aborigines are carefully tended and receive great assistance. It has been a slur in the past that the blankets were given out very much too late for the blacks. I know in some cases that was so. Now that the Ministry have charge of the aborigines in their own hands, and they have such a perfect machinery for distribution in the police force throughout the colony, it behoves the Government to take special care that the wants of those people are looked after,

so that it cannot be said they are neglected. I should like to have seen some mention made of deep drainage for Fremantle. This subject was mentioned in July of last year. A great part of Fremantle is in a low-lying position, and if it is to be adequately drained, that will be an extensive operation. The sewage will have to be taken some distance, and pumping stations erected; but I hope the Government will not lose sight of this matter, which is so important to health. If we can keep the towns clean, we can do a great deal to remove zymotic diseases, the deaths from which are simply due to the authorities who have the matter in hand. The Fremantle hospital is not conducted in a way that meets with the approval of the mass of the people. I would not say one word against the able surgeons who have that hospital in charge, but the number of patients are too many for them. I should like to see steps taken so that the Fremantle hospital can avail itself of the provisions of the Hospitals Act, 1894. It is not generally known that if the public subscribe one-sixth of the contributions towards the expenses of the hospital, they are allowed by the Government to elect one-third of the board. That is a very generous provision, and, if it were better known, the great firms who employ labour would make contributions to the hospital and put it on a satisfactory footing. There could then be a larger staff of surgeons, and those surgeons could attend the cases which they have already treated outside the hospital, and follow them into the hospital. It is simply for want of information about this that the public have not availed themselves of the admirable provision of the Act of 1894. Another great question not mentioned in the Speech, but which, I think, has a great deal to do with the morals and health of the people, is that of the examination of spirits. I believe the people in this colony drink a vast amount of poison. They drink things which they do not purchase as such. This is sometimes treated jocularly, but I think all those brutal assaults and acts of violence do not result from overdoses of alcohol, but from some more deleterious and deadly spirit. It would be for the public good if inspectors were appointed and some kind of supervision given for

the sale of ardent spirits. I have great pleasure, sir, in supporting the Address-in-Reply.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: I do not want to say much on this subject, but I would like to make a few remarks. It is gratifying to notice the output of gold is increasing steadily, and I hope it will continue to do so. We are told in the Speech that the Mint is nearing completion, and I think it will probably want all the gold it can get to keep it from being a white elephant. Paragraph 2 of the Governor's Speech enumerates a lot of public works which are completed, and in a number of these works I am afraid the Public Works Department have not studied economy, as witness some of the elaborate stations and sidings on some railways. Some of the public buildings have not been erected in an economical manner, especially in the North. They are not constructed suitably to the climate. They have cost a lot of unnecessary money, and I think some more suitable buildings could have been provided at less cost, if the department had appointed someone who understood the climate and the requirements of the different places to plan and oversee them. I mention this because, when necessary expenditure is required by the North, it may be said "Look at the amount of money that has been expended there!" I suppose there has been a fair amount of money expended in different parts in the North, but, as I said before, it has not been judiciously expended. It has been wasted, a lot of it. There is one very necessary work up North that ought to be carried out, by placing an engine on the Cos-sack tramway. I do not know why the department continues to make such objections to this. I think it has been reported on favourably by officers of the department. As to paragraph 20 of the Governor's Speech I notice that, in order to assist the pastoral producers, jetties are in course of construction at different places. I hope the Government have considered well the places where they are going to put these different jetties. From what I can learn, they are not always put in the most advantageous places. I do not see any reference to one place where a jetty would have been of great benefit. This is at Balla Balla where there are

extensive copper mines, and also a wool trade to be done. It is a place which ought to be considered as one where steamers could get fat stock from, and also where freezing works could be established. In paragraph 22 of the Governor's Speech, I see that the Government do not intend to take any duties off. I thought perhaps the Government might have seen their way to reduce the duties on some of the things that can never be produced in this colony in any quantity, notably tinned milk, butter, cheese, &c. [AN HON. MEMBER: What about beef?] There is plenty of money wasted in other ways. [HON. R. S. HAYNES: Anything else but beef?] I do not think I need say any more, except that I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: In reading through His Excellency's Speech, our first impulse is one of self-congratulation on account of the number of most satisfactory circumstances in connection with the growth of the colony, to which our attention has been called. But, on the other hand, the Speech gives rise to a feeling of great disappointment on account of the number of things which have either been omitted, or on which the Governor or the Government fail to give that satisfaction which one certainly expected to receive. Amongst the circumstances which give rise undoubtedly to very great congratulation, the first is the marvellous increase which has taken place in the gold returns of the colony. I suppose there is no other country in the world in which the gold increase, when once it started to increase on any scale, has gone on at such a rate; and, what is more, I do not suppose there is any country in which there is such a certain prospect of the gold output increasing at a larger ratio than that we have already experienced. This is a subject upon which we can afford most heartily to congratulate ourselves and the Government. Of course, this increase is due, to a very large extent, not to the Government but to the action of nature. That should not be lost sight of, but still very great credit is due to the Government for the facilities which they have afforded for opening up the goldfields. I do not think there is anybody who takes any other view of the position. Another sub-

ject of congratulation is undoubtedly the large amount of work done in opening up the water supply to the fields and other districts of the colony. There is no doubt in a colony like this, which depends and must depend to a very large extent on the storage of water, the Government can hardly do too much in the way of creating dams, and assisting the inhabitants of the colony to exist. It is perfectly clear that the inhabitants of the colony could not exist unless there was water provided for them. But when the water question is considered, one is astonished to see that the Government appear to have—if I may use the expression—weakened on the Coolgardie water supply scheme. Those of us from the fields who have considered the question most deeply are satisfied that some water scheme of the sort is absolutely essential to a comfortable existence for the numbers of miners who, we hope, will bring their families to this colony. Until something is done to provide cheaper water, a great deal might be done by reducing the food duties; but the reduction of the food duties would not be sufficient. I can give you a very easy reason for my opinion. The cost of condensed water can fairly be put at a minimum of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per gallon. I do not think anybody could possibly produce condensed water under that price, which means, as you can easily reckon, 4s. 2d. for 100 gallons. At the present moment water is being sold, so far as I can gather, the lowest price, at 9s. for 100 gallons; that is, condensed water fit for drinking purposes. When that price is compared with the price in Perth of 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, it will at once be seen how striking is the drawback under which any man would labour who attempted to bring his wife and family to reside on the goldfields. Under the Government scheme, I understand, it is proposed to charge 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons. Doubts may be raised as to whether water can be profitably sold at that price; but when you consider the enormous difference between 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons and 4s. 2d. per 100—which is what may be called the cost price of water—one can easily realise the margin there is for providing a water supply by some such scheme as that of the Government at a rather higher price than it is proposed at present to charge. It is a matter of very great regret that the Gov-

ernment should find themselves obliged to postpone this water supply scheme. Whatever prosperity this colony enjoys depends on the success of the goldfields. Immediately the prospects of the goldfields improve, the prospects of the country improve, and the goldfields are our market. Every facility should be given to the people who go to reside there, and the question of a water supply to those districts is quite beyond any other question at this moment. Everybody who, like myself, has to go month after month to the goldfields, sees that something should be done to ameliorate the condition of the people in those districts. As to whether the scheme advocated by the Government is the correct one, and can be carried out according to the estimates, not being an engineer or well posted in these matters, I can express no opinion; but I can assuredly express the opinion that some water scheme must be carried out by the Government of the country, for the sake of the progress of the goldfields. We have always been led to suppose that the Government are prepared to go ahead with this business; and it will come as a great surprise and a terrible shock to the people of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie to find that the Government intend to postpone it. This will be more especially their feeling when, on reading the Governor's Speech, they find that the expenditure on the harbour at Bunbury is still to continue. They will notice, without doubt, the extremely dubious way in which the prospects of this harbour are alluded to. When they read paragraph 12, they will see that, instead of expressing himself in the way he does in reference to the Fremantle harbour scheme, His Excellency says:—"There is every reason to believe"—a most cautious and guarded statement—"that the work will be successful, and enable this important outlet to be utilised with advantage for timber, coal, and other exports." Of course there may be reason to believe the work will be successful; but many people believe that it will not. In addition to that, I think any estimate that has been placed before the House will not lead one to believe that the ultimate traffic which may pass through the port of Bunbury will in any way justify the expenditure or contemplated expenditure. I do not hear of any



great trunk lines verging on Bunbury that will remove goods from the ships; and I do not hear of any large quantity of exports to leave the port of Bunbury. They have no large quantity of imports landed at Bunbury, and nothing to justify the large amount of money that has been voted for the improvement of Bunbury—not all voted, but which probably will form a portion of the estimates of expenditure which are to come before the House. Bunbury, no doubt, has a nice little harbour; and any scheme that will provide the place with a suitable jetty, such as it is proposed to erect at Carnarvon, Maud's Landing, Ashburton, and Port Hedland—

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It has a jetty.

HON. A. MATHESON: I was not even aware that it had a jetty; but if that is so, considering the traffic carried on there, it is amply provided with shipping facilities.

