

that speech, made last year, will get at the inner mind of the hon. member for Nannine. There was a site he would select, but it was not to the north-west of Rocky Bay, but somewhere east of Perth, a nearer spot, to which the haulage of the Cellie coal would be less than to Fremantle, and that was near, not a private railway, but a public one. Now I express no opinion for my own part about the Fremantle Workshops at the present time, because we are open to conviction on this point. The Premier has promised Parliament shall deal with the question. The hon. member for North Fremantle, when speaking on the Speech, fell into an error in dealing with the minority report of the Commission that was appointed some years ago. He said that report was a most excellent report, which I have no doubt but it is, but the object of that report was simply and solely to show that the site of the Workshops at Fremantle was a good one, and that they ought to stop where they were. That was the object of that excellent report of the minority, not to move the shops at all; but every one has receded from that position now. That report is no help to members.

AN HON. MEMBER: It proves too much.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Yes, far too much. The hon. member for Nannine, and others, have referred to the question of re-distribution of seats, and the large influx of miners into this country. Now we all wish these miners success, for if they are not successful they are not very desirable colonists, because they have no other trade, and have no occupation if they cannot find gold. They become discontented if they are not successful, and therefore it is unjust to ask the Government of this colony at the present time in the year 1895, to enfranchise these miners until it is proved they have got something like permanent employment.

THE SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that the time for adjournment has now come. This debate now stands adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House, in accordance with Sessional Order, at half-past six o'clock, p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, 3rd July, at half-past 4 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd July, 1895.

William-street Railway Crossing—Raid upon Fletcher police station, East Kimberley—Train arrangements for Pinjarrah—The townsite of Parkerville—Employment of Dredges—Agricultural Hall for the Canning—Contract for the construction of Mount Eliza Park Road—Construction of Subiaco (Cemetery) Road—Address-in-Reply: adjourned debate—Licensed Surveyors Bill: first reading—Emoluments and Salaries of Australian Governors—Public Buildings at Cue and Coolgardie: extra cost of—Cost and operations of Agricultural Bank—Plans of Railway Workshops—Traffic receipts, Southern Cross Railway—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 p.m.
PRAYERS.

WILLIAM-STREET RAILWAY CROSSING.

MR. GEORGE, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways,—

1. Whether he considered the measures taken in connection with the Melbourne-road Crossing and the William-street Crossing were sufficient to secure the safety of the general public.
2. Whether any measures were contemplated to increase the precautions already taken.
3. When these measures will be put in force

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied, as follows:—

1. Yes; I consider the measures at present taken for the protection of the public at the Melbourne-road Crossing are as safe as it is possible for the Department to make them under existing circumstances.
2. Further measures are in contemplation for the Melbourne-road Crossing, which may include gates.
3. In regard to William-street, every possible precaution is taken by the Department for the safety of the public in crossing; but the Government have finally decided to erect a bridge, and this work will be put in hand as early as possible, when funds are voted by Parliament.

RAID UPON FLETCHER POLICE STATION.

MR. JAMES (for Mr. CONNOR), in accordance with notice, asked the Premier,—

1. Whether it was a fact that in June, 1893, the natives made a raid upon the Fletcher Police Station, in the East Kimberley District, and burnt the station, together with all the effects therein belonging to the police stationed at Fletcher's Creek.

2. Whether it was the intention of the Government to refund to the constables the amount of the loss sustained by them by reason of this outrage.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied, as follows:—

1. It is a fact that the Police Camp at Fletcher's Creek was destroyed by fire in June, 1893, and goods—the property of the constables—to the amount of £98 were destroyed.

2. The Government have called for Reports, and when they are received they will consider the matter. I may add that this is the first I heard of the affair.

SATURDAY TRAIN ARRANGEMENTS FOR PINJARRAH.

MR. JAMES, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways, whether the train now leaving Perth early on Saturday morning for Pinjarrah, could not be despatched on Friday night?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied: It cannot, economically, be altered, because the train which is made up on Saturday morning consists principally of empty trucks. These trucks (loaded) reach Perth from Fremantle at 10.30 p.m., Friday, and have to be discharged and got ready during the night for the morning train. The empty trucks are required for Stations, Sidings, and Mills on the South-Western Railway.

NAMING THE TOWNSITE OF "PARKERVILLE."

MR. JAMES, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands who was responsible for the name of "Parkerville" applied to the new townsite at or near Mahogany Creek.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) replied that the Cabinet were responsible.

DREDGING PERTH WATER.

MR. JAMES, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works.—

1. When the dredge now at the Canning would be available for use in Perth.

2. Whether the Priestman dredge at Fremantle could not be used in Perth water; and if so, whether it would not be more usefully employed than at present.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn), replied as follows:—

1. Probably about 1st January next.

2. Not conveniently. It is not very suitable for the purpose. It is very usefully employed at present dredging rock.

AGRICULTURAL HALL AT THE CANNING.

MR. JAMES, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, whether he would make provision in the Estimates for this year for the erection of an Agricultural Hall at the Canning.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), replied in the affirmative.

CONTRACT FOR MOUNT ELIZA PARK ROAD.

MR. GEORGE, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works,—

1. Whether the contract for the construction of the Mount Eliza Park Road was signed.

2. If not, what was the cause of the delay.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

1. No; the contract has not been signed.

2. The authority of this House is required for the expenditure.

CONSTRUCTION OF SUBIACO (CEMETERY) ROAD.

MR. GEORGE, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works, in reference to the Subiaco Road:—

a. What was the total length which the Department undertook to make.

b. The cost of putting in a siding at Subiaco.

c. The cost of the temporary tramline, including equipment.

d. The cost of laying same, and the first removal.

e. The cost of formation.

f. The quantity of limestone bottom, and cost of same laid in position.

g. The quantity of bluestone of each, large, medium, and small, and cost of; same laid in position.

h. The estimated quantity and cost of the proposed blinding.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

- a. One mile fifty-one and one-third chains (1 m. 51½ chns.)
- b. £29 17s. 2d.
- c. £52 11s. 10d.
- d. £162 0s. 0d.
- e. £236 0s. 0d.
- f. 1,530 c. yards, £631 2s. 6d.
- g. 4in. stone : 297 c. yards, £188 11s. 6d.
2in. stone : 989 c. yards, £660 4s. 6d.
1in. stone : 490 c. yards, £349 2s. 6d.

£1,207 18s. 6d.

h. 750 c. yards, £618 15s. 0d.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY TO GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) : Sir—I hope I shall not detain the House many minutes in concluding the few remarks I commenced to address to the House last evening. I was proceeding to say a word or two in answer to the hon. member for Nannine as to the re-distribution of seats, which the hon. member said should have formed an item in the proposals of the Government for the present session, referring particularly to the goldfields. He seems to think, because some 20,000 miners have lately come to this country, that we are bound at the present time to provide for the re-distribution of seats, so as to find representatives for those people. Well, I am of opinion that it is premature to deal with the Constitution Act on these lines again, in 1895. We had an amendment of the Act the year before last, when this Government gave representatives to the mining centres of the colony as they then existed. No doubt the population is growing rapidly on the goldfields, and, no doubt, in the near future, there will be reason to consider this subject of the representation of the goldfields; but I say that, just now, and until there is more permanent settlement on these fields; and the fields are a little further developed, it is rather early, having dealt with the question the year before last, to re-open this subject again now. I have no doubt the hon. member will give every credit to the Government of doing their duty to the goldfields. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] We have tried to do the best we could for them. They

exist, unfortunately, a very long distance from the old centres of settlement, but we have carried to them all the paraphernalia of civilization that we have here. We have provided them with the necessary officers and buildings for their management—Wardens, Resident Magistrates, Courts, Hospitals—a great deal of expenditure has taken place in connection with the Hospitals. We have had to provide them, at great expense too, with police, and I say we are certainly doing more than our duty in these matters. We have provided them with water also, at enormous expense; and we have given them postal facilities, when asked for, and also telegraph communication, and we are giving them railways; therefore it cannot be said that we have not been trying to do our duty in attending to the requirements of our goldfields. I ask the hon. member to be a little patient before he calls upon us to give him another colleague to represent these goldfields.

MR. SIMPSON: Have the Government taken the duty off soft soap?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): We are proposing even this session to assist the miner very materially in more ways than one. We are taking the duty off his sugar, and off his tea, and off his blankets and his rugs.

MR. MORAN: What about tinned meats?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): We are leaving those alone. Miners, like other people, must contribute something to the revenue, otherwise the members representing them will not have the satisfaction of saying that they are the main factors in providing the Government with revenue. The hon. member would be deprived of one of his pet arguments. I have no doubt the hon. member for Nannine will have the satisfaction, very shortly, of sending a telegram to his constituents (as I believe he is in the habit of doing) telling them that he has been able to obtain for them the abolition of the duty on sugar and also the duty on tea, and he will be able to telegraph that he has also been successful in removing the duty off their blankets and their rugs. He will also have the satisfaction of wiring that he has been able to obtain a reduction in the fee for a miner's right from £1 to 10s., because I may tell him that is a proposal which the Government intend to make in the Bill which I hope to see introduced in a few days. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.]

I think I have now made the hon. member a happy man, and he will be able to send his telegram in the morning.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I shall be very glad to do so.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The hon. member for East Perth (Mr. James) has asked us to consider a programme which was really too much for me. He recited, in his speech—or perhaps I should call it lecture, for he is generally very condescending and patronising to the members of these benches, the hon. member for East Perth is—he unfolded a programme which it has taken years in other countries to consider, and talk of, and debate; many of them questions of great difficulty and of great intricacy. I tried to take down a list, somewhere, of the subjects the hon. member mentioned. I know he wanted us to legislate for an eight hours day, for early closing, for strikes, for regulating the relations between capital and labour, for regulating the drink traffic, for the adoption of the betterment principle, and something in reference to Asiatic. We must not go so fast as all that. The hon. member must allow me to ask him to wait until we have some expression of public opinion on these subjects, before the Government can be expected to provide legislation of this sort, which has occupied years of consideration and discussion in other countries, and given rise to a great deal of opposition. Where such questions have been settled at all they have been settled only after a good deal of thought and a great deal of debate. But many of them have never even been mentioned before in this colony; yet we are supposed to be prepared with Bills dealing with them. I say we are not at present prepared to do it. Take the drink question, for instance. I would like to know who can settle the drink question. (MR. SIMPSON: The brewers.) To ask this poor little Government in this colony to deal with the drink question is asking us rather too much. It is too large an order altogether. I have my own opinion on the subject, and I think we might settle it in a very short time if we could only bring public opinion to bear upon it. Instead of encouraging people to drink, and laughing at them, if we sat down upon them a little and tried to make them ashamed of themselves, there would not be one half of the drunkenness there now is. That is the only way, in my opinion, in which this drink question can be touched effectually

—bring public opinion to bear upon the subject. You may try as many systems as you like, and you will do very little good with them. Take the Gothenburg system, for instance. I do not think the Gothenburg system would do more good here than it has done in Gothenburg itself. It may be known to a great many of us, that the *Times*, some time ago, sent a very able correspondent to report upon this system and the result of it, and his letters appeared in the columns of that paper, and we know he had very little good to say about it. Gothenburg was discredited as being one of the most drunken places on God's earth. People actually drank their spirits neat there, and the only good the "system" did was to make them drink beer instead of spirits. There was just the same amount of drunkenness. If you can bring public opinion to condemn the drinking habits of a community you may hope to do some good, but, without it, all the systems in the world will be ineffectual in suppressing the evil. Then the hon. member for East Perth wants us to deal with the question of betterment. I don't know that this colony has heard much about the betterment principle. Possibly members here would like to know more about it, and how it has worked in countries where the principle has been introduced. There has been a committee on the subject in the House of Lords, and the question no doubt will be considered by the Imperial Parliament shortly, and we shall reap the advantage of the discussion that is bound to take place on the subject. I am not prepared to say it is not a principle that should be enforced with regard to building railways, but the Government would have been altogether premature in introducing the subject this session to the notice of the House. Of that I am sure. The hon. member also spoke on the question of deep drainage, and said that the Attorney-General last session pooh-poohed the idea. If you look at *Hansard* you will find that what I said was this: that it was a matter for the Municipal Council to deal with, and to obtain information upon, and that if the Government found they were studying the subject (which they were not doing) and, after doing so, would come and ask the Government to assist them in obtaining a loan to carry out some approved work, the Government would only be too glad to render them some assistance. But I fail to see yet that anyone is studying this question of deep drainage in the

way it ought to be studied. I would like the City Council to consider what the expense would be, not only in establishing a system of deep drainage in the city, but also the expense of maintaining and managing it, after it is in working order. I would like them to consider what amount of rate they would require to levy to enable them to carry out a work of this nature. The revenue derived from the present small rate would certainly not be sufficient, and they would at least have to double it, to pay anything like interest on the capital value of the works themselves, and to cover the working expenses. If they found they would require to double the rates, they might hesitate, and set about to consider whether some other system which would not cost so much money would not be better. I do not say that one particular system is better than another. I don't know. It is a subject that requires a great deal of consideration and a great deal of thought, particularly from the financial point of view. Those who do know something of the subject have told me that if you were to sit down and put the matter into figures, including the purchase of the Waterworks (which I take it would be necessary in conjunction with any system of deep drainage)—if you were to go into figures you would be rather astonished at the probable cost of any scheme of deep drainage for this city. Last year it was suggested that £150,000 would be required for the purchase of the Waterworks alone, and I suppose that £200,000 or £300,000 would be required for a deep drainage system. You must remember that a deep drainage system in Perth would probably involve—we shall know more about it when the contour survey is completed—would probably involve pumping stations, amongst other things; and you must bear in mind that you are not going to pump what you have to deal with in connection with deep drainage and sewerage, with a 6-in Douglas pump. Probably many of us have not seen a pump of the magnitude that would be required for a work of this sort, and have very little conception of what the maintenance and working of such a system would mean. It would not be one pump, but probably two or three pumps that would be required. Then there is the question of where this sewage is to go. Is it to be pumped to the North beach, opposite Cottlesloe? If so, I am afraid there would be strong opposition to that. Or is it to be pumped into the river? I expect

there would be strong opposition to that too. All these matters have to be threshed out. What I object to, is to hear people who ought to know more, and think more, crying out "We want deep drainage; give us deep drainage," as if you could have it to-morrow morning by asking for it. When it comes to the question of what sort of deep drainage, and how much will it cost, and what you are to do with your sewage, and where the money is to come from, no one seems to care, or to think very little about it. The only cry is, "Why don't the Government introduce a Bill to give us deep drainage." You can have the Bill to-morrow, if you like. There is one drawn out. I believe my friend behind me (Mr. Traylen), who is interested in this matter, has a Bill in his pocket. But you want something besides a Bill. The Government are now carrying out a contour survey of the city, and, when that is finished, we can then consider what system of drainage will be best adapted, on the basis of that survey.