HON. G. RANDELL: It is utterly unsafe as a harbour.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member says it is utterly unsafe. If you want to make a practicable harbour to enable ships to lie in safety, we have to consider the amount of money which it will take to construct the harbour. It seems a shocking thing that works of absolute necessity, works vital to the prosperity of the country, have been postponed, while money is available for such works as a harbour at Bunbury. On the other hand, we again find an allusion to the harbour works at Fremantle. It is a matter of great congratulation, as the Hon. H. Briggs has pointed out, that these works are making such progress. No doubt the formation of a harbour at Fremantle is one of the most important works, after water supply, that could possibly be carried out in the country. It forms, as I was glad to hear the Premier say on a previous occasion, only part of a big scheme for connecting us with Europe and with the colonies of Australia, of which I hope this colony will soon form not only the first in value of imports and exports, but in position. I look forward confidently to the time when, as the result of this expenditure, the mails and packages for the whole of Australia will be landed at Fremantle and come on to Perth. I think we should commend the Government in

every possible way for the work they are carrying on at Fremantle; but I do not think they are going far enough in making the river navigable. We have heard from an hon. member that the Government have dredged the channel so that lighters can come up. It is no use dredging the channel a little way. The river must be dredged as far as Perth, so as to make it equally navigable all the way. At present the Swan is almost impassable in parts, in consequence of vessels having to go round certain bends; and I think money might be well expended in this direction for making it without doubt one of the finest waterways in the world. There is another matter which has been entirely overlooked, and that is the lighting of the river. For years gone by in this, as it has been, "Sleepy Hollow"—I hope it is not now—it has been necessary for the traffic to go on in the daylight. [HON. G. RANDELL: Oh, no.] I may qualify my statement by saying, safely carried on. I have got up in the morning to find the Swan River Shipping Company's steam launch stuck in the mud.

HON. G. RANDELL: Traffic has been carried on at night for years and years.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Well, I can assure the House that the launch has been stuck in the mud owing to attempting to navigate the Swan at night. One would have imagined the Government might do something to light the posts, in order that the traffic might be developed to the utmost extent; but you find that this is not the case—that the river is entirely neglected, with the exception of the large sum of money being spent at Fremantle.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: They have put some luminous paint on one of the piles.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: There is another matter I may fairly congratulate the Government upon, and that is the purchase of the Western Australian Land Company's property. I have paid some attention to this question, because I at one time failed to see the wisdom of the course pursued. But in view of the large amount of ground purchased by settlers during the last few months, I have been compelled to come to the conclusion that the policy then adopted by the Government was a most judicious and desirable one. The more settlers who can be en-

couraged to take up agricultural land, the better for the colony. Even by the expenditure of that sum of money, immigration can be promoted; and the Government are fully justified in the expenditure. It is to be regretted that the bonds which were handed over for the line were not issued by the Government in the ordinary way of business; but the mischief has been done, and I do not think much good can be achieved by discussing it now.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: We can prevent a recurrence of it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Again, we may congratulate the Government on their proposal to bring in a Bill dealing with the question of alien, coloured, undesirable immigrants. I do not think myself that it is desirable—if it is possible to stop it—that we should promote immigration to the colony of even coloured British subjects. I have a most intense dislike to the taint of coloured blood in a European colony. I do not see how you can get over the possibility of that taint if you admit coloured races, even though they happen to be British subjects. I am not a lawyer, and am therefore not posted up in this matter of excluding them; but, if it is possible to exclude them, I consider it should be the first duty of the Government to bring in a Bill for their exclusion. I have noticed with very great satisfaction that the Government, in paragraph 18, propose to make provision for the erection of public quartz-crushers. The Minister of Mines will remember that on many occasions we have endeavoured to induce him, during the last eight months, to take a step in that direction, but without success. I am glad that the experiment is now going to be given a fair trial. There is no doubt that there are a number of districts in which the erection of public crushers would give a great stimulus to prospecting and mining; and though these public crushers may be run at a loss, there is no doubt that in the long run the loss is likely to be of benefit to the country, because it will lead to the opening up of ground, and possibly to the discovery of resources for which otherwise there would be no inducement whatever to explore. Because, hon. members must remember, it is all very well for men to go out into the country and find good ground, but then,

when they have got it, they may be without the means of having the quartz treated. Every man who finds stone which will go one ounce—which is considered payable—will, by the erection of these public crushers, have opened to him facilities which he could not provide for himself. With these facilities at his disposal the working miner will be placed in a fair position; otherwise he is very heavily handicapped, and unable to reap the benefit which he is justly entitled to. The next paragraph, I think, is one on which we can fairly again congratulate Government. My surprise on reading the Governor's Speech was to find the number of points which I, for one, was able, without doubt, to express my approval of. It is extremely satisfactory that the Government propose to adopt the system of free education in the State schools; but they have stopped a little short of what they might have done. They might also have provided free books. It seems an extremely little thing—the small tax of providing books for children; but, when a man has a large family—a man who has to send, say, five or six children to school—the books, and slates, and pencils, and these little things mount up. It is a very small thing for the Government to provide these; but it is a large tax on a poor man.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: We might ask the Government to get pinafores for them.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I should have no objection for them to go in fig leaves; but parents have to find their children in garments at any time. I would go a little further. The Hon. H. Briggs pointed out, very fairly, that it was the duty of the Government to provide facilities for the poorest boy or girl reaching the highest position in the State by means of education. I would suggest that a system of bursaries might also be established, by which the deserving students in State schools might receive the highest education, by means of a small fund placed at their disposal to complete their education in the higher branches in the higher schools. This system is in vogue in Scotland and in England.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: There are bursaries here.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I have never heard of bursaries applied to the State schools here, and I was not aware that the system existed; but it might be expanded with great advantage.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: You are behind the times.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: My experience of bursaries in Scotland has shown me that boys who have not boots or shoes, but have plenty of brains, can go to Edinburgh and finish their education—can carry on work there during the day, and study at night—simply by means of the £10, £15, or £20 which the bursaries carry with them for three years from the State schools.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It is only in Scotland they can do that.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I am sure any hon. member who says that can have but a poor opinion of the children of this country.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I mean looking out for the bawbees.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I now come to a subject on which I am sorry to have to express a sense of the deepest disappointment. I find that while facilities have been afforded for the producer, while jetties are in course of construction at places where the revenue obtained is very minute, such as Carnarvon, Maud's Landing, Ashburton, and Port Hedland, while a stock route is being opened up by a series of wells from Mullewa to the Ashburton River, while it is proposed to connect, by railway, Owen's Anchorage with Fremantle, yet no allusion whatever is made, except in a negative sense, to the construction of a railway to Norseman. You have there a goldfield which is coming to the front, and which is expected, in a short time, to take the third place in the gold-producing centres; and yet, all the Government find to say about the project to construct a railway to Norseman is that they are unable, during the present session, to make any proposal. At the very moment that they are unable to make any proposal on this subject, they are making an unnecessary branch from the Boulder tramway. If there is money for that, why is there not money to make a railway to Norseman? It is to me an inexplicable thing that this goldfield should be shut out, in the way it is, from proper facilities which the

Government might be expected to find for such a producing field.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: A railway from Coolgardie to Norseman?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I mean from Esperance to Norseman, or Coolgardie to Norseman. The fact remains that the Norseman district is producing a large amount of gold; and while money is being found for public works which are absolutely and utterly unproductive, and never can be expected to be productive—such as these jetties, such as the Observatory and the Mint, such as the road in the Perth Park, which are pure luxuries, yet necessary and productive works are left undone. Take, for instance, the road in the Perth Park: £14,000, I believe, was spent in making an excellent drive for the benefit of the aristocracy of Perth in the Park, which is an utterly unproductive work. It is the same as buying a diamond necklace for your wife when you get to be a millionaire, and you postpone it until then. Here is a place producing revenue, and it is shut out because some hon. members are afraid that some goods might come from Adelaide to that port. You are afraid of Adelaide.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: How much would a railway to Norseman cost?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I have not gone into the figures; but it certainly would be a productive outlay.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I thought you said you had studied the question.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Can you show it to be productive?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I cannot prove beforehand that it is going to be productive.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: That is what you ought to do.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Nothing that any person can possibly bring forward can show any revenue from these other works I have mentioned—that is my sole argument. Then, again, I regret to find that the Ministry propose to do nothing towards bringing in an alteration of the tariff. Ministers appear to have lost all sight of the feelings of the country on the matter. I have travelled in both agricultural and mining districts, and I have no doubt a large majority of the population to-day is in favour of a number of the duties being reduced—not

absolutely abolished, but the duties reduced on a number of articles which they do not produce, and which, as several hon. members have pointed out, never will be produced here—such as tinned milk, and bacon, and cheese, etc. The trouble is the difficulty one finds in arguing this matter. On the one hand, a person comes to you and says: "These duties are necessary for protection, perhaps, to enable the producer to produce." When you point out to him that the producer does not produce and does not want to produce, his argument is illogical. He then turns round and says: "We must have increased revenue. We cannot afford to lose a penny of our revenue." The amount of revenue that would be lost by reducing these duties is very minute; and if hon. members only studied the question, and compared the amount with the total revenue of the country, they would come to the conclusion that the country would not suffer to the extent that the Government pretend it would if the duties were reduced. Possibly I may be met with the argument that, if the duties are so small, what is the good of taking them off? How can they materially add to the cost of living? They add to the cost of living in this way: though they may be small, they combine to enhance the cost of everything that is done in the country on which a man who works is dependent for existence; and though they may be small, they add to the cost of everything. That is the way in which the country would benefit by the reduction of the duties. However, I do not think any good will be derived in this House by arguing the matter. I will only express my strong sense of disappointment at the attitude which the Government have taken up on this question. With reference to the land laws, there is no doubt that in the agricultural and coastal districts the laws dealing with lands are the most liberal you can possibly imagine. The Minister administering those laws is one of the most liberal-minded men it has ever been my pleasure to meet; but the astonishing thing is that, with all this liberality in the coastal and agricultural districts, a narrow-minded policy prevails in regard to land on the goldfields. Not a word can be said here about the encouragement given to people to settle on the goldfields. On the contrary, every

possible obstacle that human ingenuity can devise is placed in the way of people settling on the goldfields. I can assure the House that that is a fact, and I will call the attention of hon. members to a little matter that transpired only in the *Gazette* issued last week. In the *Gazette* of the 5th of last month there was a certain very reasonable area provided for the Boulder township. That area has been altered within one month, by the *Gazette* of the 8th of the present month, to include an enormous area of Government land and leases, and I understand the express object of that amendment in the town boundary was to prevent miners being able to take up residence areas. I speak subject to correction, but I understand that that was the leading impulse—in order that everybody might be compelled under the Act to purchase the land by auction. That is one of the greatest troubles that the miner on the goldfields has to contend with. Rich men go to these auctions and pay the deposit on the land in the hope of being able to turn it over before the month has expired, and to sell it before they have to pay their final balance. This is done repeatedly. The result is that working men cannot get a town lot by auction. These areas outside the town should be available to the miners working in those places for residence areas, but by a stroke of the pen they are prevented from getting them. I have seen to-day a plan providing for exactly the same extension of boundary to the town of Kalgoorlie, which will have exactly the same effect. It will crowd the whole of the population into two small centres. I say, therefore, and I consider I am justified in saying, that every possible obstacle is put in the way of people acquiring land for the purposes of residence on the goldfields. It is no use for members living in Perth, who do not know anything about the social condition of the goldfields, to deny it, because it is the case.

**THE MINISTER:** Are those the only two goldfields in the colony?

**HON. A. P. MATHESON:** I only quote those two cases because one was published in the *Gazette*, and the other one is contemplated to be published in the *Gazette*. [**THE MINISTER:** Why not quote others?] Because it is not necessary. In other goldfield towns it may be

that it is possible to secure residence areas in the immediate vicinity of the towns; but these are not the parts to which the population is thronging. The lands in question are no good: they are waste. When it appears there is likely to be an honest demand for land for residence areas, the holders of these areas put them on the market, and legitimate miners are prevented from obtaining them. That is what we have to complain of. I have taken up a great deal of the time of the House. I must plead my enthusiasm on behalf of the goldfields as my excuse. I can only express my greatest possible satisfaction that the financial prospects of the colony are so excellent, and that the London bankers continue to give satisfaction to the Government. I hope this state of things will continue for some time to come.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I thought some hon. member was going to move for this debate to be adjourned. I take it that hon. members desire to bring this matter to a close. I have one or two words to say on the Speech of His Excellency, and it may be just as well I should say them now. If the merit of the Speech is to be measured by its length, then its merit is almost boundless, for its length is almost without parallel. The hon. gentleman who leads this House informed hon. members on the last occasion that, although the opening Speech then delivered was very short, we should have an exceedingly long one on this occasion; and I must say that the hon. gentleman has more than fulfilled his promise. But it is not the length or the quantity of the address, but its quality of which we have to complain. Speaking of the Jubilee festival, no doubt we are all pleased to see that the Premier was able to attend, and that there was a mark of recognition given to him, not only as a personal mark of honour, but in his capacity as representative of the colony. I must again express, I was going to say, dislike of the action of the Government in allowing the colony to be governed by a Ministry without calling Parliament together for twelve months. Parliament was adjourned on the last occasion at the end of October. [A MEMBER: This is the third session.] There was no real intention to do business in the earlier sessions. Almost everyone was handicapped with a

promise of being appointed to go over to Sydney or Adelaide and represent the colony, and they voted as they were told. There was no intention to do business, and very little was done. While we could not refuse to allow the Premier to go to England, I do not think that the business of the country ought to have been postponed until his return. I think the gentleman who leads this House so ably filled the place during that absence, when Parliament was not sitting, that I am quite sure he would have ably filled it when it was sitting. If he could have carried on the business of the country without the Premier, he could have carried on the business of the Parliament without the Premier. The only excuse that could be given for not carrying on the work was the absence of the Premier, and I say it was not a sufficient excuse for leaving this colony practically ungoverned for twelve months. There is no justification for the Government not calling Parliament together for twelve months. One hon. member says we were called together three times, but that was not for general business. He may justify the Government. I condemn it. When we consider it calmly and without heat, I think you will all agree with me that it is a practice that ought not to be followed. I hope it will never be followed again, because it would be setting up a bad precedent. Precedent after precedent has been set by this Government. We are simply making precedents which, to my mind, are capable of leading this country into disgrace. The same objection I had to the federation. I objected to the business of the colony being neglected while hon. members attended these federal meetings. I then said, and I say again, that it is impossible for this colony to join the federal movement on the lines laid down in the Federal Bill. I am of the same opinion still. During the last Convention my opinion was strengthened. In fact every hon. gentleman who came back from Sydney was, I think, convinced that we cannot join federation on the lines laid down at the Sydney meeting—not only not now, but at any future time. It is a matter of satisfaction that the output of gold has been so increased. I never had any doubt that this would be one of the greatest gold-producing colonies in Australia. Of

course the Government have now placed this to their credit. Very properly so, and I very much wonder that they have not also placed to their credit that we have had an exceptionally good season. If they did the one, they should certainly do the other. The Speech refers to the opening of the Royal Mint; but, inasmuch as it was voted before I became a member of this House, I do not think it necessary to refer to that, except that I think we have paid rather dear for our whistle. Time alone will be able to show whether this is so or no. The attempt made by the Government to supply the districts with water is a source of satisfaction to all who have the interests of the colony at heart. The only question is—it is true you have supplied water, but at what cost? I hope when we come to consider the question carefully we may not find we have paid too dearly for water. I think with the hon. member, Mr. Randell, that the system of letting out public works requires very careful consideration. I join with my hon. friend Mr. Matheson in expressing very great regret that the Government cannot see their way to proceed with the Coolgardie water scheme. I must say that I favour that scheme, and I agree with my hon. friend Mr. Randell that there seems to be some hidden reason which caused the Government to delay in carrying it out. I do not know that any hon. gentlemen in this House has a better experience than Mr. Matheson of the goldfields. As he states, he is there constantly, and I think everyone will agree with me that, without an unlimited supply of water at a limited cost, we can never look to the goldfields to prosper as they ought to do. I have heard, upon what may be considered good authority, reasons given for the action of the Government. I am told that the action of the Government has been thwarted by a set of scheming brokers in London. I have every reason to believe my information, and that it is not the fault of the Government that the scheme is not proceeded with. I do not think that the reasons suggested here are the whole of the reasons, and I suppose the Government have some very good reasons for not disclosing what has prevented them from carrying that scheme into effect. However, I hope that after the speeches

delivered at the opening of Parliament, the Government will see that Parliament at all events is at their back in carrying out this scheme. I think Parliament is unanimous on the point. I see no reason to depart from the scheme of which we have already approved. The public works have been referred to. I am not going to say very much about them. I can express myself as being thoroughly satisfied with the work that has been done in Fremantle. I was very much astonished indeed to find that the work had progressed so satisfactorily. It was a source of gratification also to see so many ships lying in the harbour. The hon. member (Mr. Briggs) was pleased to see five barques and one steamer there. I should have been better pleased to see five steamers and one barque. I should like to see more provision for steaming vessels. The hon. member (Mr. Briggs) has mentioned the name of the engineers-in-charge, and undoubtedly they are deserving of the greatest credit; but it would be unwise not to place on record the marked success which has attended the efforts of the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. O'Connor). He comes in for a great deal of blame at times, but this is one of the greatest achievements that any engineer in Australia at all events can point to, and, as he has come out so successfully from a very trying ordeal, he deserves the thanks of the colony at large. I cannot agree with the hon. member, Mr. Matheson, about the Bunbury harbour works. They are in charge of an engineer of known repute, and so far as my unpractical eye could see, they have been carried out in a very satisfactory manner. I believe that for durability—I am not speaking of price—the mole at Fremantle does not compare with the mole at Bunbury. [A MEMBER: What is the cost?] I am not speaking of the cost. It is within the estimate. [A MEMBER: No, it is not.] Perhaps it is not. I am pleased indeed to see that the work, if it is costing more than it was estimated, is exceedingly strong. It consists of huge blocks of granite, which one is surprised to see lodged in the sea in the way they are. It would well repay anyone to go to Bunbury to see the work carried out there. The Hon. Mr. Matheson is perhaps unaware that behind Bunbury lies one of our richest districts,

containing, in addition to coal, which may not be of the best, but is a good useful coal, what I believe is one of the finest forests in the world. I have travelled over a considerable part of it, and there are industries there which would agreeably surprise the hon. gentleman if he went. I hope he will go there and accept the invitation of the people at Bunbury.