MR. JAMES: That is what you refused to do for us last session.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Pardon me; that is exactly what we promised to do. You will find from the records it was promised even before last session. The hon. member also spoke a word or two in reference to the Stock Tax, as representing East Perth I suppose. I think he said he was the working man's friend, or a labour candidate, or something like that. Assuming him to be so, I suppose that is the reason why he singled out the Stock Tax, and made this odd remark about it, that in the case of this particular tax the natural protection which the trade gets is sufficient for it. I suppose he means by that, that as stock coming from the other colonies has to pay freight the local producer does not want any duties to protect him—that the freight alone is sufficient to protect the grazier here. At the same time, he says that other industries require protection. Surely if the graziers have sufficient natural protection in the freight upon the imported articles, the bootmaker, the clothier, the hatter, and all the other traders which the hon. members want to protect, have exactly the same natural protection: and, if it is sufficient in the case of the grazier, why is it not sufficient in the case of other industries which the hon. member is anxious to see further protected? If it is not freight that he referred to, what is the natural protection he did refer to? It

cannot be anything else. It just shows the inconsistency of man when he gets on his legs to bolster up a system which is based on fallacies from top to bottom. There is no question about that. The hon. member also asked us why we did not bring in a Bill about Asiatics. I don't know, I am sure, what sort of a Bill he wants.

MR. GEORGE: To clear them out.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt):

That is a novel sentiment for a citizen of a great Empire to enunciate. If we begin to clear each other out of this world, I am not quite sure whether we would come best off. I, for one, am not prepared to begin to clear people out. One man has as much right to come here as another. What we ought to do, when these people do come here, is to try to keep them within proper bounds, make them behave themselves and conform to the laws of the land. If we Englishmen, in this nineteenth century, cannot do that, we ought to; if we have not yet arrived at that stage of civilisation that we are able to protect ourselves against evil in men of any colour who come amongst us, we ought to find some means of doing so. Those means can be found without resorting to that policy of exclusion suggested by the hon. member for the Murray, which is nothing more than a sign of weakness. I hope I shall never lend myself to any such policy as that. I only wish to add one word more. The hon. member for the Murray made some allusion, in the remarks he was good enough to address to us on the subject of the Railway Workshops at Fremantle, with reference to Mr. Allison Smith, the gentleman who was invited by the Government, on the advice of their Engineer, to come here to report on the subject. Mr. Allison Smith was then an officer of the Government of Victoria, and he was lent to this colony by that Government to report on the subject of Railway Workshops generally. I do not think the hon. member, on reconsideration, will consider that he was quite fair to Mr. Allison Smith in making the attack he did under cover of the privilege of this House. I think the hon. member went out of his way. It should be recollected that Mr. Allison Smith, whatever his ability and talent may be, was lent to the Government of this country by the Government of another friendly colony, and the least we can do is to criticise what he said, or what he did, in a fair and reasonable spirit. Probably the hon. member was led away in

speaking as he did, because to his mind Mr. Allison Smith's report was a misleading report, but I think it would have been better if the hon. member had treated the report in milder language and in a more reasonable spirit, instead of heaping contumely upon the writer, calling him names, and describing him as ignorant and incompetent, and using the other adjectives he did in speaking of that gentleman.

MR. MORAN: I desire to express concurrence in what the Attorney-General has said with regard to Mr. Allison Smith. I was very sorry indeed to hear the hon. member for the Murray, and the hon. member for North Fremantle (Mr. Moss) too, speaking of Mr. Allison Smith in the disrespectful tone they did. I have the pleasure of Mr. Allison Smith's acquaintance, and had the pleasure of making a long journey with him, and we often talked over this matter of the Railway Workshops. I am not going to say that he convinced me that his views were right, but he convinced me that he was very earnest in the matter, and that he was satisfied that the recommendations he made, and the plans he submitted, would provide the best solution of the difficulty connected with this Workshops question. I am not going to say a word as to my own opinion on the subject at present. I have formed an opinion, and, when the proper time comes, I shall be prepared to express it. Mr. Allison Smith just now is one of the unfortunate ones of this world, inasmuch as he has incurred the displeasure of an influential section of the people of Victoria. He is a down-trodden man, and being down-trodden he deserves our sympathy and assistance, rather than our villification. I hope that he will be able to vindicate his reputation to the fullest extent, in the case now pending, and that he will be fully restored to public confidence with his name and character untarnished. So far as his opinions are concerned, I am not going to allow my judgment to be warped by what has been said about him in the other colonies, or by some members in this House. I only regret that such statements should have been made, and I concur with the Attorney-General in condemning them. Coming to the Governor's Speech, it contains a great deal of what is purely historical matter, which does not call for comment. I am very much inclined to endorse a great deal that was said by the hon. member for East Perth (Mr. James) with regard to a good many subjects. The hon. member and myself agree in our politics to a

very large extent. I wish, in the first place, to thank the Government for what they have done for the goldfields. I desire particularly to say that the members of the Ministry, and especially the Premier, deserve the fullest and heartiest thanks of everyone on the goldfields, and of every citizen of this colony, for their promptitude in attending to the representations made to them as to the requirements of our goldfields. During the late session of this House, and also during the recess, this trait in the character of the Government as a whole, and of the Premier especially, must have appealed to the heart of everybody who is interested in the welfare of the colony. The Premier is a man who has himself tasted of the troubles and trials of a bushlife, and knows what they are and he is able to sympathise with those who are struggling on our distant goldfields. I was delighted to hear the announcement made this evening that the Government intend to reduce the fee for a miner's right to 10s. This will be another bone of contention taken from the mouth of those who represent the goldfields. 'The action of the Government in deciding to prosecute artesian boring on the goldfields is also deserving of every credit. I only hope that the conception will be successfully carried out with as much facility as the preliminary arrangements. I do not know what the Government are doing with regard to appointing practical men to conduct the work; I shall have the privilege of asking some questions on this point later on. I am very pleased also to hear that the Government are going to appoint inspectors of mines. I have often asked for this to be done, as have other goldfields' representatives. These inspectors ought to have been appointed long ago; but better late than never. I only hope that good practical men will be appointed for this post, and not men with superficial knowledge and no practical acquaintance with mining. It is absolutely necessary that the men appointed for this work of looking after the safety of human lives, should be thoroughly practical men. The next question I wish to touch upon is the railway policy of the Government. I do not suppose the Government expect me to extend to them the same adulation in regard to their railway policy as I have done in the other matters I have referred to. In fact, I am most strongly opposed to the policy of the Government on the question, so far as the goldfields railways are concerned, and have been

all along. I think the importance of our goldfields is now universally recognised. We have had testimony to that effect from all parts of the House in the course of this debate, including an ex-Minister of the Crown (Mr. Marmion). When we find an ex-Minister, freed from the trammels of Government, bearing his testimony on this subject, I think we may depend upon it; and his words were, he did not know what we would have done if gold had not been discovered. No one can be blind to the fact that the interests of Western Australia are centred in her goldfields. Her revenue, which has been rising by leaps and bounds, would have been at a standstill but for her goldfields, and possibly her timber industry. Most of the money for the development of these fields, up to the present, has come from the other colonies. I am not casting any discredit upon Western Australians in this matter, but the fact remains that most of the money spent in the development of our goldfields up to the present has come from the other colonies.

HON. W. E. MARMION: What about London?

MR. MORAN: Up to the present the effects of the investment of London capital have not been much felt. London capital will never go out of England to be invested in mines, until it is proved that the gold is there, and that capital is required to extract it. But, throughout the other colonies, there is scarcely a town or hamlet that has not contributed men and money to open up the goldfields and the backblocks of Western Australia; and I can assure you, as the result of my recent visit to those colonies, that their public men, as well as their ordinary citizens, are seriously aggrieved that the Government of this colony should, in their wisdom, or out of their wisdom, see fit to put a prohibitive tariff upon goods required on our goldfields. A previous speaker has mentioned the question of a railway from Esperance Bay to the goldfields. A member of another House, in one of the Eastern colonies, not long ago, said that if such a scheme were brought forward, only one member in this House (referring to myself, I suppose) would vote for it. So far as I am concerned, I have never suggested such a scheme; I always like to be as reasonable and wise as I can, and I recognise this fact: if this colony is going to achieve importance, the Government of the country must concentrate their efforts in providing railway facilities at our own end, and not expend their efforts in providing facilities for other people. How could this Government

be reasonably asked to construct or support a railway from Esperance Bay to compete with the goldfields' traffic at our own end? I should think it would be a very unstatesman-like proceeding. The greatest amount of revenue now derived by our railways is contributed by the traffic on the goldfields' lines. That is an undeniable fact; and I shall expect the Commissioner of Railways to carry out the promise he made in this House last session, that if the Southern Cross Railway was proved to be paying as well as other lines in the colony (notwithstanding that the traffic was only one way), he would be prepared to reduce the freight rates on that railway, and assimilate them with the rates on other lines. The hon. gentleman cannot get away from that promise, for he will find it recorded in *Hansard*. I do not wish to labour the question, though I feel very strongly upon it. I wish to say a word or two with reference to the Customs Duties Bill introduced by the Government. I cannot view that Bill with much favour, and I will give my reasons for it. If you take the great consuming population of the colony—that population which is engaged in developing her industries, not only on the goldfields and in the back country, but also on our timber stations, right along from Albany to Perth—you will find that the articles of consumption most in use consist of tinned meats. You will find tinned stuffs on the table of all the restaurants, and you will find them on every camp on every goldfield in the colony. Yet we do not find tinned meats included in this Customs Duties Repeal Bill. If you look at the schedule of that Bill, you will find—

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member will be out of order in anticipating discussion upon that Bill.

MR. MORAN: What latitude am I allowed?

THE SPEAKER: You are not allowed to discuss a Bill of which notice has been given, and which is down for its second reading.

MR. MORAN: Then I will speak generally on the question.

THE SPEAKER: You may speak generally, but you must not discuss the details of the Bill.

MR. MORAN: I simply wish to point out that, if the Government wish to assist the men who are struggling to develop the best industries of the colony, by a remission of duties, the first article they should repeal the duty upon is tinned meat, and other

tinned stuff, which is universally used by those who are engaged in this work of development. It is all very well to take the duty off tea, but a pound of tea will last a man a long time, whereas a pound tin of meat will only last him one day. Yet the duty on tinned meat is allowed to remain, while the duty on tea is taken off. So far as this Bill is concerned it is Dead Sea fruit. You may call it a Bill to provide a free breakfast table or a free camp table; but, when tasted, it turns into ashes. So far as the consuming population is concerned it might as well to have never been brought before this House. I think every reasonably minded man will recognise the truth of what I say. I am a strict follower of the hon. member for the Swan (Mr. Loton) in this respect, and I want to get as near the principles of freetrade as possible. This brings me to the question of the Stock Tax. Of course there is only one policy open to me with reference to that tax; I have the strongest possible objection to it, and I shall use my strongest possible advocacy to have it wiped out. I have prepared a few figures here, which I will ask hon. members to listen to attentively, for I want to endeavour to make out as good a case for its abolition as I can. The contract price for the supply of meat to the Government institutions of Melbourne at the beginning of last month was 1d. per lb. Similar prices rule in Queensland. Stock there is sold, in condition, at £2, £2 10s., and £3 per head, and even as low as 30s. The meat is brought to the coast, prepared, loaded into steamers, and sent to England, 13,000 miles away, and there sold from 20 to 25 per cent. cheaper than it is in this, a sister Australian colony. Yet we are told that the Stock Tax is of no material consequence to the consumer here. Let us see. The meat-eating population is (say, for rough calculation) 50,000 people. Supposing they consume on an average 1lb. per day; that is 50,000lbs. of meat per day. Take the weight of the average beast at 800lbs.