HON. G. RANDELL: You might add, it is a good country, with a good rainfall.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: And good people. Well, the purchase of the West Australian Land Company's railway has been referred to. I am pleased to see that the Government will receive the support of the House in their purchase; but I cannot but express my disgust at the way in which the credit of the colony has been practically ruined by the action of whoever was to blame for the result of the negotiations. Really, one cannot but feel that the time has come when he should speak in plain language on this subject. We all know the way in which the negotiations were conducted. It was a standing disgrace to this colony. We all know who was responsible for it. We have an agency in London, and if the credit of the colony has been injured, the agent is responsible for it. If you wish to conduct negotiations for the purchase of a property in London, and give bonds and bills, and your agent allows your name to be ruined, what would you do? It seems to me, at all events, that you would want some explanation of how it occurred. I do not know if any hon. member has read a nice little work called the "Statement of Operations of the London Agency." It is just as well to look at page 9 and see how this gentleman has referred to the floating of our loans:—"At the close of the year the prospects for the issue of a fresh loan were rather uncertain from a number of causes, owing to which it was hard to predict when a successful issue could be placed." Commend me to an unmeaning paragraph like that. That is the condition in which our credit stands in that country, and I will give you the reason assigned by the document from which I have just quoted:—"A large parcel of Western Australian 3 per cent. stock was then in the hands of the West Australian Land Co., being the purchase consideration of the Great Southern Rail-

way. The Bank rate further had steadily risen from 2 per cent., where it stood on 1st January, 1896, to 4 per cent., where it stood at the close of the year." That is no explanation at all. I consider, if the Government were aware of this, it is unsatisfactory. The Government cannot ask us to support them in any way, if they allow the credit of the colony to be ruined and not give the House any explanation of the way in which it was done, nor bring the person who did it to task. I do not know whether any explanation has been given to the Ministry. If it has, it ought to be given to Parliament, and I think the Government ought to deal very promptly with the gentleman who is ruining the prospects of the colony. It is a matter of common report that the office in London is not posted up to date with the improvements that are taking place here.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Yes, it is; the papers are sent from here.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Then, if the papers are sent, they are not read. I only wish to show the incompetency of the holder of the office. Reference is made to the appointment of the Mining Commission. I am glad to see a Mining Commission has been appointed. It will keep the members engaged for a while, and keep them out of evil ways, and that is the only effect that will accrue. The Civil Service Commission made a huge report. Has anything been done in consequence of that Commission? What then is the use of this Commission? Take any Commission: you may cite a solitary one, but what good do the generality of Royal Commissions do? Nothing at all. I do not look to this Commission to do any good towards solving the question or to introduce a good mining Act for the colony. We have an excellent Mining Act before us, that of Victoria. It has been the outcome of many years of search and work and conferences between the miners. It has stood also the test of judicial decision, and that ought to be sufficient guarantee for us that it is a good Act. The Act that will be brought to us will be very much like the last was, so tinkered and hampered that it will be unintelligible, like the present one. Let the ideas be given by the miners, if you will: they can undoubtedly give the ideas, but let a good draftsman draft the Bill.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** The Commission are not going to draft a Bill.

**HON. R. S. HAYNES:** If the Bill is going to be anything like the Bills drafted last year, then I predict for it a gigantic failure. If it is not drafted by a gentleman of professional skill, and of experience in drafting Bills, it will be a failure. A man may be a lawyer or a barrister, but that is not sufficient guarantee of his being a good draftsman, which is a special kind of work. The only real question which forms, perhaps, a subject for discussion is in paragraph 17 of the Speech. That paragraph sketches out the Bills it is proposed to lay before the House. It is stated that it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill dealing with undesirable aliens. The time has arrived when legislation is necessary, but I certainly would be no party to any legislation which would deprive those aliens who have now settled in the colony of any rights they are entitled to. So long as the bill deals with persons about to come into the colony, the Bill will have my support. If the Bill attempts to deal with persons who are already resident here, I shall oppose it, and I hope every member of the House will. The principle of free education has already been affirmed, and therefore I think the Government will find ample support if they introduce a Bill in that direction. But there is one note which jars in reference to education, and that is the proposal to increase the money for the High School. I quite agree with the Hon. G. Randell that the High School has not earned the reputation which we all think it ought to have earned. Personally I think, and I regret to add I am bound to say it, the High School has proved itself to be a failure. I go further than the hon. gentleman, Mr. Randell, and say it has proved a failure. I contrast the High School with similar schools in the other colonies, and I say it is a failure. It has not reached the standard of education, achieved in colonies on the other side. I regret to have to say this, but I am sure that every member in this House, if he expresses his opinion, will say the same. Until it has been proved that the money already voted to the High School has been properly and beneficially applied, it would be unwise for this House to pass any vote giving the school further funds. Let the school first prove that it is worthy

of an increased vote, and it will receive it. I again regret that no mention is made by the Government of a proposal to found a university in this colony. I regret to think the people in this colony have to send their children away for the purpose of attending universities. This colony is in much the same state as was New South Wales when the university was established there. This colony and Queensland are the only two colonies in Australia without a university. Certainly Western Australia is as far advanced as was South Australia at the time the university in the latter colony was established. We are able to establish a Mint and an Observatory, and at all events we ought to be able to establish a university. I hope this question will be dealt with, if not this session, next session. The other Bills which the Government propose to introduce, if they are framed on the lines we all expect they should be, will have my hearty support. Legislation in the direction indicated is absolutely necessary for the good government of the colony. I regret that no mention is made in the Speech of the introduction of a Civil Service Act. The position of every civil servant in this colony is a most unenviable one. Their tenure of office is at the will of the Government. Any officer, no matter what his position is in the Government, may be dismissed or dispensed with at a moment's notice without any cause assigned, and he is entitled to no compensation whatever. Civil servants, it is well known, get into a certain kind of groove, and when they are discharged they are unfit for commercial work or any other employment except Government work. I also regret that the Government have not thought fit to introduce a food adulteration Bill. Mr. Briggs in his Speech referred to only one section of foods—liquids. An Act is required authorising the Government to appoint inspectors to obtain samples of liquors and drinkables, and visit with heavy punishment those persons who introduce into the colony and sell to the public liquor which is absolutely poison. I agree that half the vile crimes brought before the courts owe their origin not so much to excessive drink as to the bad quality of drink. People are absolutely driven mad and commit crimes, and it is



the duty of the Government at once to introduce a Bill in the direction I have indicated. In the Licensing Act power is given to the police to take samples of liquor with a view to analysis, but I do not believe that in any instance has a prosecution for adulteration been successful, though in one instance the Government did attempt to secure a conviction. In addition to that, the food sold in Perth is frequently unfit for human use. On several occasions people have been brought before the Bench and fined, but there does not seem to be sufficient provision for bringing home the charges to persons guilty. There are not sufficient officers; there being only one, I believe, who makes a round of the butchers' shops. That officer only pays attention to the meat sold; but there are other articles sold in cheap shops which are absolutely poison. Goods are sold under various fraudulent trade marks at a low price, and business is cut, and I think one hon. member has said that some aliens have been competing with the Europeans in trade. Apparently genuine brands are sold, but as a matter of fact, in many instances, inferior and adulterated goods are disposed of. I now come to what is the most important portion in the whole of the Governor's Speech; that is paragraph 22, which states the Ministry do not propose this session to introduce legislation with a view to amending the tariff. It is the duty of every hon. member of this House, as far as possible, to give effect to the wishes of the colony at large, and if he is aware, and becomes convinced that the majority of the colonists are in favour of any scheme, either for increasing or reducing the tariff, it is his bounden duty to bow to the decision and wishes of that majority. We have had an opportunity in the last few weeks of gauging the public opinion on the question of the tariff. I am forced to the conclusion that the colony has unmistakably spoken in favour of reducing the tariff. That being so, I feel I am compelled to say that the time has arrived when the tariff should be immediately amended. I do not say that all the duties should be reduced—far from it; but I certainly say that the duties on the common necessities of life, and especially on meat, should be reduced. I can see no justification whatever for the present extravagant and extortionate price

charged on the importation of dead meat. I will not have with me those gentlemen who are directly or indirectly connected with pastoral pursuits, but they should recognise that they must, sooner or later, bow to the will of the majority, on this question. No one can say that those exorbitant duties can be kept up. No doubt the pastoralists will say, "Give us a chance." But they have had a very good chance. I know from admissions made by persons in pastoral pursuits that they are at present making from 10s. and upwards on every sheep they sell. I may be wrong in the amount, but so I am informed. [AN HON. MEMBER: You are wrong.] I must say that I am not wrong, notwithstanding what the hon. member says. I was so informed by a gentleman engaged in pastoral pursuits, and I will now say they are making more than 10s. at the present time. Nothing justifies the present high price of meat, and the stock tax ought to be taken off. I am positive that the duty on chilled meat should be immediately reduced. Pastoralists do not care so much about the duty on live cattle as they do about the duty on chilled meat. The reason why is obvious to the veriest dunce. It is their stronghold to keep the duty on imported meat. I say it is scandalous. The people at the present time are simply being loaded with an undue tax for the purpose of keeping up a certain section of the public. However much I may be inclined to assist the squatter—and I recognise he has certain claims, and whenever his claims come legitimately before the House they will always find an ardent advocate in me—I do not think I would be justified in upholding the present taxation on chilled meat, and I will not assist the squatter at the expense of the whole of the rest of the colony. The hon. gentleman who moved the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, the gentleman who seconded it, and every hon. member who has spoken since, have recognised the absolute necessity of at once reducing the tariff in the direction I have mentioned. That being so, this House has spoken almost without a dissentient on this question. Surely, on such a matter as this, our wishes ought to be attended to. It is true we cannot introduce legislation, but I think the Government ought to take a warning now from this Chamber,