MR. A. FORREST: 550lbs. is the average of bullocks in Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: I am putting the average at 800lbs. That represents a daily consumption of 62½ beasts, or a yearly consumption of 22,812 bullocks, which, at the amount of the Stock Tax (namely 30s. per head), represents £34,218 per annum, which comes out of the pockets of the consumers of this colony, because it has to be paid directly in the Stock Tax,

or the Stock Tax keeps up the price which competition would otherwise in some measure adjust. And yet we are told the Stock Tax is of no consequence to the consumer. One hon. member (Mr. Cookworthy) pathetically suggested last night that, although meat may be sold here at 7d. or 8d. per lb., still the producer only got from the cattle dealer and butcher about 3d. per lb. This is truly awful. An average bullock at 3d. per lb. is only the modest price of £10. Ten pounds! This, it appears, cannot be enough for the Western Australian producer, considering that producers in other colonies are satisfied with one-third of it. The producer here is not content with 25 per cent. better prices than the producer elsewhere. He is not content with 50 per cent. better prices. Nay, even 100 per cent. will not satisfy him. He must have, and he gets, 200 per cent. better prices. And yet we are told that the Stock Tax is of no material difference to the consumer. Let us see, then. A beast is bought in Queensland for £3, landed in Western Australia and sold (let us say) at 7d. per lb., that is, for the sum of £23 6s., or, in other words, he has gone up nearly 800 per cent. in the process of trade. Does this hold good in any other form of trade? Does it not seem monstrous that such should be the case? Yet, truly, the Act sanctions it, to the sorrow and loss of the consumer here. Nay, worse; the Act makes it so certain that the poorer classes of Western Australia—happily not numerous—are underfed, and the great working and middle classes are struggling under a burden which presses heavily on a colony where living is higher and wages lower than in any other colony. And yet we are told that the Stock Tax is in the interests of this colony! But it is not only the actual cost of the Stock Tax that we have to resent; it is the incalculable evil it is working in this colony in the shape of deterring outside enterprise from coming to utilise our fertile Northern lands and stock them. Travel through the Eastern colonies, and you hear it on all sides, "Your Government does not want settlement; they put a poll tax on us and on our stock, as if we were Chinese." When you consider that this Stock Tax means to the cattle owner and grower of the other colonies a duty on his stock of from 50 to 80 per cent. it is no wonder that it effectually kills enterprise from that quarter. This is the great evil. It is an effectual barrier against breaking up any monopoly that

may exist; and the great mass of the people of this colony are paying for it, and suffering accordingly. If a plebiscite were taken on this question I venture to say that three-fourths of the people of the colony would say, "Sweep it away."

THE PREMIER: Or any other tax, as well.

MR. MORAN: "Sweep it away, and let us at least have a chance to live reasonably." Coming to another subject, I most strongly support the remarks of the hon. member for Nannine in reference to the re-distribution of seats. I do not, however, go so far as to say that the Government should have mentioned the subject in the Governor's Speech this session. I am quite content that the Attorney-General should have given us his assurance—an assurance which the hon. member for Nannine did not have at the time—that the Government are going to consider the question before the next General Election.

THE PREMIER: I don't think he said that.

MR. MORAN: I think members will have understood that to be what he intended to convey. I am sure every member here always listens with the greatest patience and interest to the remarks of the learned Attorney-General. Speaking personally, there is no member in this House whose words carry greater weight with me on most occasions, but I must differ from him entirely in what he said about the mining population, and their claim to be represented. He says we have 20,000 miners here who are a wandering population, mere birds of passage, and that it is too early yet to recognise their claim to a share of representation. I wish to point out that miners are not necessarily birds of passage. Some of the miners who were at Ballarat in the early days of the goldfields may be found there to this day. There are thousands of miners who are still residents on the goldfields of Sandhurst. It is the same in Queensland, and I venture to say it will be the same in Western Australia. Our goldfields give as much promise of permanency, if not more so, than Ballarat did in the early days of its development, or than Charters Towers did. Considering the large numbers of men that are now congregated in the different mining centres of this colony, on our eastern goldfields, I say the time has arrived, or will very soon arrive, when these new settlers should have full representation. It is unreasonable to expect one man to adequately represent them scattered as they are from Booracoppin

to the South Australian border. There must be 15,000 or 16,000 men settled upon the various centres within this large area, and yet one member is expected to represent them all, and only have one vote in this House.

MR. A. FORREST: Thirty-three votes, more likely.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member for West Kimberley will persist in saying that he represents those goldfields. He represents those goldfields in the same way as I may be said to represent Kimberley, and, though I am a member for Kimberley, I say we must do away with the Stock Tax. Some of these mining centres have a population ten times as numerous as the population of some of the constituencies represented in this House. One electorate at Yilgarn has nearly as many men, and men of intelligence and enterprise, within its own boundaries, as the whole of the voters in the other electorates of Western Australia put together. Is it fair that all this large population should only have one member to represent them in this House? It is not fair. It is unreasonable to expect any single member to attend to the multifarious wants and requirements of all these mining centres. I hope the Government, when they are dealing with this question of the redistribution of seats, will give us two or three more members for these goldfields. There is a good feeling towards the present Government throughout our goldfields, and they have nothing to fear from giving them increased representation. At the same time there are one or two things that want righting. We want our machinery carried at reasonable rates, and we want other things required on our goldfields carried at a reasonable rate. It is high time the present rates were reduced, and, as I said before, I mean to keep the Commissioner of Railways to his promise of last session to reduce the rates on our goldfields railways. The cry at one time was that we did not know whether these goldfields were permanent, and it was necessary to charge high rates, and, so to speak, make hay while the sun was shining. But the day of doubt as to the permanency of these fields has passed, and it is time the Government recognised that fact by reducing these rates. At present it looks as if the whole world had confidence in our goldfields, except our own Government. They still persist in adhering to a tariff of rates that will recoup them in a few years, in case the goldfields collapse. The present tariff is a stand-

ing argument against the permanency of these fields. I trust that the figures which I intend to ask for, showing the amount of traffic on this railway, will, when they are furnished, lead the Government, in their sense of fair play, to reduce the present rates and assimilate them with the ordinary rates. I do not wish to trespass further on the time of the House. I thank members for having listened to me at such length on this occasion. I may have to ask the House for leave of absence, for a fortnight or so, and I may not have the opportunity of expressing my views on some of these subjects when they come up again; therefore, I thought I would avail myself of the present opportunity to express my views, which I may say are the views universally entertained throughout the district I represent. That being the case I have felt no hesitation in placing them before this House. I think it is as well that those who are friendly disposed towards the Government as a rule, should give expression to their views on this occasion, so that nothing unexpected may happen. I hold these views strongly, and will continue to do so, so long as I have the honour of occupying a seat in this House.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: This debate has been prolonged to such length that no other member seems to care to get on his legs to further discuss the Address-in-Reply. But I should like to make a few remarks before the debate closes. I have no reason myself to be dissatisfied with the Speech. It is very long, it is true, and there is very little in it that we did not know before; and I see no reason, myself, why we should not have had the Speech when this House first met. It might have saved time and a lot of debate. I do not propose to deal with the paragraphs of the Speech *seriatim*, but there are many matters which I should like to refer to. I think it is a wise provision that a certain amount of latitude should be allowed to members in discussing the Address-in-Reply. It saves the time of the House afterwards, and it gives the Government an opportunity of gauging the views of the House upon the questions brought forward in the Speech. With regard to our railways, it certainly is a matter of considerable satisfaction to hear that they are returning such a good revenue as we are told they do. At the same time I think the hon. member who has just sat down, and other members, have good reason for complaining about the excessive rates charged on our railways, and particularly

on the railway between Northam and Southern Cross. We have been told that this line contributes more to the revenue of the colony than any other line, and I have reason to believe, on very good authority, that the revenue derived from it amounts to about £80,000 annually. It has been stated that the Government could not afford to reduce the present rates to a level with the charges made on the other lines, and one can see that there is some ground for that argument, when the reduction would involve a loss of £40,000 a year. On the other hand it is an argument that cuts both ways. It is an argument which shows that the railways to our goldfields pay. If the Government derive such a large revenue from that short line from Northam to Southern Cross, what do they derive from all the traffic along the line from Fremantle to Northam? The same goods are carried, or a great proportion of them are carried, over that line. It is hardly fair for the Government to take credit for the handsome revenue derived from our goldfields, while at the same time they do not seem willing to assist them in any way by lowering the freight rates, or remitting duties upon such articles as are in greatest demand upon the goldfields. Judging by what we hear and see, they do not propose to remit the duties, or to reduce the duties on these articles. I do not see any proposal to reduce or remit the duty on crushing machinery or on explosives, or upon such articles as the boots and the clothing worn by the miners. Certain reductions or remissions are proposed, but these will principally benefit, or are supposed to benefit, the towns. I doubt, however, whether the public will derive much benefit from them. I do not think, for instance, that any reduction in the duty on sugar will benefit the community generally. It brings in a lot of revenue to the country as a whole, but I do not think that individuals feel it very much. You can buy good sugar now at 2½d., and, if the duty is removed, I do not suppose the community generally will benefit at all. I think the storekeepers and the merchants will reap the benefit, and one or two industries; but I do not think it is likely that consumers generally will be able to get their sugar cheaper than 2½d. We are always saying that the prosperity of the colony depends on the development of our goldfields, and on these goldfields now there is a very large consuming population. All the corn, hay, and chaff that can be produced in

the colony find a profitable market there and, as the agriculturists of this country cannot grow sufficient stuff to supply our goldfields, large quantities have to be imported from the other colonies, so that these goldfields are not only benefiting our own agriculturists, but also others. Yet we find the Government refusing to reduce the railway freights on these goldfields lines. On the contrary, any produce going over them is charged double rates.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: No.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Not for produce?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Certainly not.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I do not find fault with the promised reduction of freights in other directions, but I do not see why our goldfields lines should have an extra burden placed upon them, when it is clearly proved that these are the very lines that are making our railway pay, and that otherwise our railways would probably be worked at a loss. The question is, do our railways pay? We are told that they are paying interest and working expenses, but I am not prepared to accept that statement as correct. Whilst so many public works are going on, causing a large amount of traffic which is only temporary, and while such large repairs have to be made on existing lines out of loan funds, I am not prepared to say that our railways do actually pay. I doubt very much whether there is any account kept against the railways, in respect to repairs to locomotives and other charges. Then there is the printing work that is done for the department, and which costs the country many thousands a year. I should like to know whether all the work that is done for our railways is charged to that department. There are many other expenses that ought to be charged, but I question if they are. If all the charges that ought to be made against our railways were charged to them, I do doubt whether it would be found that they do pay. I doubt very much whether it will be found that they pay when our loans are exhausted. I hope the Civil Service Commission will enquire into this question of whether our railways really do pay, or whether they derive assistance from outside sources.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: If they don't pay, you will have to raise the freight rates, instead of reducing them.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It is not a question of raising freights. We are told that our rail-

ways pay, and I know some of them cannot pay: and I shall want some very strong reasons, and figures too, to satisfy me that they do pay. I think that if you allow a margin of about 3 per cent. for expenses and other miscellaneous charges, you would be near the mark. A great deal has been said about the Stock Tax. I think that members representing centres of population, and also the gold-fields, have a good deal of reason for regarding this tax as a vexatious tax. But I think that is all that can be said about it. I do not think that consumers would derive much benefit if the tax were removed to-morrow. I do not believe it makes meat dearer, in any way. The hon. member for Yilgarn said that the cost of a bullock weighing 800lbs. was £10. I think there are very few bullocks weighing 800lbs. delivered to the butchers in Perth or Fremantle. Against that, there is the cost of killing, the freight and landing charges, commission, insurance, and innumerable other charges. At the same time I cannot reconcile the price we have to pay for our meat in Perth, with the price the butchers pay for their cattle. Someone must be making a large profit, and I can tell you it is not the grazier or the grower. I am a freetrader myself, in every way, and am perfectly satisfied to do away with all duties imposed for protective purposes. But I think it would be most unfair that the unfortunate stock owners at the North, when the only thing they produce is meat, should be singled out, and receive no protection, when they have to pay duties on all the articles they themselves consume or require,—flour, chaff, hay, corn, boots, clothing, and everything else. I am confident myself, that the removal of this Stock Tax would not cheapen the price of meat in Perth. There is plenty of live stock in our Northern areas which could be brought to market if facilities were given for bringing it down. I am glad to see that the Government propose to give these facilities, which I think is a move in the right direction. I only hope they will go further, and subsidise steamers to bring stock down from the North. There is no doubt in my mind, that it would be a good thing, not only for the people of Perth and Fremantle and these southern parts, but also for those who have stock to send down, but no means of bringing them down. Some of the steamers at present on the coast are subsidised, and some are not, and they can only bring down a few stock at a time, and it doesn't pay to send steamers up specially

to bring stock down. I think that a reasonable subsidy would materially assist, not only the consumer, but also the producer. It would be necessary of course that these steamers should not call at the intermediate ports, as the steamers do now. If they had to do so, there would be great deal of loss by deaths, and the stock would also lose in condition. With regard to the question of Federation, a great deal has been said about it by several hon. members. I am one of those who think it would not suit this colony at the present time to go in for Federation. We may all be satisfied it would be a very fine thing to be a member of a great Australian Federation, and to help to build up an Australian nation; but, so far as this colony is concerned, I think our isolation is a barrier, at any rate for some time to come, to our federating with the other colonies. We have an immense territory to develop, and have quite enough to do to look after our own interests for the present. I hope to see the other colonies taking up this question of Federation in a more earnest manner than they are doing at present, and let a start be made in this direction. Let New South Wales and Victoria federate first; then Queensland and South Australia might come in. It will then be time for us to consider whether we should join the Federation or not. I think we are too far away from the other colonies, and I do not believe that it would be to the interest of Western Australia to federate with them for many a long day, setting aside the question of inter-colonial freetrade. As I have said, we have a large country to develop, our debt is small, and the colony is prosperous, while the reverse is the case in the other colonies. Going outside the Speech itself, I am very pleased indeed to see, in view of the appointment of a fresh Governor, that some regulations have been approved by the Executive and sent home to the Secretary of State, with regard to the allowances which future Governors are to be entitled to. I wish the Government had gone further, and made some regulations so as to give them some control over the absence-on-leave of a Governor during the term of his office. Take, for instance, the case of the present occupant of the office. His Excellency's commission is dated the 26th August, 1890, and we were told by the Premier, in answer to a question the other night, that His Excellency's leave had been extended to the 16th August next. I have