and meet our wishes, thus recognising that in doing so they are meeting the wishes of the colony at large. I hope, sir, the Government will take this to heart. This is a question on which the Government ought to meet us half-way. We do not wish to make a party matter of the question, but the Government, by the way in which they have referred to this in the Speech, admit that the charge against them cannot be defended, and it would be better if they were to introduce a motion to amend the tariff. That would be a proper and becoming step for the Government to take. The Government do not say that they consider the present tariff must be continued. In the Speech we find "My Ministers do not propose this session to introduce any legislation with a view of amending the tariff." That of itself imports that the Government do, at some future date, intend to introduce some measure reducing the tariff. It is an admission on their part that the tariff requires amendment. What the Speech says is that the tariff requires amendment, but the Government do not think the present time is an opportune time to amend it. And why? If the tariff is not a fair one, why not amend it at once? The price of living is getting higher and higher, and there is a depression at present. When there is a depression, it is the duty of the Government to make the cost of living as low as possible. When times are flourishing the Government might be justified in increasing the tariff. We do not expect the Government to wait until the people are forced to leave the colony before the tariff is amended. There is a clear admission by the Government that the tariff requires amendment, and the only question is whether it shall be amended now or next session. If this House has spoken with one voice on this question, I take it that the Government ought to listen to the opinions of this House, and, respecting them, amend the tariff. I do not say abolish the tariff altogether, but amend it and reduce it. There are certain subjects which I regret are not touched on in the address. I referred just now to a Civil Service Bill. At the present time, Western Australia is cutting a nice bundle of sticks to beat the back of a future Ministry. I propose later in the

session to move for a return showing the number of clerks engaged in the Civil Service in the various departments. I will take that return and compare it with the number of clerks engaged in the service in the other colonies, and I venture to say that every person who sees the numbers will be alarmed. We have been putting Government clerks on in every direction, and although it is true the Government will give no fixity of tenure, and tell the clerks they are only temporarily employed, the time will certainly come when the staff of Government clerks will have to be considerably reduced, and when the Government will be met by howling deputations of the unemployed, and brought face to face with the same difficulty experienced by other colonies with their discharged civil servants. I hope the time is far distant when we will have to have labour colonies, or have to resort to the expedients found necessary in Victoria and New South Wales to cope with this very difficulty. It is impossible at present to know how the civil servants are situated. I do not think the Ministry are responsible. It is the heads of departments. There seems to be a very loose system in vogue in reference to the appointment of civil servants. My opinion is, that it would be very much better to relieve Ministers of a considerable amount of responsibility, and to have a Civil Service Board to deal not only with the appointment of clerks, but also with promotions and dismissals. [AN HON. MEMBER: And examinations.] Necessarily the appointment of a Civil Service Board would bring about examinations for civil servants. The board would be responsible alone to Parliament, and would make it their duty to inquire into qualifications of candidates for appointment, and make it a *sine quâ non* that the persons should pass some examination and test of fitness. In this colony there is no such test. Hon. members in this House know how they are inundated with letters of introduction from the other colonies, and Ministers themselves must be fairly inundated with them. Members are frequently introducing persons, and forwarding to the Minister letters of introduction; and it must be a source of worry to the Minister to have this sort of thing going on. Why should not the

Government make a step in this direction? The same thing was forced on the Governments of the other colonies. We find incompetent officers who are unable to perform their work placed in the service; and I do hope the hon. gentleman will represent the matter to his Government. I feel it is in the interests of the Government that some steps should be taken. I am speaking after an experience of the other colonies. The same thing has happened there as is happening here; and if we do not take time by the forelock, the same difficulty will overtake us as has overtaken the other colonies. I do not know, when one comes to think of it, how it is that the Government should appoint responsible officers to important positions in the service, and then dispatch them over to the other colonies to learn their business. I have noticed in the newspapers that one gentleman—the head of a department—has been sent over to the other side to learn how the business is done there. I suppose my managing clerk will want a holiday soon to go to Melbourne to know how a lawyer's business is done there. If he comes and asks me for a holiday, he will have a prolonged one. I do not know whether the officer I am referring to was the head of a department—I do not know the exact position he held—but it was a chief officer of a department; and the very fact that he had to go to the other side to learn how the business was conducted there was an acknowledgment that he was incompetent to hold his position. He is not in the hon. gentleman's department, and I do not know in what department he is. The Hon. H. Briggs has referred to the Inspector of Schools. He may be a very estimable gentleman, but I am "shot" if I can understand why it was necessary for him to go to the other side to see how the business was done there.

AN HON. MEMBER: To learn colonial experience.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Then he ought to learn his experience before he gets the appointment. Why appoint him before he becomes acquainted with the work he has to perform? I cannot understand it. I do not wish to single out any one person; but the same remarks apply to a great number of the officers in the civil

service. I regret to say so, but the conviction has been forced upon me that most of the responsible officers in the Government service are incompetent. Some of the most important posts in the Government are held by persons who are absolutely incompetent. They could not get a position in Perth or elsewhere if they left the Government service. The honourable gentleman shakes his head. I could name them at once, if I chose; but I do not wish to do anyone any harm. It is a matter of common notoriety; it is a fact that everybody knows; and it is for this reason I say the present system requires amendment. With regard to our Government Astronomer, I have not seen him yet. I wonder when he is coming here. The reply may be given that we are not ready for him. Then why appoint an officer, if we are not ready for him? He has been sent to England. For what?

HON. A. B. KIDSON: To get his tools; for colonial experience.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Yes; he has gone to England to gain colonial experience; but why he should find it necessary to go to England at the time of the Jubilee, I do not know. [A MEMBER: He has gone to Ireland.] Then, if he should meet some of the evicted tenants it might be the end of him. I referred to this matter at the last meeting of Parliament, and the gentleman at the head of the Government in this House did not seem to think the matter worthy of a reply. Now that some other hon. gentlemen have supported my remarks, the matter may be deemed worthy of a reply. If no explanation is given, I shall have to make a substantive motion on the matter. This is not the way we expect the business of the Government to be carried on. We are paying the officer I have referred to a large salary. But I do not wish to talk of the gentleman behind his back. I do not know what department he is in, or who is the head of his department; but I think the head of his department ought to answer for his absence, and give the reason for his appointment. I did say at the last meeting of the House that I thought some move ought to be made in the direction of finding other quarters for the old men who are kept at Mount Eliza.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: The old women, too.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: That naturally goes. As to the old men, the medical officer of the Government has informed me that the place is cold and cheerless, which is responsible for a great many of the deaths which occur. I think some provision should be made to have them housed in a place which is fit for them; and it is almost an eyesore, in one of the most pleasant drives we have in Perth. I think a suitable place elsewhere might be found, and some place ought to be found for the old women. It could all be done at a very small outlay. I am glad to see that the much-vexed question of petitions of right is about to be dealt with. The Crown Law Statutes Bill has been prepared, and I hope it will be passed, and I hope the Government will not put a limitation on it. If the Crown in this colony enter into business, such as the carriage of goods and the carriage of mails, they practically become contractors, and ought to be liable in the same way as any private firm. I hope the Government will see fit to introduce—I do not know whether it may be included in these words, “many other matters also”—but I do hope a Prison Discipline Bill will be introduced. We have had a great deal of unpleasantness, not only inside, but out of the colony, about these floggings. The matter is over now, and it is not necessary to defend or attack the floggings; but it must be revolting to the feelings of everybody to think that persons should be subjected to floggings. Floggings are only administered for breaches of the rules—running away, etc.; but if we had a proper Prison Discipline Act and proper discipline in the prisons, floggings would be unnecessary. I hope the Government will introduce such a Bill; and I am sure it will have the support of every hon. member in this House. It is absolutely necessary. I may tell the House that the present Discipline Act was in force in the colony—I think it was passed in 1856—I may be wrong in the year, but it was in the fifties, and it is altogether inapplicable to the state of affairs to-day. It was passed in the convict days, for the purpose of dealing with hardened and desperate criminals. The Act ought to be amended, or abolished and another introduced. It is a much-vexed question whether flogging should be abolished or

not. I hold the opinion that flogging should be abolished altogether; but I respect the opinions of others who think that perhaps it ought not to be. There is one question which I think it only right to touch upon, because this is the eve of a session; and that is the manner in which questions are answered in this House. I refer to this because many questions are asked of the Minister of Mines, who is the leader in this House, by hon. gentlemen who require information on various subjects, and the answers given are not satisfactory or full. I do not wish in any way to lay the blame at the door of the Minister of Mines. It is not the same as if the hon. gentleman was responsible for all the departments. He is only responsible for that which takes place in his own department. But questions are asked of the hon. member with reference to other departments, and he has to ask the heads of other departments for replies. No doubt, in the hurry of business and in the circumstances, the hon. gentleman does not look to see if the answers given by his colleagues are ample or full. The fact remains that the answers are not ample. I speak of this because in one instance I asked for information, and the answer given was a quibble. It was given by the Works Department; and any answer from that department must always be looked at with suspicion, like everything else that comes out of it. It was in reference to the dredging outside the shipping company's wharf. If the gentleman at the head of that department thinks he is going to quibble with me, I tell him in plain language that he makes a mistake if he attempts to do it; and, if it occurs again, I shall give him such a castigation that he will never forget. And not only on questions which I put; but if I find any other hon. gentleman in this House who does not receive full answers from that department, I shall back him up, and see if we cannot have a noise about it, if nothing else. The last subject, I think, that ought to have been touched on in the Speech—and I think it is absolutely necessary that it should be treated with a firm hand and at once—is the immediate abolition of the Agricultural Bureau. The principle of government in this colony is this. Every penny of money expended by any department is subject to the vote of Parliament;

and the actions of the officers of every department should be subject to the vote of Parliament, and the closest scrutiny. The Agricultural Bureau is a more independent body than even the Minister of Mines, the Minister of Lands, the Premier, or the Colonial Secretary. Last year it received, I believe, seven or eight thousand pounds out of the revenue, and it is responsible to nobody for it. Who is at the head of it or the tail of it I cannot make out. We sometimes get little books sent round to us as the result of their labours—hints to people about to start farming. I was looking at one in my office, and I saw a cure for toothache in it, and a cure for a sprained ankle. I do not know whether they expect our money should be squandered in this way. I do not know who is responsible.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** There are advertisements in it. They help to make it pay.