looked up the record supplied to the House last session, and I find that the present Governor, during his term of office—assuming he does not return until August next—has been in the colony, drawing full or half-salary, 1,825 days in all, and that he has been absent on different occasions 591 days; that is just one-third of the term of his occupancy. It suggests itself to me that if the Imperial representative, who is paid a very large salary by the colony (something like £6,000 a year altogether) can be away from the seat of Government for one-third of his time, we might do away with him for the remaining two-thirds. Apart from that, we are keeping up three Government houses, and it is just a question whether it would not be wise to dispense with two of them and save the expense of keeping them up. Another thing, I think it would be well that the Government should suggest to the Secretary of State, that any future Governor appointed should be a married man. I do not know why hon. members laugh. I do not think it is well that Government House should be without a lady; for social and other reasons there should be a lady presiding over the Governor's establishment, and I hope that when the next Governor is appointed he will not be a bachelor, or someone who will not have his wife with him. There is another matter I wish to refer to, and that is the Government Printing Office. The Civil Service Commission, I believe, enquired into some branch of this department, and they seemed to be satisfied; but I do not think the public are. It is only lately that *Hansard* for last year was supplied to members, and the Votes and Proceedings have only been supplied since this session opened, while the Blue Book is not published to this day. I hope the Government will cause some enquiry to be made into the working of this department. I do not in any way recommend a Commission, for I do not think the Commission understood their work, nor do I think they enquired what amount of printing work was done for the different departments. We know it is costing the country a large sum of money to keep up this establishment, and I notice in the Excess Bill for last year that there is a very large excess in connection with this department. What I would suggest would be this: that all work done in the Government Printing Office for the different departments of the service should be charged to those departments, and a debit account kept

against departments for work done. We would then find out what expenditure is incurred for printing by each department, and we would get some idea as to whether we are getting value for our money. I think it is most important that the organisation of this office should be fully enquired into. It would have another good effect: it would make Ministers and heads of department more careful if they found there was a large charge against their departments for printing. They would probably come to the conclusion that their printing was costing them too much, or, if the Government Printing Office charged too much for the work, they would get the work done outside, which would be a sort of check upon the Government Printing Office. Coming back to the question of our goldfields, I think the Government are doing a great deal for these goldfields, in the shape of spending money in providing them with water, and giving them railway communication and other conveniences. While on this subject of railways, I would ask the Government whether it would not be well for them to enquire into the cost of narrow gauge railways—temporary railways I may call them—of 2ft. gauge, which might be used to bring the different fields into communication with the terminus of the permanent line, say at Coolgardie.

AN HON MEMBER: There was a select Committee on the subject last year.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Yes, but present circumstances are different. The cheap lines then contemplated were to be permanent lines; I am alluding to temporary lines. I don't know much about the cost of such lines, but I have been told it would not be more than £300 or £400 per mile. They might be run in different directions, connected with the main line, and when they were no longer required in any particular locality, they could be removed and made use of somewhere else. I know that these cheap lines are not in favour with engineers, as a rule. They like something permanent, whether it pays or not, but I do not see why they would not be of great service in some parts of the colony. There is another question I must refer to. I do not wish to deal with it in any captious spirit; I always wish to avoid giving offence if I can, or say anything calculated to create ill-feeling or dissension. But I must refer to one question, and that is the Education question. I think that in the interests of many of our friends in

this House, whom we would like to see here again, it would be as well to deal with this question during the present Parliament, when it can be dealt with in an amicable spirit. I think those who are interested in the present system will be likely to receive better terms from the present Parliament than from any future Parliament. The results of some recent elections indicate that the days of the present system are numbered. The Government, I am aware, have taken a strong stand on this question, but they will either have to turn some kind of somersault or go out of office over it.

MR. SIMPSON: Go out.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I don't wish them to go out. But the results of the recent elections went to show what the result will be when the present Parliament will cease to exist. Therefore, I think it would be wise if some arrangement could be arrived at with the Assisted Schools during the existence of the present Parliament. I would suggest (if it can be done) that the Government should take over these Assisted Schools and convert them into national schools, where required, giving the owners of the schools a fair and reasonable compensation. With regard to the proposed railway to the Collie coalfield, I have visited the coalfield, and I am satisfied (which I was not before) that we have a good useful coal there. The only question to my mind is this: whether we have it in sufficient quantity. There is also the question of the cost at which it can be brought to market, and whether the cost of it, delivered in Perth, would be cheaper than the cost of imported coal. If we can get imported coal cheaper, no doubt it will continue to be used, as it is a more valuable coal. One is gas coal and the other is not. Another objection to the Collie coal is the large bunker space it would occupy on board steamers. I do not wish to express my opinion at the present time upon this question, but I would like the Government, before they build this railway to the Collie, to put down a bore in different parts nearer the coast, to ascertain whether coal cannot be obtained in a more advantageous position than this Collie coalfield. With regard to working these coal mines, I differ from the hon. member for East Perth on that point. I am not in favour of the Government working them. I should prefer to see them worked by some capitalists, but we want to know whether the railway is going to pay before we build it. With regard to the proposed Mint, I have not studied the

matter, but it certainly would be to the advantage of the people on our goldfields to be able to bring down their gold and have it converted into sovereigns, instead of having to carry it away in a chamois leather bag to the other colonies. It may not suit the Banks, who would lose their little profit, and their commission. So far as keeping the Mint going, I have no fear but that this colony will be able to keep it going for many years to come, working every day in the year. The hon. member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) told us he was informed by a high authority in New South Wales, Mr. Donald Cameron, that only one Mint in Australia will pay.

MR. CONNOR: In the Eastern Colonies.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I believe, myself, that the only Mint that would pay would be the West Australian Mint, because I believe we shall obtain more gold in this colony than any of the other colonies. My old friend, the hon. member for Sussex, complained about the time it takes to get from Busselton to Perth by railway. I quite concur with him. It is a most tedious journey, and something ought to be done to improve the present service. There is bad management somewhere. I have got out when travelling on this line to see what was causing the stoppages, and I found the guard employed in hunting out parcels for the different stations. Instead of having the goods assorted, they seemed to be mixed up higgledy-piggledy, and the time of the guard is wasted, and the time of the travelling public too. I have very little more to say, except that I think some improvement ought to be made in the accommodation of the public in this Chamber. There is very little accommodation here for the public now, and there seems to be plenty of room in the Press Gallery, a portion of which might, I think, be set apart for the accommodation of strangers, without in any way interfering with the reporters. I should be sorry to hamper or cramp the members of the Press, or to cause them interruption, but I think one portion of the gallery might be boarded off without inconveniencing them. If that cannot be done, something else ought to be done to increase the accommodation provided for the public; and I hope the Government will consider the matter and see what can be done. I must apologise to the House for detaining it so long.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I have some remarks to make, in the nature of replies to hon. members

who have spoken. Following in the wake of the Attorney-General, I must on behalf of the Government thank hon. members for the moderate tone in which they have dealt with the Address. Taking the debate on the whole, I do not think we can trace any great hostility to the Government, and we may take it as a compliment that the Speech has been received generally with so much favour. With regard to whether the debate on the Address is a loss of time or not, I may say that in my opinion it is not. I think it is an advantage, and I think members have a right to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by this debate for addressing themselves to any subjects they desire to ventilate. The hon. member for Perth, who first followed the mover and seconder, spoke about the Collie coalfield, and said he hoped the Government, before the session is over, will give as much information to the House as they possibly can upon this subject. On the part of the Government, I may say that the most full and complete information which the Government have up to the present time will, I hope, be laid on the table for the information of hon. members. We have had many tests made, some good and some bad, and they will all be laid before members, so that they may be able to form their own judgment. Personally, I am as confident now, that we have good, marketable, and serviceable coal at the Collie, as ever I was; and I feel sure that when we have a railway to that colliery, we will be able to put fuel down here at a price within the range of the pocket of the poorest inhabitant of the colony. Coming next to the hon. member for Albany, the hon. member's words sounded to me as if the voice was that of Jacob while the hand was that of Esau. If the hon. member's ambition is at some future time to occupy a seat on these Treasury benches, and that ambition is realised, and we on this side happen to be in the cold shades of the Opposition, I can promise the hon. member that we will give him a loyal support in everything which in our opinion will tend to the benefit of the colony. However anxious (in the hon. member's opinion) we may be to keep in office, I assure him we are not at all anxious to do so one hour longer than we think the people of the colony desire. When we feel that the people have lost confidence in us we shall be happy to retire in the hon. member's favour. He spoke of the maladministration of the Government generally, and of myself in par-

ticular, and he supported his allegation by the tremendous indictment that the stone for the Albany Post Office was imported stone. It may be of some interest to members if I read a short memorandum on this subject, which may clear the minds of hon. members:

1. The specifications provide that "freestone" shall be from Pyrmont Quarries, N.S.W., and the "bluestone" from Newport Quarries, Victoria, or local granite, at the option of the Contractor.

2. The Contractor elected to use imported stone.

3. A sample of stone, got at South Albany, was tested Dec. 3rd, 1894, but the proposal to use that stone was abandoned, as it proved brittle and unsuitable for mullions and transoms.

4. In connection with this, it may be mentioned that Charles Layton, a local builder, supplemented his tender for this building by a telegram, dated 11th Dec., 1894, "error in alternative tender, local material increased by forty-five pounds (£45)."

5. The invoice price for freestone, imported, is £47.

6. The labour on freestone and bluestone was executed locally, viz., at Albany.

7. There is no plant at Albany for breaking granite, and hand-breaking is expensive, and no other hard stone available, suitable for making the steps of concrete.

8. There is no sand at Albany suitable for making such concrete.

9. If the steps had been of concrete, broken bluestone would probably have been railed from Greenmount, and an imported cement would necessarily have been used.

10. The basement walling and rough wrought steps at entrance, as well as the door and window sills and the plinths, are of local stone.

11. In Perth local granite steps cost 7s. 6d. to 8s. per super foot, and Victorian blue stone 4s. 3d. to 4s. 6d. per super foot.

12. Referring to the practice in other than Government buildings, it may be mentioned that the specifications for the Congregational Church, in St. George's Terrace, Perth, provided that the steps to entrance should be of local granite, but it was found that they could not economically be procured, the result being that the top step is of local granite and all the others are of Victorian blue stone.

MR. SIMPSON: Who is that report by?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): By the Assistant-Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Poole). It will be obvious to members that in making use of this stone the Government were doing the best they could in the interests of the country, and having the work done as economically as possible. Coming next to the remarks of the hon. member for North Fremantle, and the hon. member for the Murray, I feel sure that, when those hon. members come to think over the remarks they made use of with reference to Mr. Allison Smith, they will regret having expressed themselves in the way they did. I feel

sure it was not their desire to take advantage of their position in this House to cast reflections upon the character of a professional man which they would not be able to make outside this House without rendering themselves liable to a civil action. It was with regret that I heard such reflections cast upon a professional man's character, and I particularly regret the reference that was made to the amount paid by this colony to Mr. Allison Smith for his services. I do not think the hon. and learned member for North Fremantle (Mr. Moss) would think five guineas a day too high to charge for his professional services. Nor do I think that the hon. member for the Murray (Mr. George), if his services or advice were sought on some special occasion, would consider that he was fairly paid if he received fifty guineas for ten or twelve days' work.

MR. GEORGE: I give my time for 5s. a day when on a jury.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The amount paid to Mr. Allison Smith was at about the same rate as we are paying our own Engineer-in-Chief, and I do not think we pay him at too high a rate. The honorable member for West Perth made reference to the way the Government deal with arbitration cases, in respect to compensation paid for land resumed for railway purposes. I may inform the hon. member that we deal with these matters under the Act. The value of the land is appraised by valuers appointed by the Government, and I feel sure the Government always appoint the best men they can find.

MR. SIMPSON: At the Vasse?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Yes, at the Vasse also. The very best men available are appointed, and I feel sure no sensible man can cavil at their valuations. We find that in nearly every instance they are reasonable and fair, and as much as the Government ought to pay. In many instances we have bought land, privately, below the valuation of these gentlemen. The hon. member for Nannine, in speaking of our railways, said he was not perfectly satisfied with the large amounts charged to loan accounts in connection with the equipment of our railways and railway stations. On this point, I would just say this: I have been at the head of our railways now for five years, and I have heard a great deal in this House as to how they ought to be conducted. I have often

heard members say they wish to see our railways conducted on commercial principles. For my part I wish that principle to be carried out to the bitter end—not that one branch should be conducted on commercial principles, and another branch on anything else but commercial principles.

MR. SIMPSON: Black mail principle on one line.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The fact of the matter is we never did equip our Eastern railway properly, from the very first; it was the most poorly equipped line in Australia up to a few years ago. The most common conveniences were not to be found on it; and it was impossible, the railway revenue then being 114 per cent. less than the expense, to attempt to buy rolling stock, and the consequence was we had to ask for a loan for additional improvements, so as to equip our lines. As a matter of fact they have never been equipped properly up to the present day, though we are trying to do so. If this House says we must reduce our freight rates to the lowest possible standard, I ask how are you going to make our railways pay, and provide additional rolling stock, etc.

The House at this stage adjourned for an hour.