**HON. R. S. HAYNES:** It is a nice little book. You get full instructions how to break up ground, also about pumping, and you get the name of the maker on the pump. The whole thing is an advertising dodge. Names of the makers of the implements are printed on them, so that "he who runs may read." It is not what it purports to be—a Bureau of Agriculture. If any hon. gentleman who is acquainted with agriculture is here, he will support me when I say they do not pay attention to the improvement of agriculture in the colony, but to the growing of grapes and fruit. It is an amateur gardening society, in which the clerks of the department go in and receive instructions. It is nothing but a department of experts on every possible subject, responsible to nobody, and I do not know who is at the head of it. I know they asked the Governor to inspect a portion of a district, and they behaved disgracefully to him. Had that Bureau been under any person responsible to Parliament, I should have felt it my duty to have called upon him to explain his conduct. His conduct was disgraceful in the extreme. I do not know what hold we have got upon him. I suppose a sum of money will be slipped into the Estimates and brought to us to pass. I shall keep my eyes open for it, and, if I see it, I shall move, even if

alone, that the amount be struck out. If I get the support of the House, that item must be reduced, unless the Government place the Bureau under a Minister responsible to the House. It is the duty of the House to strike the vote out. I feel somewhat warm on this subject, because I speak after touring through my own district—a portion of which is agricultural—and everyone of those with whom I came in contact on the Greenough Flats and in the Northampton district agreed that the Agricultural Bureau were bestowing their money on growing grapes instead of giving assistance to farmers. Somebody went to look at their fruit. Much good may it do them. I consider that eight thousand pounds is too much for the Bureau to spend. I am sure the Minister of Mines is not prepared to defend the action of the Bureau, because I am sure he is aware of the conduct to which I have referred, and that is indefensible. I think the person, if he is responsible to Parliament—I do not know that he is—ought to be censured, if not punished in some way. Seeing there is nothing else to be done, I will support the Address-in-Reply, and I do so subject to the remarks I have made.

**HON. C. E. DEMPSTER:** I must ask the House to give me a kindly hearing. I shall touch first on the meeting of the Federal Convention. It has terminated in a way we might have expected it would do. Little has been done, and federation stands further off than it ever did. This colony is not adapted to federal Government at the present time, and will not and cannot be for many years to come. The export of gold must be a subject of congratulation to everyone in the colony. The output is yearly increasing, and we know that fresh places are likely to be discovered every day throughout the whole extent of the goldfields. We can say without exaggeration that there is a very great future for our goldfields. We can form very little idea of what the wealth of the fields may be in the future. The establishment of a Mint must be a source of congratulation to all who know anything about it. It will help in the production of gold. We all know that a most desirable expenditure has been entered into by the Government in the way of conserving water for the goldfields, and

that it has been in a very great degree satisfactory. Had it not been for the expense and pains the Government have been put to, the goldfields could never have flourished in the way they have done. Therefore, I do not think that too much credit can be given to the Government for the action they have taken. The Coolgardie water scheme is a very vexed question with a great many. When this Bill was passed by the House, it was the opinion of everybody in it, I think, that the existence of the goldfields depended entirely upon a scheme of this kind being carried out; but we see we have gone on without it, and many people condemn it on the ground that it would saddle the colony with an enormous expense. Why should we rush into this enormous expense? Perhaps it is fortunate that the scheme has not been entered into before this time. If the goldfields can hold out during the coming summer, and have enough water to work the batteries, that ought to be a convincing proof that the scheme will be unnecessary, and that it will be unfair to saddle the colony with this enormous expenditure. It is the opinion of a great many throughout the colony—and I do trust they are right—that the colony can exist without this scheme. If so, it will be desirable to save us from such an enormous expenditure. It is very satisfactory to know that, notwithstanding the prophecies of a great many, the Fremantle harbour works have been the success that they are. The greatest credit has been reflected on the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. O'Connor), and on all those who have had anything to do with it. I do not think he can have made any mistakes. The estimates at which he put the cost of the various constructions connected with the harbour works have not been exceeded in any one instance. On the contrary, they have rather been overestimated, and they have been carried out in a most efficient manner, and the whole work will be a great advantage to the colony when it is finished. I hope to have the pleasure of seeing steamers steaming up to the jetty. To do this we shall have to expend a further sum of money in removing obstacles and constructing bridges. This will no doubt be done in the future. I must say that I feel rather disappointed that some mention has not been made of the con-

struction of a railway from Esperance Bay to the Dundas goldfield, for I know how essential it is. I was at Esperance Bay some months ago, and I saw what enormous difficulties they had to contend with. There were 14 or 15 horses in a waggon carrying about 3 or 4 tons, and it was very hard work for the horses, while the cost was not less than £25 a ton. This shows how much they must be handicapped there when they have to pay so heavily for the transit of their stuff. Nothing would advance the district so much as the construction of a railway from Esperance Bay to the Dundas goldfield. I would not advocate the construction of a line from Norseman to Coolgardie, but they should have a railway from Esperance to Norseman. The character of the country is of such a nature that the industries carried on can never be brought to a success unless this railway is constructed. I would also like to point out that a railway can be constructed at a much lower rate than a macadamised road could be made, because it is a country which presents no difficulties for the construction of a line of railway. When we take into consideration that the mines which are being developed there are being developed under the very greatest disadvantage, and that the whole of these mines have proved to be good and valuable, and such as will be a source of wealth and profit to the whole colony, we are forced to ask ourselves why should this important mining district be neglected in the way it has been in the past? I, therefore, say it is a cruelty and injustice not to give these people a railway from Esperance Bay to Norseman. I have larger interests at stake in this part of the colony than at Esperance Bay, so that I am not personally interested in the matter. I say this in order to remove any misapprehension which honourable members might entertain. The construction of such a line as I advocate would benefit all those who have already invested large amounts of capital in Esperance Bay and in the Norseman district. A very large amount of revenue has been derived by the sale of land at Norseman and Dundas, and these people are entitled to more consideration than they have hitherto had at the hands of the Government. I see in the Speech that mention is made of Norseman and Dundas as being among

those places that are marked out for railway construction. I think this is a put-off, and I think that the people resident there should not be put off longer than it is possible to avoid it. These mines at Norseman are proved to be good gold producing mines, and more likely to be permanent than many of those that are now being worked; and, therefore, I do not see that the construction of this line should be delayed longer than possibly can be helped. It will do the colony good and support a very large population. I would also like to point out that the supply of firewood at Esperance Bay will very soon be exhausted. There is an immense amount of garden land at Esperance Bay; there is very little wheat-growing country till you go 40 or 50 miles inland; but, if you get sufficient rainfall, wheat and cereals grow well. From my experience, which has not been inconsiderable, of that country, I am of the opinion that a sufficient amount of rain does fall to grow corn on those lands. It can be cleared at a tolerably easy rate, and, therefore, the line would not pass through a country which would be useless. It would be a perfectly level line which would present no engineering difficulties, and a line which ought to be undertaken. I was pleased to notice that the Government are not prepared to make any reduction in the food duties. With the enormous expenditure now going on, the Government would be hardly justified in doing anything which would reduce the revenue. This expenditure does not benefit one section of the community alone, but every member of the community benefits by the expenditure, and therefore every member should contribute to it. I am therefore pleased to see that the Government are not prepared to reduce the revenue. I am very pleased to find that at length the Home authorities have consented to turn over the aborigines to the Government here. I am sure the poor beggars themselves will benefit by it, for I am sure they have benefited very little from the imperial supervision. There are many parts of the colony where these poor starving natives should receive consideration and attention, and I fully anticipate that under the present Government an order of things will be established by which these poor creatures will benefit. We know that they are fast becoming

extinct in any part of the country you can approach. Where civilization has been extended they soon die out. They have an insatiable craving for drink, and if they possibly can get it they will. Having had a considerable experience with them, I may say that I have met as fine characters among them as among the whites, and with as kind-hearted creatures among them as among the whites. I thank you all for having given me a kind hearing, and I hope during the ensuing session the House will make satisfactory progress with the work before it.