At 7.30 p.m. the SPEAKER resumed the chair.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): Resuming my remarks, I was going on to say, before the adjournment, that I think it would be as well if hon. members who have criticised the working of the railways would be consistent in their remarks, for if they expect us to show a surplus of revenue over expenditure at the end of the year, they must not, on the other hand, move the Government to make reductions in the freight rates. I will, at a later period in the session, be delivering my annual statement upon the railway estimates, giving then to the House all the information that is possible in relation to the railway accounts; and I need not now labor this question very far. Referring to remarks made by the hon. member for Nannine, I can assure him that, up to the present moment, so far as the working expenses are concerned as against revenue in this year and the year just past, there is no item, to my knowledge, charged against loan account, that should properly and reasonably be charged to working expenses. Therefore I can assure hon. members that the accounts

which will be presented to you during the present session will be accurate accounts, showing clearly and fully the actual estimates of railway expenses as against the revenue. The hon. member for the Gascoyne has said he does not feel sure that the department has not been charging to loan account the cost of machinery repairs. I may tell the hon. member that, in all railways in the world, the cost of machinery repairs is charged to railway expenditure, and not to any loan account. But in connection with other railways that are managed by companies on commercial principles, there is always a fund, which may be called a sinking fund, out of which the rolling stock can be paid for, and the companies do not care even to increase their capital account, unless it is for some extraordinary expenditure, such as extensions or other contingencies that may arise. I again say that if it is desired that the Government railways in this colony should be worked on commercial principles, there will be no difficulty in that respect, but hon. members must be consistent in that matter, and not expect that very reduced rates can be charged, and that there will, at the same time, be a large annual surplus of revenue over expenditure. The two expectations are antagonistic to each other. I may say, in regard to the working of the railways, that the results will show, when laid before hon. members, that whereas the percentage of working cost was £114 to earn £100 of revenue in the year 1890, the percentage of cost for the year 1894-5 has been £63 to earn £100. That is the very best result you can expect to attain at present; and I venture to say that it compares favourably with the working of any other railways in Australia, even under the management of the ablest experts. I may say again, that when the railway accounts are presented to hon. members, later in the session, they will be correct accounts and such as members may rely on; and I can assure the hon. member for the Gascoyne that I am not by any means likely to charge a thing to loan account, which should properly be charged to working expenses, inasmuch, if I had the desire to do so, hon. members could call for the returns, and would thus be able to see the mistake in a moment, and such a mistake would reflect very much on the departments. It has been stated, in this debate, that on a previous occasion I laid down the principle, in reference to the rail-

ways to goldfields, that when the goldfields traffic has shown a clear surplus over the working expenses, besides paying interest on capital, the Government will consider the propriety of reducing the rates of freight. Well, I say now that I never told this House, nor gave the hon. member for Coolgardie, any promise to the effect that when the line to Southern Cross paid the same as other lines of railway have paid, the freight rates would be reduced. I assure the House that such a thing was never in my mind, and I could not have said it. I may say, however, that the Government have now lowered the rates on all the railways of the colony; and inasmuch as the rates are lowered upon a large amount of produce, those people who are served by the railways to goldfields must proportionately derive the same benefit as the other portions of the community. Also, from the 1st of August next the passenger rates on goldfields railways will be assimilated to those charged on the Eastern Railway; therefore, taking it altogether, the reduced rates that will be in operation on and after the 1st of August will make a difference, a total estimated reduction in our railway revenue, amounting to between £30,000 and £40,000. So far, therefore, as my promise is concerned, as regards the reduction of the rates as soon as a certain proportion of revenue was received from the railways, that promise has been redeemed, and the reduction will be realised on the 1st of August next. The hon. member for the Vasse has spoken of the slow speed of trains on the newly opened railway to that district. It should be remembered that, in constructing new railways, this House expects the Government to construct them as cheaply as possible; therefore we have laid down on that railway, as on others, 45lb. rails, and it is absolutely impossible to get a great amount of speed on rails of that strength. If, however, hon. members want to see a high speed attained on our railways, they must authorise the Government, when constructing new lines, to use 60lb. or 80lb. rails. As to comparative speed, I am aware the Midland Railway Company are at present running trains on their railway at a higher rate of speed than the contractor for that company thinks it safe and proper to do; and I understand that those trains attain sometimes a speed of 40 miles an hour, on 45lb. rails. The Midland line is only just completed, and the company are bound to a certain amount of time. I

have no control over the rate of speed on that railway. With regard to speed on our Eastern Railway and lines generally, I may say the Government have already ordered a class of engines with a much larger wheel base, and we expect to run the trains in future at a greater speed than we have been able to do hitherto. As to the speed of trains on the Vasse railway, it is the duty of the Government to assist the poor settler as well as others, in sending his produce by railway; and the settler who has a bag of potatoes or a quarter of a ton of flour to send by railway has as much right to have it taken up or delivered, as has the man who wants to send away a 5-truck load. The picking up of small quantities at various stations along the journey will account for the slow rate of speed on the Vasse line. But the speed is not always slow between Perth and the Vasse, because on Friday the journey is done at a fairly good speed, and on that journey there is not much done in the delivery of goods. When the trade justifies it, we shall be able to run trains at a higher rate of speed between Perth and the Vasse, and I hope the time is not far distant when the trade along that railway will be sufficient to warrant the running of passenger trains, separately from the goods traffic. I may add that on and after the 1st of September next it is proposed to run daily trains between Perth and the Southern districts, and I hope they will make better time. The hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion) referred to something he thought must be wrong in the railway administration when the carters along the road can compete against the railway between Perth and Fremantle. But the hon. member, on reflection, will easily see that there is a reason for that competition. The railway between Perth and Fremantle, like the railways elsewhere, has to pay for upkeep and general management, besides the other expenses; whereas the carters who use a public road, which is maintained by the Government, have nothing to pay for maintenance. If, however, the carters had to pay for the maintenance of the road which they use, they could no more compete against the railway than they could fly. These carters are not put to any great expense in bringing goods from Fremantle to Perth, because all goods that come ex warehouse from the Port can be delivered in Perth with only one handling; whereas, the other way about, when goods go from a warehouse to the Goods Shed at Fremantle there is

the handling, and on reaching Perth by railway there is a second handling, and in the delivery there is a third handling. When I was in South Australia recently I was astonished to see the great amount of cartage that is done between that city and the port. There is also a large amount of cartage between the city of Melbourne and the port; and the same is to be seen in New Zealand. It is easy to understand that carters will be able to deliver with greater despatch than can be done by the railways, because if you put a load of stuff on a cart in Fremantle, to be delivered direct to some agent in Perth, you can estimate within half-an-hour the time when the stuff will be delivered in Perth; but if the same goods be delivered at the railway station in Fremantle for conveyance to Perth, there may not be a goods train till the night, and the articles may not be delivered in Perth till the next morning, so that there is not the same certainty of quick delivery within a given time. That is why the carters are able to carry goods at payable rates on the road between Perth and Fremantle. There is another question outside of that. Does the hon. member desire, in raising this point, that the Government should "run" every trade, and monopolise the whole of the business in this colony? Does he desire that the Government, when they see a carter making a living by carrying goods in a small way, should run him off the road? [AN HON. MEMBER: You do it in the delivery of parcels.] Yes, we do send out a carrier to deliver small parcels. But, on this question of carters competing against the railway, I think it is a good thing to encourage private enterprise as much as possible, and if carters find that it pays them to carry goods direct by road between Perth and Fremantle, and if it pays the railway to deal with goods ex ship, we may well leave the matter as it stands, and not find fault with the Railway Department for not lowering the rates, and leaving some trade to be done by carters along the road.

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: I did not say the rates were too high.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): No; the hon. member said he thought something was wrong when the carters were able to compete against the railway. I am quite satisfied there was no animus in what the hon. member said, but that he simply mentioned it as a fact. I may say, however, that if I were the managing

director of a private railway, I do not think you would see any traffic in goods along the road at all, in competition with the railway; but, in the position I occupy, it is my duty to study the best interests of the colony generally, rather than the actual interests of the railway revenue. I do not think I need labor the question further in regard to the administration of the railways, as I think the accounts that will be laid before hon. members this session will carry conviction. I regret, with the hon. member for the Murray that the railway reports have been wanting, and were not presented last session; but that is due to the fact that we have been running at high pressure in our offices ever since I have been in office, and the Engineer-in-Chief has not had time to make those valuable reports which he should do, and which otherwise would have been presented regularly; but I promise that before long—I hope before this session closes—you will have full and complete reports. As we have nothing but good to report, you can quite understand it is annoying to me that I was not able, last session, to place before the House the annual report on the railways. That report, as well as the report for the year just past, will be printed. I hope, before the close of this session we have the matter a good deal forward now, and it will only be a question of printing that will prevent the report for the year 1894-5, as well as that for the previous year, being presented during the present session. Before closing, I may be expected to refer to some remarks made by the hon. member for Albany. I may say that, when he speaks about putting a stop to dissensions in the Ministry, I do not know to what he alludes. I do not know of any dissensions in the Ministry. [MR. SIMPSON: We all know what he alludes to.] Well, so far as I am individually concerned, I may say that the longer we, as colleagues, are associated with Sir John Forrest as Premier of this colony, the better we appreciate him and the more loyal we are to him. The hon. the Premier will be able, before this debate closes, to address himself to the hon. member for Albany. There was a remark made by the hon. member for Gascoyne about the want of conveniences in this Chamber. Two years ago there was expressed a desire on the part of certain members for the erection of new Parliamentary Buildings. I do not think that desire met with much support from members generally; but, as Director of Public

Works, and knowing that this desire existed, I have thought it would be unwise for me to make large or expensive alterations in the present building, if there was a desire to erect new Parliamentary Buildings, in which both branches of the Legislature could be amply accommodated. If, however, hon. members can agree to put that idea out of their minds, and go on using the present Chamber, a great deal may be done in improving the present arrangements, not only for the greater convenience of members, but also for the public in the spaces set apart for them. I have had a design prepared which shows that, for a few hundred pounds, a greater amount of sitting accommodation can be provided for the public generally, and for the ladies, by improving the present Chamber.

MR. LEFROY: It must be very gratifying to any one representing the people in any country, to hear a satisfactory statement emanating from the Government at any time and I think we may all feel gratification that on the present occasion the Government are able to present to us a satisfactory condition of affairs. I must admit they have tried to give it as rosy a hue as possible, but of course that is naturally always the desire of a Government. But though everything about this colony at present appears to be very golden indeed, yet in some parts of it there are clouds which any one who knows the inward condition of this colony must not ignore. I do not intend to go *seriatim* through the different items that are presented to us in the Speech of His Excellency, but will merely pause a little over a few of the questions that are here brought to our notice, and which have been debated to a certain extent by hon. members. Some exception has been taken to the statement in the Speech with regard to Federation. I myself must agree with the Government that this is not a pressing time for us to initiate in this colony any state of Federation. Exception has been taken by some members to the appointment of delegates to the Federal Council, as made by the Government; but I think this is scarcely the time to take exception to those appointments, because it must be well known to hon. members that there is no other course provided under the Federal Council Act, by which delegates from this colony to that Council could be appointed. I am not sure however, that it would not be a much better plan if delegates to the

Council were to be appointed by Parliament; but, at the same time, I do not think it right that members of this House should object to the present arrangement, by objecting to the Government having made the appointments they did make, when the Government had no other course they could possibly have taken under the Act. Of course it would probably amount to the same thing if the delegates to the Council were to be elected by Parliament, because the Government of the day must necessarily have a majority to carry out the business of the country, and they would possibly name their own representatives, and their supporters would probably support them in doing so. I think indeed that, under the present system of appointment, we are more likely to get gentlemen appointed as delegates who have not exactly the same views as the Government on general questions, than would be the case if the delegates were to be appointed by Parliament as a whole, in which the Government must necessarily have a majority. The Federal Council is the only body that has any power to deal with federal questions; and I think it is very well that this body should continue, for if it is nothing else, it is the germ of that larger Federation which we all hope at some time to see. I am not one of those who would like to see merely the Federation of Australia against the outside world, because I do not think that is the proper spirit which should actuate us in desiring Federation. I should like to see, with the Federation of Australia, the Federation of the whole British Empire; and if we cannot have that, we had better have nothing. As to federating Australia against the outside world, where does the money we borrow come from, if not from the outside world—from England particularly? And as to our having Fretrade amongst ourselves, and protection against the outside world, I do not think we should endeavor to put restrictions upon the mother country by shutting out from our shores her exported goods, when our produce is being exported to England. One of the questions debated on this occasion is the Stock Tax, and that question has arisen out of the Tariff Bill mentioned in the Speech, and since introduced into this House. I must say that some of those members who are opposed to the Stock Tax have handled it in a very extraordinary manner. The hon. member for East Perth, who I notice always makes

a long oration to the House, and to whom we are all pleased to listen, for we look upon him as a rising member of this House, does not himself remain in the Chamber to listen to others, after others have listened to him for perhaps an hour or more. The hon. member classes himself as an out-and-out protectionist, and what does he do at the same time? He wants freetrade in stock and meat. I do not like to impute motives—it is a thing I would rather not do—but when I think over this matter, it seems to me that the hon. member is merely addressing that argument to his constituents, thinking probably that it will suit those who placed him here, and consequently he desires to see the Stock Tax taken off. I think we ought all, as far as possible, to try and legislate for the colony at large, and, when legislating for the protection of industries, we should place that protection, if possible, on the whole community rather than on any particular class. The hon. member says this tax irritates a certain number of people. Well, I say if there is something more than another which would irritate those people who live in the Northern parts of this colony, it would be the abolition of the Stock Tax. I believe that, to take it off, would irritate them more than anything else. Personally, I say it would not affect me in the least, or those I represent, but it would certainly irritate those people who are our pioneer settlers in the North. If the retaining of the Stock Tax would irritate one class, and the removal of it would equally irritate another class, I say the mere fact of there being irritation in one class would not be a right reason for taking the tax off, now that it is in existence. I say it would be better to leave the tax as it is. Another hon. member has said that if the question of abolishing all these taxes were to be submitted to a direct vote of the people there would be a strong majority against it. Well, if we were to put to the direct vote of the people this question—“Shall we take the taxes off everything and do away with all taxation through the Customs house?”—I should like to know what would be the answer. I say the answer of the majority would be “Yes; do away with every taxation.” That would be the answer, because the majority of the people do not interest themselves much in the intricate matters of government, and the majority of the people never think how the government of the country is to be carried on—forgetting that all the

public services and works require money for carrying them on as public conveniences. I certainly think that the argument used by the hon. member, about submitting this taxation question to a direct vote of the people, is an argument that is untenable. Of course it is said by some, that the removal of the Stock Tax is going to make a great reduction in the price of meat. I know something about that part of the question, having lived in the colony a number of years, and am able to judge in my own way whether the removal of this tax would much lessen the price of meat to consumers, I say distinctly it would not; and I would like to say here now—and I think hon. members and the people generally will find it so—that as long as this colony is in a flourishing condition, the price of meat will never go down much. If, however, the colony gets into depression, if many people leave it, and we then have more meat in the colony than is required by the reduced population, then down will go the price of meat. Otherwise, the price will not go down much below what it is at present. There is plenty of meat which might be sent here from the Eastern colonies and South Australia, and the Stock Tax does not prevent the growers and salesmen from sending it here. [MR. MORAN : I know it does.] The hon. member, who has been visiting the other colonies, may have come to the conclusion that it does, but I have also visited the Eastern colonies recently, and I know that those interested in stock there say the Stock Tax in this colony has never deterred them from sending meat here—that what deters them is the distance, together with the risks they have to face in sending stock to our markets. I think it is only right to those people who live in the northern parts of this colony, and who lead as arduous a life as any miners, that they should be considered in this question as well as the miners, because the removal of this tax would operate as a great irritant in many quarters; and, now that the tax is in existence, we shall do very much better to leave it as it is. I will not say much with regard to the establishing of a Mint, as the question will come before us bye-and-by. I know it will be impossible for a Mint to pay here. The Melbourne Mint does not pay. I find it turned out last year coined gold to the value of four millions sterling, and I believe the cost of producing it was £208 above the working expenses, without taking into con-

sideration the interest on buildings that have cost £60,000, and the interest on fittings and other necessities, which cost £40,000. Of course a Mint will not pay here, and nobody expects that the coining of gold is going to pay. At the present price of gold, and the present value of the sovereign we all know that the minting of gold is not a profitable occupation; but, at the same time, if we are not likely to be burdened with any great expense, and if the Government can show us that such is not likely to be the case, I would not be inclined to oppose the idea of a Mint being established here, as it might give this colony some prestige in the estimation of the outside world, and as a gold-producing country, we should be brought into more notice. With regard to the Fremantle Workshops—that burning question of the day—the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion) has got a site somewhere in his own mind, which he is going to tell us about bye-and-by; and of course I would not like to pledge myself either to one site or another until my honorable and genial friend has been able to explain where this site is; and I hope it will be possible for me to give my support to the site which the hon. member intends to propose. I am afraid, however, that unless we have some better arguments brought forward than have been produced already, I shall have, on this question, to vote in the opposite direction to that of my hon. friend. His Excellency's Speech tells us that the railways are proving of the greatest importance to the country, and that the revenue for the present financial year will not only exceed the working expenses, but will also pay the interest and sinking fund on the capital expended in their construction. It also "says: "The success which has attended the "opening up of the country by railways proves, "beyond a doubt, that the policy of giving "facilities of transit by railway has been "thoroughly justified, and should be continued "to the utmost extent, consistent with the means of the colony." Now, I regret that has not been the case in the district I represent. A railway has been running in that district (the Midland) some considerable time, and the work has been under construction nearly eight years. From the answer we received from the Premier last evening, the House now knows that not one acre of the Midland Company's land, through which the railway runs, between Guildford and

Champion Bay, has been alienated during the last two years, and therefore none of that land has been alienated during the last eight years, because until two years ago the Government had no power to sell any land within the area of the Company's concession—that is to say, from 1887 until two years ago, the Government had no power to sell any land for settlement within that district. This is a question of very great importance to the colony, because we have had all this extent of country lying idle, waiting for settlement and for cultivation; and yet not one acre of the Company's land has been alienated during the last eight years. It is not that there is no land there suitable for settlement and cultivation. There is abundance of land that might be used for settlement and for agricultural purposes, and this can be shown by the fact that even within the last few months, on the side of the railway where the land has not been selected by the Midland Company, the Government have been able to part with a considerable amount of Crown land, and some settlement is going on there. But, unfortunately, the Government retain very little land there that is of any good, between Guildford and Geraldton, after the Company have made their selections; and I hope the Midland Company will soon open their eyes to the fact, that if their railway is to be a payable undertaking, they must do something to settle the land they have selected under their contract. It is ridiculous for a board of railway directors, sitting in London, to value the Company's land, as they do, at the absurd price of 30s. an acre right through, as an average. Those directors sitting in London must know particularly well that a large area of land in this colony cannot possibly be worth 30s. an acre, when the Government are giving free grants of land to homestead selectors. Those gentlemen ought to know that land here cannot be of that value for settlement, when they must be aware that within the sound of the church bells of London, there is land now reduced to prairie value. Small holders in the Midland district, who had perhaps 100 acres of land eight years ago, and may now wish to increase their holding by purchasing from the Company, are not able to do so because no man can afford to pay 30s. an acre, and make a profit out of the land by working it. Besides, how can persons in London imagine that, when we are giving away land here for the purpose of inducing settlement and cultivation, the Mid-

land Company can get the high price they expect for it? I do not wish to call to account those gentlemen who are in this colony representing the Company, for I think they have carried out the construction work well, and the colony has got a good line of railway now running; but unless, the Company adopt some practical scheme of land settlement, the present state of things will prove a great detriment to the Company and to this colony. If the Company wish to get out of their difficulties, they will have to bring settlement to the large area of country which they hold. I am glad the Government have decided to put down artesian bores on the goldfields. I have always advocated this, because I do not see how we can really know whether artesian water is obtainable there, until sufficient tests are actually made; and I am pleased to think the Government are now going to put down bores in different parts of the goldfields, and try to find artesian water if possible. One or two hon. members have said there are several questions which ought to be settled here, while the public feeling is calm. Why, those hon. members want to get about two hundred years ahead of any other country. That sort of thing is impossible. We all know that political changes come gradually, and they must come in this country, as elsewhere, by a series of revolutions, and not by any other way. Does any hon. member know of any great political question having been settled when everything in that country was calm and quiet? I never have, though I rather prefer a state of calm. All great questions of the day, in other countries, have been settled either by force of arms, or when the political conditions were very stormy. With regard to increasing the facilities at elections, and all that sort of thing, I think we have gone quite far enough in our electoral legislation, and I do not think anything further is required at present. Some hon. members seem to imagine that all the people think of, in this colony, is getting their names put on the Electoral Rolls, and having a vote for members of Parliament—as if that were their sole ambition. My experience with electors is that there is usually the greatest difficulty in getting them to take steps for having their names put on the Electoral Rolls; and that, if they do get their names on, if they are not driven to the poll they will not go there. I do not know whether my hon.

friend, the member for Yilgarn, intends to drive all his friends to the poll, when the day of election comes round. [MR. MORAN: Yes.] I am not one of those who wish to see these changes at present. As to the payment of members, I say a Member of Parliament wants to be independent of Parliament, and unless a member is independent of Parliament, he cannot be as fitting a representative of the people as he would be if he were not paid. When representatives come into this House to be paid, all they think of will be the emolument, and very often the paid members in other Parliaments are induced to vote with the Government, simply to keep them in power, because the paid members are afraid that if the Government go out there may be a general election and these members may lose their emoluments. After the lengthy reports we now see printed every evening of the proceedings in this House, and the great length of some of the speeches, some of us may think whether it would not be better if each member were allowed only ten or fifteen minutes to speak in a debate. I rather expect that some of those gentlemen in the gallery who have to report our speeches may be "striking" before this session is ended. I am aware there is a provision in the contract agreement for publishing these lengthy reports in a newspaper, that the publishers are not to be held responsible in the event of a strike. However, we are all aware that the colony is in a most satisfactory financial condition—it must be most satisfactory for all of us to know that—but at the same time I think that, outside of the gold, the people generally are not in that satisfactory condition that the finances of the colony would lead one to expect they are, and that to say otherwise would appear but mockery to some of those poor, unfortunate people who have had to tide over the great difficulties of the last few years. But this fact emphasises, at the same time, the great importance of the gold discoveries in this colony—the fact that, when everything else in the colony is depressed, the financial condition of the colony is sound and flourishing—because, take away the gold discoveries and all that depends on them, then what sort of condition would we be in? That again emphasises the inference that we should try to assist the gold industry as much as possible. We should consider carefully what we expend in that direction, and I am not sure the Government are not right in charging a little higher freight

on the railways to the goldfields, as compared with the freights on other lines. It is to be remembered there is no back traffic on the goldfields' railways, and that before they were built the cost of carriage by road to the fields was enormous. The difference between the freight by road and that now charged by railway is so greatly in favor of the mining industry, that it means a saving in cost of 300 or 400 per cent. These railways have been, proportionately, of much greater advantage to the people interested in the gold mining industry, than to the other classes of the community. While the colony is in this satisfactory financial condition, I think this is a time when we ought to be most careful with regard to its finances. It is well known that it is not only the case with the Governments, but with private individuals, that when there is plenty, when there is abundance, when there is great financial prosperity, there is also a bigger outgoing, and a greater waste. We have seen that experience all over the world, and I think we should be all the more careful in dealing with the finances, so that when we have abundance we should not squander it. Although sitting on the Opposition side, I am not here to attack the Government in any way for what they have done in the past; and it remains to be seen in the future whether it will be necessary for me to take up a position of that kind. My duty to the country is to see that the affairs of the colony are carried on properly and rightly, through Parliament; and as long as the Government bring forward measures that are in the interest of the country, I say here, fearlessly, I shall be prepared to support them, and support them to the utmost of my ability. I think that is the proper spirit which should actuate any representative of the people. We cannot all have the same views. It is very pleasing if we can all agree, but we cannot; and it is often extraordinary to hear that, when some of one's friends get up, their views are so entirely different from one's own views. At the same time, I have not congratulated the Government, or even told them they have managed the colony's affairs in a very satisfactory manner. But I hope we all in this House shall work, during this session, as we have worked in the past, for the best interests of the country at large, and of the people we represent.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN

LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): There are not many points in this exceedingly long debate I wish to dwell upon; so I will confine my attention to a very few of them. Every hon. member must have become weary of the whole thing. It would not be becoming in me, I suppose, to join my congratulations to those which have been so numerous, and perhaps I shall save the criticism of the hon. member for Albany if I withhold them on this occasion. I have noticed that hon. members have dealt very kindly with His Excellency's Speech as a whole. The only member on the other side who has made a downright straightforward attack on the Government is the hon. member for Albany, though perhaps, before we finish this debate, the hon. member for Geraldton may have a pitch-in too. [Mr. SMITHSON: Nothing of that sort about me.] We are all thankful to the hon. member for Albany for brightening up our debates with his flashes of wit, and as he is one of the jocular members of the House, perhaps we expect from him a certain amount of funny sayings. Being the funny man of the House, we expect him to amuse us by saying funny things. It would be very monotonous at times if we had not this relief, and so, long as the hon. member does not become too personal, he may in this way become popular. But I will say that if he poses before us as a serious politician, and wishes to be taken seriously as a statesman who perhaps some day may have to take his share of responsibility in guiding the destinies of this great country, we shall expect from him something more, something different from either criticisms or rebukes—we shall expect him to handle the affairs of the country in something like a statesmanlike manner. The hon. member bewails the absence of anything like a policy in the Governor's Speech, and remarks that surely, in the face of this rising revenue and this surplus, the Government ought to be able to sketch out something or other in the shape of a comprehensive scheme of expenditure. He also objects that the policy of the past has been one of loans and public works. The hon. member does not make it clear as to whether this policy, the absence of which from the Speech he so much regrets, was to show how this surplus revenue should be expended, or whether it was to so arrange things that no such misfortune as the possession of a surplus of £200,000 should occur again. I suspect he

cannot mean the former, because he tells us that any Ministry could carry out a policy of loans and public works—that practically anybody, without any political instinct at all, could do this. He says they have only to sit down, spend the money, and wait for the result. Well, it should follow logically that if we had indicated any policy to show how we are going to spend this £200,000 of surplus revenue, it would be no proof of political instinct on our part, because the hon. member says no political instinct is necessary to carry out a policy of spending money—that anybody can do it. He further says that one of the first principles of good government is good finance. Well, that must be a contradiction of his previous proposition, and it is one of those funny things that we expect to find, and do find, in a speech from the hon. member. Therefore, as I imagined before, it could not have been his meaning that the absence of a policy from the Speech was indicated by the absence of any scheme which should show how this enormous surplus was to be expended. But, on the other hand, if it is so, I think it would have been rather a better idea if the hon. member had had patience enough to wait until the Annual Estimates can be placed on the table, because while telling us the Speech was inordinately long, he regrets that the Government have not made it longer by adding other paragraphs to explain how this enormous balance of £200,000 is going to be expended. He attempts to show it is a proof that we have no policy, by complaining that we have not given in the Speech a list of those public works on which we intend to spend this large revenue, and he infers therefore, that we do not know how to spend it. I think the hon. member must have meant by his argument, that we ought to have brought in a policy, with a list of the intended expenditure, in order to prevent a recurrence of such a disaster as our having this enormous surplus—that is to say, we ought to have brought in a policy that would decrease our revenue in the future. Well, I must point out that we have brought in a policy that will decrease our revenue, and that the Customs Duties Repeal Bill is now on the table. But even this does not please him. He poses now as a hard-and-fast freetrader; and he gives us evidence of his financial ability in his criticisms on the tariff. He tells us he is not satisfied with the reductions the Government propose to make; which reductions, I maintain, are very

considerable in amount, and will materially relieve the burden of taxation on the people. The hon. member says we should wipe out the 20 per cent., and the 15 per cent. duties, and above all the 12½ per cent. *ad valorem* duty. This statement shows how deeply he must have thought over the tariff question, when he has not discovered that there is no 12½ per cent. duty at all. The hon. member describes the reductions proposed by the Government as a mere tea-and-sugar policy.