HON. A. H. HENNING : I do not propose to deal in detail with the items in the Speech which his Excellency has delivered. As a retrospect it is admirable. It is matter indeed for congratulation that we find such wonderful strides have been made by this colony in the past; but as a forecast, and I think this Speech should in its main character be a forecast, I venture the opinion that it is, to say the least of it, disappointing. We find it is pretty well filled with statements of works that have been or are being done, and that it tells us of things that are not to be done. In one paragraph we are told that the Coolgardie water scheme has been shelved, and in the same paragraph we are told that the committee of experts have confirmed the opinion of the Engineer, and that the Government are more than ever convinced that no other means are available to provide a certain, cheap, and good supply of water for the goldfields. It is also tacitly admitted that the need for a water supply still exists; and since that is so, and the Government scheme will give us a certain, good, and abundant supply, why is it not to be carried out, especially remembering that the project was authorised by the last Parliament? If we find that railways authorised at the time of the water supply project are being proceeded with, why should this not be carried out, seeing that it is a matter of far more advantage and profit, not only to the goldfields, but to the colony at large? There can be no comparison between the benefits that are to accrue to the country from the carrying out of a water scheme and from the construction of the railways named. If there is no other scheme, as we are informed, and the Government scheme is a good one, and can be carried out at the

estimated cost, then why are we not to have it at once? We are told that there are several measures dealing with railways and public works, *etcetera*, that will be brought in, and "many others." I think we might have been told of their nature, instead of being informed in general terms that there are others. In the 22nd paragraph of the Speech, we are informed that the tariff is to be maintained, and two reasons are given why the food duties are not to be interfered with. The first is that it is an inopportune time to reduce the revenue, and secondly that it would discourage the rapidly increasing occupation and improvement of the land in the colony. Are we to gather from this that the revenue derived from the food duties is absolutely necessary for the general administration of the Government? Are the duties absolutely necessary for that purpose, and not required to foster what we are told are local production and native industries? Not so very long ago we were told by the Premier at Bunbury that the revenue derived from the food duties was not required—that the duties were not retained for revenue purposes. That was what the Premier told us in March last. What has brought about the change that we should now be told those food duties must be retained for the purpose of revenue? What is the reason given by the Government? That the abolition of the duties might discourage settlement on the land. I can see no connection between those food duties and settlement on the land. It is not the existence of those duties which has impelled and induced people to avail themselves of the opportunities provided by the Crown Lands Act. It is not for that purpose they have settled on the land: it is because of the market. People have come here and increased the population and the market, and it is the excess of demand over and above supply that has caused the settlement. To be told that settlement on the land is brought about by retaining the duties, to me, at any rate, appears childish. I have not the figures for the present year; but, taking the figures which the Premier gave at the time I have mentioned, each individual of the population of the colony for the year preceding March last paid to the Govern-

ment in food duties 30s. per head. In addition to that, I think they paid an equal sum to the local producer, who got the same price for his article as was given for the imported article, *plus* the duty. In addition to that, owing to the restricted supply, a fictitious price was also obtained; and, consequently, the people of this colony paid for that year considerably over £3 per head for the right to exist here, and for no other purpose than for the benefit of those who are interested in local productions. It is the majority of the population who came here and went out into the desert, and there by their energy developed what is now recognised as the great industry—the backbone of the country—the mineral wealth of the colony. I am not dealing particularly with the goldfields people, because the high prices press just as hard on all who are not engaged in or benefited by the duties. The prices press equally on the people resident in the coastal regions as on the inhabitants of the goldfields. It is an iniquitous thing, considering the limited supply and the natural advantages enjoyed by the local producer, that the people of this colony should be mulcted, as they are by those duties. As I have said, the settlement on the land is a matter for congratulation. We have seen vast areas taken up recently. The impetus given to that settlement is due entirely to the market and the limited supply, and not to the retention of the food duties. Since the whole colony has freely expressed its will, not only through the press but during the recent elections, the Government should bow to the will of the people, and at any rate moderate or reduce to some extent those duties. Subject to what I have said, I give my support to the Address-in-Reply, moved by the Hon. Mr. Randell.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Sir, before proceeding to make any remarks in connection with what has fallen from hon. members on His Excellency's Speech and the Address-in-Reply, I would like to thank those who have expressed themselves satisfied with the efforts the Government have made to promote the interests of this colony. It is exceedingly gratifying to have listened to the majority of the remarks this evening; and even when hon. members have criticised the Government, I thoroughly



appreciate the way in which that has been done. I feel the criticism has been of a reasonable nature, and is the outcome of conviction, and not of malice or absolute opposition. Having said so much, I will proceed now to make a few remarks in connection with what has fallen from hon. members, and I hope I shall not detain the House too long. The first subject is, I think, the Coolgardie water supply scheme. The opinion has been expressed that the reason given by the Government for not continuing that work is, perhaps, not the only one, and that hon. members would like to know why this important work is not proceeded with. Nothing will give me greater pleasure than to inform hon. members. It is very gratifying to me to have heard that, with two exceptions in this House, every member is in accord with this great scheme. One member accused the Government of having weakened on the scheme, and of trying to back down. If that had been the case, the Government might well have taken up that position, considering the very little support they ever had from the goldfields—that portion of the colony the Government desire to improve the condition of. When we hear representatives of the goldfields accusing the Government of weakening, it is time to show that the goldfields should give the Government a little better support than has been given in the past. A section on the goldfields who had described the scheme as an absurdity, until the Government demonstrated that it was the right scheme, are now clamouring for it. The Government are as ready and anxious as ever to give the people this scheme. Why cannot we? For the simple reason that it is going to cost £2,500,000, and the money is not available. We hear one hon. member say "Why not use the money for that and not for this?" But the £3,500,000 of loan money voted to carry on reproductive works has been partly spent, and a great many works which have been commenced will have to be proceeded with. None of that £3,500,000 can be given to the Coolgardie water scheme. Unless we were prepared to lay our hands on £2,500,000, it would have been most imprudent to start the work. Every reasonable man will agree with me from that point of view. When the Premier went to Eng-

land and the result of the last loan was not so successful as could have been wished, would it have been wise to start this great work before being assured of the money? It would have been very wrong, considering the position we are in to-day. As soon as we are assured the money is forthcoming, the work, I can assure you, will be proceeded with. The estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief, compiled with so much ability and so much care, has stood the test of every engineer of the colony, and of the best combination it was possible to get in the British capital. The scheme, it has been proved, will cost within the amount he estimated; and therefore the Government could not be in a better position to carry it out. There is nothing to prevent them, except the want of means. That is the explanation I have to give of the reason why the scheme has not been started. The Hon. R. S. Haynes has mentioned that a great deal of the trouble occasioned in regard to our funds was in connection with the purchase of the Great Southern Railway. I am prepared to admit it was, to some extent; but it was hardly occasioned in the way he thinks it was. When the Bill was laid before the House, it was shown that the purchase money had to be paid in West Australian inscribed stock at three per cent; and not the slightest objection was taken to that by anybody. Parliament was convinced, just as much as the Government were, that the owners of the railway wished to have their money invested in West Australian stock; that they preferred taking bonds rather than money, and it suited us to give bonds. It would have suited us just as well at the time to give money, but as they preferred bonds, we gave bonds. No one anticipated they were going to rush the bonds on the market. A transaction of that kind is without precedent. Take the purchase of the railways in Tasmania. The same thing happened; but the bonds were not rushed on the market. Once the bonds were handed over, they were beyond our control, unless we purchased them ourselves.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The Agent-General was responsible for them. What is he there for? To look at?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Agent-General could do nothing unless he purchased the bonds.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: He could not, but another one could.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Allusion has been made to-night to the proposed erection of quartz crushers by the Government. A statement has been put forward this evening to the effect that I had been for months requested to take this matter in hand and had not done so, and pleasure was expressed that the Government were about to do the work. As a matter of fact, the idea of these crushers originated with me, and the fact is recorded in the papers belonging to the Government. But how were we to put up those crushers without money? Were we to spend money without the authority of Parliament? My idea was always to put those crushers in isolated places, and not in large centres. This is a question of large policy and expense, which will require the greatest care before it is entered on. The idea of assisting miners in this way, in outside localities, originated with me, but it could not be carried into practice until the expenditure received the sanction of Parliament. Exception has been taken to the action of the Government in not providing a railway between Norseman and Esperance. The light and airy way in which hon. members talk about making railways, and carrying out water schemes, seems to me most amusing. One hon. member, particularly, asked why the Government did not go to work at once with the Coolgardie water scheme, and why on earth was no arrangement made for building a railway from Esperance to Norseman at the cost of another £2,500,000. It is very easy to assert that those works ought to be carried out; but how can it be done without funds? The railway might possibly fulfil all that is claimed for it. I have not been to Norseman, and cannot say. But £250,000 is no small sum to put into a work until its utility is thoroughly proved; and, I think, it is not quite proved yet. It has been said that this railway should be made, but that the Coolgardie water scheme would run the place into debt for ever. If ever an expenditure was justified, it is in the Coolgardie water scheme. At Coolgardie there are heaps of low-grade mines that would pay if they only had water. Coolgardie is languishing for want of water. Kalgoorlie has got a temporary supply.

Ask any scientific man with experience of geology or boring for water, and he will tell you there is not the slightest hope of a permanent supply at Kalgoorlie. Any of the mine managers will tell you that the water is decreasing in nearly every mine, except a few just touched. It is no use going against practical experience. The Government are trying to look ahead. One hon. member said this great water scheme, which would make beef and mutton a lower price, is worthless.

HON. C. E. DEMPESTER: I did not say it was worthless. I said it should not be entered into unless it is necessary.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I heard distinctly what the hon. member said—that they had too much water.