MR. RANDALL: I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman is reading extracts from a newspaper. Is that in order?

THE SPEAKER: If the hon. member is reading extracts from a newspaper of a debate that has taken place this session, of course he is out of order.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I am reading from my notes. However, the hon. member for Albany further said, in his criticisms, that he considered the means which the Government have chosen for reducing the tariff are not the proper ones at all, and that the reductions ought to have taken place in another direction. He would like to make us believe that the Government are confining their attention to taking the duty off tea and sugar. I think some other hon. members also have not given fair consideration to this matter in speaking in that way, for we have also proposed to take the duties off kerosene, bags, blankets, fencing wire, and many other articles in general use; and by these remissions we expect to lose £40,000 or £50,000 of revenue. That is a considerable relief to the burdens of the people. Hon. members may reason as they like, but still there is the fact that £40,000 or £50,000 a year, which the people have hitherto been paying to the revenue in taxes through the Customs-house, will in future be saved to them, and I am sure no hon. member can get out of that statement. The people who have been paying taxes on the very necessities of life, and especially the heads of families, are to be relieved to the extent of £40,000 or £50,000 a year; and as this large sum is to be saved to them on the necessities of life, and not on luxuries, I think the Government may well claim to have fairly considered the needs of the people who most require relief, and to have done this at a time when there was no great pressure on them so to do. It appears the only thing the Govern-

ment should have proposed to satisfy some hon. members, was to take off the Stock Tax. That is the burden of some hon. members' arguments. We have had from different quarters of the House—on that (the Opposition) side of the House and on this—some most ingenious and some wonderful calculations as to the oppressive effect of the Stock Tax on the community. I am not here as an apologist for the Stock Tax. I do not care much about it, one way or the other. I would prefer, as a principle, to see the whole colony go into free-trade. But when the voice of the country and of Parliament has declared a preference for a protective tariff—and I believe that if a *plebiscite* could be taken on that question the general vote would be in favor of a protective tariff—is it an honest or fair kind of protective tariff to protect a certain number of industries, and at the same time begrudge any protection to that very large interest, our agricultural and pastoral industry? I am not going to say the Stock Tax does not make the least difference in the price, because I do not believe in such arguments at all. If anyone tells me that to take the duty off sugar and tea will not make the slightest difference in the price of those articles, I believe that person is talking nonsense, because the argument could be soon reduced to a logical absurdity. I freely admit that the Stock Tax does make a difference in the price of meat but I do claim that it should not be charged in addition to the price of meat, beyond the amount of the tax itself. When we know that the tax on cattle is 30s. a head, that amount on an average beast weighing 720lbs. would be a half-penny per pound, or the tax of 2s. 6d. on a sheep weighing 60lbs. would be also a half-penny per pound; therefore I say you have no right to charge the Stock Tax with any further increase in the price than a half-penny per pound. Then why should some hon. members go into such absurdities as to talk of the retail price being 10d. a pound, and suggesting that about 5d. of that amount is caused by the Stock Tax? The hon. member for Yilgarn has said this tax accounts for the scarcity of meat in the colony, and he has argued that the cost of a good bullock in Queensland would be about £3, that the freight charge to this colony would be about £4, that other incidental expenses would be about £1, and that adding to these charges £1 10s. for the tax per head at our ports, the total cost of an imported bullock would be £9 10s., when landed here

from Queensland. The importer need not pay for insurance against loss. Taking the weight of a beast at 740 to 750 lbs., the price quoted by the hon. member would be less than 3d. a pound. But the hon. member has shown us that when the butcher sells the meat retail, he gets a total of £24 for that bullock. Well, if that be so, how is it that, with all the 'cute people we know there are in Queensland and other colonies, and assuming they can see how easy it should be to send cattle to this colony at a large profit—a profit equal to the difference between £9 10s. and £24—how is it they have not flooded our market with their imported cheap meat? There must be something wrong in the hon. member's calculation, for he has shown us, by the sum he set before this House, that there is somewhere in the cattle trade, a clear profit amounting to the difference between £9 10s. for an imported bullock, and £24 which the butcher realises on the carcass; therefore I say again, it is strange to me that, according to those figures, this colony has not been flooded with cheap meat imported from other colonies. Either that should be the effect, or the calculation must be wrong. Meat being say 6d. a pound all round, in this colony, there would be 100 per cent. profit on an imported beast weighing 750 lbs., and costing £9 10s. landed here, which is less than 3d. a pound. I say, charge the Stock Tax with the half-penny a pound which it is legitimately entitled to bear, but do not talk as if the Stock Tax should be charged with 4d. or 5d. a pound added to the price of meat. [AN HON. MEMBER:—It increases the retail price.] The retail price does not affect the argument at all. The butchers must have their profit, whatever the price is. The hon. member for East Perth said the natural protection to this line of trade should be quite sufficient. I presume he meant the freight and other expenses of importation. But that argument is not worth much, for I tell hon. members, as a fact, that the expenses of shipping a beast from our own Northern ports, where our cattle are grown, are greater than if the beast were brought here from another colony—say from South Australia. So that the natural protection arising from distance and other conditions, as against the people who grow stock in other colonies, is a still greater protection against some of our own people who grow stock in the Northern districts of this colony. The hon. member for Albany says he will do

his very best to terminate the reign of the present Government. Well, he is the only member on the Opposition side we have heard say so.

MR. LEAKE: But all the others think it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I do not think the hon. member pays a high compliment to his own side, if he says all the other members think so but have not the courage to say it. One would expect that if the hon. member is going to do what he says he will do, he should give some substantial reasons; but we are at a loss to discover them. As he has not explained the reasons, it is hard to understand why he has this burning zeal to get rid of the present Government. I do not know whether it is because the railways are paying so well; or because the settlement of the land is going on very nicely indeed, a considerable increase having taken place in the past year; or whether it is because the Government are endeavoring to reduce taxation, or because they are building the cheapest railways in the world. Or is it because the British capitalists are quite prepared to give £119 for each £100 worth of our bonds? Some of these reasons might perhaps suffice. Or is it because the Ministry have not "shunted" the Commissioner of Railways?

MR. LEAKE: That is one reason.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): As the hon. the Minister for Railways has told us, and is, I believe, prepared to prove his figures, that his administration of the railways has resulted in their now paying as well as any Government railways in the other colonies; also that the railways in this colony have been, and are being, constructed in the cheapest possible manner, and are being worked at a profit. In these circumstances, we are at a loss to account for the hon. member's reasons. Perhaps one reason is that the Government have nominated some delegates to the Federal Council who did not meet with his approval. Or is it after all, because the Government have imported some blue stone or freestone for the corners of the new Post Office at Albany? We do expect—in any hon. member who poses here as a statesman whether as the possible leader of a Government or as an important member of a possible Ministry—something more than either witty sayings or pleasantries. We expect him to deal with public questions in a statesmanlike manner, and to show some capacity for dealing with public affairs. If what he has

given us on this tariff question, as to his notion of reducing taxation, is to be taken as a sample. I do not know where he will be when he becomes Colonial Treasurer, and has to deal with the finances of the colony.

MR. SIMPSON: He won't be over there—that is a certainty.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I do maintain that, notwithstanding all that has been said as to the directions in which the Government propose to reduce taxation in the Customs Duties Repeal Bill, those directions are the best they could take—that is to reduce the duties on those articles that are necessities of life. Some hon. members wanted to reduce the duty on live meat, thus running against the industry of another important section of the community. [MR. MORAN: Take it off tinned meat.] But, in reducing the Customs revenue, we must stop somewhere. If the general consumers can, by these reductions, save 6d. or 1s. a week on one necessary article or on another, is not that saving a gain of 6d. or 1s. to a consumer, and does it not come to the same thing as if it were a saving of so much on tinned meat or on some other article that is subject to taxation? Hon. members must allow that we cannot take the duties off everything; because, if that is to be done, hon. members will perhaps tell us where we are to get the necessary revenue. There must be a limit to the relief from taxation. If the reductions now proposed by the Government will, as we estimate they will, cause a loss of probably £50,000 to the revenue for the year, we say that amount of loss is as much as our revenue can afford. And, in making these reductions, it is surely wise to try and save this amount of taxation to those people who are the most ill-paid and the poorest portion of the community. I maintain there are no articles of general consumption that affect the population in general, more than the articles we have named—the duty on tea and sugar, on kerosene, on blankets, and such things. Furthermore, I think a good deal of criticism has been levelled against sugar, because, as some hon. members say, this remission will put something into the pockets of brewers. I cannot understand the argument that, because one or two companies, or because one or two industries, may happen to get a benefit and make a little money out of a particular reduction in the tariff, therefore it is a bad

thing to reduce the duty on that article. It is a much broader argument to say that, if you put a little saving on certain necessities of life into the pockets of 80,000 people, you should not be deterred from doing this merely because one effect may be that you thereby put something into the pockets of a few shareholders or manufacturers, in Perth or elsewhere. I maintain that, in taking the duty off sugar, the Government had an eye to helping an important industry. [AN HON. MEMBER: Brewers.] No; not the brewers—they are flourishing already—I mean the jam-making industry. I believe this will soon be a great fruit-growing country. I believe we have the best position of any of the great fruit-growing countries in the world, and that the time is not far distant when we will have to find other than local markets for our fruits. I do not think there is any other industry so important as the jam and fruit-producing industry will be; and every gentleman I have spoken to, who has any knowledge of these things, has told me that, so long as we have a high duty on sugar, it will be impossible for us to compete against the jam imported from other colonies. If you can, in doing this, give protection to a very important industry, it is a good stroke of policy, and I think we can challenge criticism on that head. Another important article is kerosene. We all know that one of the worst things affecting the gold-producing industry is the want of fuel. On the Northern fields that difficulty will have to be faced very shortly, and the want of fuel as a motive power for batteries is likely to interfere considerably with the profits of the mines, so that there must be a resort to other fuel very soon. There is no better assistance we can render to the miners, when fuel is scarce, than to take the duty off kerosene. Yet we are told we are doing nothing for the miners. It is said we have not taken the duty off tinned meat, or clothing, or anything in favor of the miners, and yet we have proposed to take the duty off their tea and sugar, off their blankets, and, above all, off kerosene, which will form a most important factor in the profits of our mines.

MR. SIMPSON: It is for the Agricultural Bureau you take the duty off kerosene.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I say this tariff does very minutely study the miners' interest.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If we get the Collie coal, we shall not want kerosene.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. B. Richardson): It is all very well to talk of the Collie coal, and I hope it will be a very important industry; but if you have to carry coal over long distances, and perhaps take it part of the way by shipload, with several handlings between the pit and the goldfield, I do not know what kind of fuel it will be when delivered at the mines or other places. But kerosene can be carried hundreds of miles in a convenient manner. I join in tendering my thanks to hon. members for the very kind way in which they have received His Excellency's Speech, and I congratulate the country upon the unparalleled prosperity which prevails at the present time. It has been said we should help the gold-mining industry because the prosperity of the colony depends on it—as if there was no other industry going on but mining! Well, I can show, from my place as Commissioner of Lands, that the settlement of the land is also going on in a most satisfactory manner, and no doubt the day will come when the settlement of the land will be a very important portion of the policy of any Government. When the Premier introduced the Homesteads Bill, to give free blocks of land on conditions of occupation and improvement, he was told pretty frequently that the Bill would have no effect; but I am pleased to be able to say now that the Homesteads Act is proving a great success, and that there are nearly 20,000 acres at present occupied by free homestead blockers, which means a very large addition to our settled agricultural population, and to our town population, because no person can take more than 160 acres under the Act, and some have taken less. So the House will understand that, as well as our mining going on as an important industry, with it the settlement of land is proceeding apace.

MR. SIMPSON: I am sure it will scarcely be anticipated that I shall start away by congratulating the Ministry—later on I may do so, but I am not sure—but I will state this, that in anything I have to say, I do not for a moment impeach the integrity or the high character of the gentlemen who compose that Ministry. Anything I have to say will refer simply to their political judgment and their administration of the public departments, and, in dealing with public matters, I do not

refer to individual officers in the departments. When I speak on public questions here, I speak to the responsible head of the particular department—with his officers I have nothing whatever to do. He is responsible for the actions of his officers, and as a Cabinet Minister he takes the full responsibility of his department. I do not purpose wading through the 26 verses of this long chapter that has been submitted to us. It is a long recapitulation of everything that was known already. It fails to record anything that is not known, and that is an astounding feature in the official gospel. One would have thought that, if these numerous paragraphs did not refer to mistakes that are known to have been made, they would have referred to some of the mistakes that are not known to have occurred. [THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: There are none.] The hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands remarks that there are none; and, if that be so, I shall be glad if the observations I have to make in that direction can be confuted. I do not think it is out of order, in connection with speeches on the Address-in-Reply, to refer to the composition of the Ministry. We have still, at its head, the Premier, growing grey in the service of the colony and a credit to the country. We have still in position the Attorney-General, a man whose name and whose ability carry respect throughout the land. And we have still the Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works, to whom I shall refer later on. We have the member for the De Gray just returned by the electors, unopposed, as Commissioner of Crown Lands; a man who, I am sure, so far as integrity of purpose goes, will do his best to promote the settlement and opening up of this country. In another place, also, the country has now the advantage of the services of one of the most capable public men in this colony. In the composition of the Ministry I believe Her Majesty's Opposition has had a great deal to do with its present form. I believe it was the Opposition that secured to this country the services of the present Commissioner of Crown Lands, and undoubtedly succeeded in securing to the service of this country the great ability of the Minister for Mines and Education in another place. There were incidents in connection with those recent appointments which called for considerable comment from the public during the recess. There was some very interesting