HON. C. E. DEMPESTER: I know that is the opinion of a great many.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Now we come to the most crucial question of all—the tariff. The Government has not taken up its present position without very careful consideration. It has been stated in the House to-night that the majority of people in the colony are favourably inclined to an alteration of the tariff, and that the Government should have taken the matter up. I am not quite in accord with that statement; for if the majority of the people are favourable to an alteration, then I say the hours of the Government are numbered. The matter will be tested in a few days, and if the representatives of a majority of the people are opposed to the tariff, the present Government will not remain long. It will be a satisfaction to have this question settled. The first object of the Government in keeping those duties on is to encourage production. That is the principle we are going on—to foster and encourage production. You can only do that by making and maintaining a market until an industry—not only this particular industry, but any industry—gets on a firm footing. Anyone who knows Western Australia in connection with food production, knows that the initial expenses are of the very highest kind. Anyone who has travelled through those forests of large gum trees and thickets, knows what it must be to clear the land and build a house, getting nothing in return for three years. Unless some encouragement be given, people will not speculate and put their money into the industry.

But the Government I belong to maintain that, by keeping the duties on for a little longer, these will be the means in time of cheapening food more than anything else; and we are doing it for this reason: we have ample precedent. Take the other colonies. Take Victoria. It has had heavier food duties than any place I know of. Will any hon. member tell me that, when the gold fever broke out at Ballarat and other places, the price of food was not as high in Victoria as here? What has been the consequence? Those people put on a heavy duty, and it induced production. Food there became cheap—that is, until Western Australia ate half of it for them. That has been done by protection, and inducing people to produce; and in all those colonies where there are lots of people, it has been the same, and food is now as cheap as possible.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: New South Wales is the cheapest, and there is free trade there.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I do not know that it is the cheapest of all. [HON. R. S. HAYNES: Undoubtedly.] Well, that is the object the Government has.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about frozen meat?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If you take the duty off frozen meat, you will have to eat frozen meat for the rest of your lives. You know particularly well that in Queensland and a part of New South Wales it was not saleable until in the last two or three years. They could hardly give it away. How can you expect people in this colony to attempt to raise meat, when it is brought in at a cost of next to nothing? If you do not give people encouragement to produce meat here you will have to live on frozen meat for the rest of your lives.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The cost of carriage is sufficient.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It is only a circumstance. If you wish to have a pastoral industry, if you take the duty off frozen meat you will kill that industry, and you will never have a supply of fresh meat. That argument, you will see, cuts both ways. [HON. R. S. HAYNES: Certainly!] But we will take fresh meat. No one will have the temerity to say the duty interferes with the price of fresh meat.

The duty on meat is not a circumstance in the price. Meat is being retailed in Perth at about 8d., and the duty is only a halfpenny in the lb. I am speaking of live meat. Now it will be argued, and it has been said, that if you do not take the duty off the articles of food you produce in the country, you should take it off those that you do not produce. But there are many things that we do not produce now which we will produce in a short time. Take, for instance, butter, cheese, and bacon. A little while ago, chaff was at a prohibitive price, and had to be imported. Now we have overtaken the demand for chaff, and we have too much; and the demand for chaff having been overtaken, growers must in time turn their attention to wheat; and, with the increasing amount of population going on to the farming lands of the colony—which circumstance has been referred to in such satisfactory and glowing terms by hon. members—in turn, this wheat demand will be overtaken, and wheat will have to be exported. And what will be better than the farmers turning to the production of butter, cheese and bacon? Wherever bacon is produced, it has been done by over-production of grain. I come back to the old argument that, by inducing the production of these articles, you will make the people supply them, and we will get a fresh, cheap, and certain food supply. I did not finish my argument about taking off the duties. Someone mentioned preserved milk; and the Hon. A. P. Matheson said that, after all, these duties were small when they came to be divided. I do not think it is worth tinkering with the tariff for them.

THE HON. A. P. MATHESON: I said the result of the duties was very small.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It is just the same thing. It is not worth opening up the question for the present. The Government have taken their stand; and they consider that it is in the interests of the country, that it is not wise to revise the duties, because they form the shortest way of providing the people with a cheap and certain supply of food. That is their argument; and the Government will stand or fall by it.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: But the Upper House takes no sides.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There are some other remarks which have been

made by hon. members, and I will refer to a few of them, apologising at the same time for keeping hon. members rather long. The Hon. A. B. Kidson made some remarks about deep drainage. The Government have the deepest sympathy with the question. It is a very difficult one, and one that will cost a great deal of money. The unfortunate position is this, that Perth and Fremantle consider that they have a right to have deep drainage carried out by the Government; and possibly they have strong ground for it. But every other town in the colony can take the same ground. Until the Government have a large sum of money for carrying out this work, they cannot do it. [Hon. A. B. Kidson: It was voted!] But the money was not borrowed. The Fremantle Hospital is another question that was brought up. This question is now being considered; and the advisability of placing it on the same footing as the Perth Hospital is being considered, and I will say favourably considered, by the Government; but, at the same time, hon. members must be aware that the object of that Act introduced in connection with the hospitals was to endeavour to make them self-supporting, to allow those people who contribute towards the support of a hospital to manage it themselves. But the present arrangement, so far as it has gone with the Perth Hospital, is that the Government has appointed a Board and found all the money, and the only person that I can find who has supported the Perth Hospital is a Chinaman, and he subscribes £25 each year. That is the only private subscriber I hear of. Therefore the question is—it has not been tried very long—whether it is working well. The object the Government had in view was to induce people to subscribe to the Hospital and to manage the institution themselves. It is a very pleasant position to hold—to manage a place and spend other people's money; and it is a question whether the Government is wise in allowing this. The Hon. R. S. Haynes does not think that these irresponsible bodies should be entrusted with moneys. That question arises. The Act is on its trial, and I hope it will have the very best results. The Hon. A. B. Kidson concluded his speech by congratulating the Government on the satisfactory state of the

revenue. At the same time, he suggested that the duties should be taken off certain things. But, if they are taken off—you know that last year the expenditure reached the revenue within £3,000—if you take the duties off some things, you must put them on somewhere else. The Hon. H. Briggs made reference to the salaries of teachers in public schools. If the hon. member will look back, he will find that the expenditure in connection with the public schools is regulated by vote of Parliament, which, I think, is £4 10s. for each child; therefore, all the expenditure has to be regulated in accordance with that amount. It is paid in a block sum to the Education Department; and, if the salaries are raised to any extent, it will be necessary to raise the amount granted for each child, and that will have to be done by statute. The Hon. A. P. Matheson referred to the fact that the money spent at Bunbury might have been given to build a railway from Esperance to Norseman; and reference was made to the money spent on the park drive—some £14,000. If that amount, or even the £45,000 spent at Bunbury, were taken, it would not go very far in building a railway.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: What about the recreation reserve?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The sum stated was £14,000. I expect it was exaggerated; but if we cannot spend a little money for the comfort and pleasure of the people of the colony, we ought to be able to do so. It is one of the most charming drives and pleasant places for recreation that can be found; and it is not only for the Perth people. The Norseman people can use it if they like to visit Perth.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: They cannot get here. They have no railway. If they had a railway they would come here in hundreds.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Government have not the money for building this railway.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: They could have the money any time for the asking:

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I am pleased to hear it. It is very absurd to say that if a place in the country has not a railway, the inhabitants of Perth should not have a little place of recreation and amusement. Exception has been taken

to the fact that in bringing forward the work of the session, the promises made by the Government have been very small. Hon. members see that with the bills named there will be a good deal of work ; and time was limited for getting the work together this year. It has been a most exceptional year. There have been interruptions of all kinds, with different events taking place, which have upset the work ; we had a very short time at our disposal, and the programme which the Government have put before hon. members will keep them going amply for the time we hope to be in session. The Hon. R. S. Haynes also spoke in regard to some of the officers in the different departments going away to learn experience. Some of them have gone away—not to learn experience. There is one in particular he mentioned. He did go away to the other colonies, but not to learn experience : he went away for his health. He is a very hard-working officer, and instead of spending the whole of his time in pleasure, he took the opportunity of comparing matters in this colony with matters in the other colonies.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : I take the official statement in the official organ of the Government.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : I am simply explaining it. Wherever a man goes, he will always learn something. It is not altogether an unwise practice that people should go to the other colonies to see how things are going there. Mr. Cook, the astronomer, had to go to England to select the instruments for his department. He is one of the best men you could get in Australia, highly recommended and bearing the best testimonials.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : Where is he now ?

THE MINISTER OF MINES : A little while ago the honourable member said I would not give him an explanation. Now that I am giving him one, he interrupts. The gentleman will be back soon. With regard to the remarks about the Agricultural Bureau, I would point out that it is composed of a number of gentlemen who give up their time willingly to work for the country.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : How then did they spend that £8,000 ?

THE MINISTER OF MINES : They did not spend it on themselves. I am

not prepared to say that their action meets with the approval of all. Apparently it does not, but the gentlemen who form this Bureau—I am not alluding to the secretary—give up their time for nothing.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : They spend £8,000 a year. They don't do it for nothing.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : I desire to express my sincere thanks to the honourable members, Mr. Randell and Mr. Kidson, who have so kindly proposed and seconded the Address-in-Reply. The remarks they made were listened to with very great satisfaction, and I thank them both for having undertaken what is not always a very pleasant duty. I trust that our work in the coming session will be satisfactory, and that it will be carried out in the same good spirit and in the same manner as it has been in the past.

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, adjourn until Tuesday, the 19th inst., at 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 9.15 p.m., until the next Tuesday.

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 14th October, 1897.

Paper Presented—Address-in-Reply : Notice of Amendment ; Ministerial Statement—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.