correspondence—not only interesting but perhaps slightly irritating to those immediately concerned. We had angry letters from the Premier, and we had dignified but carefully restrained epistles from the gentleman who thought it was in conformity with the dignity of his position that he should retire from the office of Colonial Secretary and leader of the Upper House, when he found he had not been consulted as to the delegates from this colony who were to proceed to the meeting of the Federal Council of Australia. The course adopted by the hon. gentleman who retired, under those circumstances, had the approval of the country. It was dignified; it was consonant with the respect we have for the Upper Chamber; and it seemed to indicate a little of those high-handed proceedings on the part of the Premier which have, to some extent, smirched his reputation as a political leader in this great country; and in connection with the composition, we may say the reconstruction, of the Ministry, it is a singular thing that we find the leader of the Legislative Council of this country is the fifth Minister, the junior Minister in the Cabinet. That is the position the leader of the Legislative Council takes to-day, before the eyes of the people—that this leader of the Council is the junior member of the Ministry, and that this junior member is entrusted with perhaps the three most important departments—the mining industry, the post and telegraphs, and that great department, the Education department. However, I suppose we may charitably say these are eccentricities of the leader of the Government. The Speech of His Excellency, which has been submitted to us, indicates that a Bill will be submitted to this Assembly in connection with the Ecclesiastical Grant. I had a good deal to do—I had the honor to have a good deal to do—with the bringing forward of a resolution on this question in the last session, and was very cordially supported in my efforts to secure the abolition of that grant. But, if I know the tone of this House, and the opinion of this country, it is the exact and positive desire that this House and the Parliament of this country shall deal in no niggard spirit with those institutions which have been in receipt of this grant. Most certainly if I err in the use of my voice or my vote in connection with that matter, it will be decidedly on the side of liberality. Allusion has been made to the Agricultural Bank. I have

always looked upon that institution as a sort of “Aunt Sally,” to be shied at by the ancient cockey who will not work. It had, however, one saving feature, and that was the appointment, as manager, of the gentleman who then represented the Murray in this Assembly. I think I had the honor of first suggesting that gentleman's name to the Premier, in connection with that appointment, and I do say that, though I have never had much hope about the success of that institution, I have great faith in the man who is its manager. The Electoral Act has been referred to by the member for Yilgarn and others, and I do say that when a man realises the position of an elector in this country, and the hindrances that are needlessly placed in the way of exercising his vote, it is a great and crying shame on this country; it is a stigma attached to every member of this House, that this thing is not blotted out of existence immediately, and that every man who contributes to the revenue, and obeys law and order has not free and easy access to the right of voting for the representatives of the people. The great question of federation, we have been informed in various places, is in the air. We are told there is a lion in the path, and that this lion is the tariff question. Is that lion to grow into a mouse by waiting? Has the appearance of that lion frightened the men who were put forward to bring about this great consummation? Will our opportunities of becoming a great, undivided nation, grow greater or grow less by waiting? I tell the Premier, who sits there with his accumulated honors, that there was never a nobler opportunity than at present to him now, to step to the front and be the “Peter the Hermit” of this great crusade—to go to the people of this country and say, “I will take this question to the front, and make it the question of the day.” We know he has honesty, and we know he has the ability, to do this great work. Referring to the reports of proceedings of that Assembly of great men, the Federal Council of Australia, I do not know that I ever dropped on a more apt speech than that delivered by the President, who said:—[*Extract not supplied.*] Shall we, on this Western fringe of the continent, furnish the part which will not work into the great agreement, the federation of Australia, because we say there is a lion in the path? Shall we turn tail and run away? Or shall we say, “We will face this lion?” There is no lion when you come to look at it. It is

a mouse. It is a petty, little thing to say, "We will stop our neighbors' products from coming within our borders, for fear they should compete against our local products." I say, can we not, as men inspired with the higher instincts of Australian patriotism, face this question and settle it? I heard one hon. member to-night say he enjoyed calm—a man whom I have the honor to look upon as a personal friend. Mr. Speaker, I think we have had nearly enough calm in Western Australia—we have had about 60 years of it—and now there is beginning to be a little rustle on the water. There is a story in the good old Book which says that when the waters are disturbed they yield healing powers. I think that, in this case, this colony has had enough stagnant calm, and that the time has come to try what healing powers the waters will yield when disturbed. Then we come to the question of the tariff, and really I must say, apart from my personal respect for the Premier, I never knew any statesman in Australia so entirely back down from his position as the Premier has done since the Tariff Act was passed two years ago. Do you know, Sir, that by a singular coincidence, they (the Ministry) smuggled away the Attorney-General to the North-West, with "hay fever," while they got their Tariff Bill of two years ago carried through Parliament. The Premier said then, "We cannot do without revenue," and in order to get it out of Customs duties they smuggled the Attorney-General away up there. Now they have got him back, and they must have revenue. I can see the Premier is a little frightened, and a little bit cowed, so that he does not know which to do. The Government now say they will take something off kerosene. I tried in this House to get that duty reduced, and we did manage at length to get it down to 4½d. a gallon. It is said they now intend to take the duty off kerosene in the interests of the miners. I should strongly urge the hon. member who holds that opinion to invest his dollars in mangel-wurzels down South, rather than put them into mines that are going to be run by kerosene engines. He says this reduction will be 4½d. a gallon presented to the miners. It is nothing of the sort. It is in the interest of vine and fruit-growers that kerosene is reduced, because it is largely used in clearing their gardens from pests and codlin moths. In connection with all the congratulations that have been presented to the Ministry, the word "resumption"

was mentioned by some hon. member. I am sure it was not the member for Sussex, because if there is one particular question on which he likes to keep quiet, it is that of land resumption. I don't think it was the member for Bunbury (the Premier) who mentioned it. But I believe that, behind this question of resumption there is a grave and big matter for inquiry. I have learnt, incidentally, that the Government did not produce a single witness in the resumption arbitrations at the Vasse. Those claimants who wanted more for their land than the Railway Department had offered, did produce evidence on the question of value, but I am informed the Government did not offer a single witness in support of their valuations.

MR. A. FORREST: They should not have wanted it.

MR. SIMPSON: I am also informed there is a matter in connection with Bunbury that took place about the time of the general election, which is worth looking into. If it would occur to a Select Committee to call for all the correspondence of every nature—that in the Lands office, that in the Attorney-General's Office, and that in the Premier's Office—if they would call for all the information and all the correspondence relating to this matter, I believe the inquiry would yield some very valuable information to the people of this country.

THE PREMIER: Call for it and get it.

MR. SIMPSON: I am sure the Premier agrees with me that it would yield some valuable information as to how resumptions are managed.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Call for it.

MR. SIMPSON: Very well, I will, and then we shall see where we are. You won't like it so much when you get it. Then we come back to the Works and Railways Department, and we have been told in this debate, by the Attorney-General and by the Commissioner of Railways, that they are highly gratified at the kind way in which these suggestions of the Ministry, and the way in which the 26 verses of this official chapter, have been received. But coming now to the stern facts in connection with the Works and Railways, we are told the railways of the colony are paying interest on the cost of construction, also the sinking fund and the working expenses. I am not prepared, at present, to give my adherence to the principle that the sinking fund in con-

nection with our railways should be a charge on them. We construct them, and when we go away to that higher place we leave them clear; and I am not sure that a sinking fund is a legitimate charge on railways. I have no intention of impugning the word of the Commissioner of Railways, but I do not believe that, in a colony with our population, such is the case, unless it is accomplished by a system of black mail, such as rules in the tariff rates on goods and passengers carried over the goldfields line to Southern Cross. I do not think there is a railway in the colony that pays expenses, if you eliminate the goldfields traffic. There is not another railway in Australia that has ever done it. New South Wales, with a population of over a million, has not been able to make its railways pay all these charges, whereas we have a population of 80,000, and we have a larger mileage per unit of population than New South Wales.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: What did their railways cost per mile for construction?

MR. SIMPSON: Some of them cost £15,000 a mile. All I have to say, in connection with this matter, is that I have facts in my possession which will largely do away with this idea of extreme satisfaction in connection with the Railways and Works Department. There are too or three things I should like to mention to hon. members—little incidents which will indicate how matters go on in the Works and Railways Department, because we have always been told that a feather or a little thistle-down thrown on the wind will indicate the direction in which it is blowing, as a straw on a stream shows how the water is running. Some time ago there was a contractor—a hard-working, decent, steady, respectable man, who was trying, like most of us, to make a pound do thirty shillings' worth of work. He was a great believer in Mr. Illingworth and Mr. Traylen—he was a teetotaler. This contractor had occasion to see his banker, and he arranged for an overdraft of £300, explaining that he had sent in certificates to the Works and Railway Department, and the money due to him from them would be payable on the 10th of the next month. This was arranged in December. But when the 10th of January came, the money was not paid by the Department; and so that contractor—a good man, who is respected by those acquainted with him—was

placed in a serious difficulty. Hon. members will be surprised to learn that, upon inquiry, the explanation was ascertained to be that in the precious Works Office, in consequence of the Christmas and New Year holidays, pay day had been put off from the 10th January to the 23rd! That is an absolute fact. I do not know of any banking institution, or any big manufacturing company, or any large commercial concern, that puts off its pay day in consequence of Christmas festivities or New Year holidays. But I suppose the Works Department is above ordinary commercial rules, although we are informed the railways are run on exact commercial principles. Then we have to go further into the doings of this great department. Last year, in solemn conclave, the representatives of the people sat here and passed a Loan Bill providing for the construction of the Coolgardie and Cue railways. We thought that, having made mistakes in the past, and the Government having expended about £50,000 in an extraordinary way which they could not explain, we would take care this time that the amounts scheduled in the Bill should cover the entire cost of construction, including the rolling stock, purchase of plates, and necessary details. Well, do you know that at that date, when we passed this Loan Bill, and these specific items, the Commissioner of Railways had never asked as to the rolling stock required for enabling the traffic to be carried over these new railways; but on the 4th of January, after we had passed them, it was deemed advisable to make inquiry as to what rolling stock would be required, and it was then found that £112,000 worth of rolling stock would be required to carry the traffic to Coolgardie and to Cue. Well, the result was that the officer who has to carry out the traffic was informed there was only £27,000 available for the required rolling stock which was to cost £112,000. That was the kind of estimate on which this House was asked to vote the money for these works. We will go a little further. Time after time we have been assured by the Commissioner of Railways as to the safety of the public, travelling on the railway between Fremantle and Perth. I say there is evidence within the Department now that the people travelling over that railway are in extreme danger. It is on record in the Works Office, and the Commissioner has known of it for months—he has had minutes from the General Traffic Manager—to the effect that the public

are travelling in extreme danger. Those minutes have remained unanswered. I say this Works and Railways Department is a huge octopus, that with its tentacles is dragging in other departments, and bringing down the fair fame of this as a progressive colony; and if the Premier won't face the question, but will go on carrying that department and that weak Minister on his back—that ponderous, pompous inanity which resides there—the people of this country had better turn this Ministry out. It has been said, on this (the Opposition) side, that we do not want office and do not want to turn the Ministry out. I say that when I find anything wrong, I will, as a public man, do my best to turn the Ministry out. Allusion has been made to the majority in this House. I know the Government whip feels proud when he thinks of his solid 17. I know some of them, and I know these men have the interests of the country as truly at heart as I have. I know the facts are smothered up and hidden from them. If those members only knew the facts, they would revolt, and would say "Our personal respect you have, but as political administrators you are the most deadly failures we ever knew." Now, Sir, the Government Whip will say you may talk as you like, but we have seventeen solid bits of jarrah, that will vote right, because the hon. member for West Kimberley is a great believer in jarrah. He knows its merits, and he knows something of the profits that are made out of it.

AN HON. MEMBER: The insects don't affect it.

MR. SIMPSON: I do not know that, I have heard of its getting the dry rot, through being too long in one position. I do say this Sir, in connection with this matter, it is time the people began to ask for something more than mere personal respect, it is time they demanded integrity. It is time they began to look into the details of the various offices. I have spoken before on this matter, and I think it a matter that might very properly be referred to a select committee to look into the affairs of the railway department. I say there are minutes in Minister's offices requiring answers, absolutely necessary to ensure the safety of the travelling public, and economy in management, and yet answers cannot be obtained to these minutes. In the works department there are huge affairs to be administered, on which the progress of the colony

depends, and yet there is the most absolute disregard of these things, indeed the works department has grown to such a position that it can flout Parliamentary opinion whenever it likes, but I will not trespass further.

MR. FORRESTER: Hear, Hear.

MR. SIMPSON: The hon. member for West Kimberley says Hear, Hear, he would have liked to have said it when I began. The burning question of to-day in this colony is not that of the removal of the Government workshops, it is a question from which many hon. members want to wriggle away, the Premier himself would like to do a lot of wriggling but his form will scarcely admit it, the burning question is the Education question.

MR. CONNOR: No it has burned out.

MR. SIMPSON: We will fight it out in this House this session, the Government dare not go to the country on it, the voice of the country has decided it. I can remember two seats over there which used to be occupied by men whom I respected, but their positions are held by two hon. members who sit on this side of the House. The last two appeals made to the country during the last recess have decided that the great and burning question is the Education question. I do not congratulate the Government on their administration, nor on the Speech they have presented to us, for it is a chapter of mere platitudes, neither do I congratulate them upon the way they are carrying on affairs now. I think this country would have gone ahead just as well if the present or permanent heads of departments had been there, and the colony had not been cursed with the vast ability of the Forrest Ministry.

MR. CLARKSON: Sir, I feel rather reluctant to add to the length of this already too long debate on the Address-in-Reply. It must surely appear to an onlooker not connected with this Assembly as a great waste of time, particularly when, as one hon. member who sits on the opposite side of the House, says there is nothing in the Governor's Speech, and yet the debate of this particular Speech has lasted over a week. Hon. members on this side of the House have not occupied much time in saying what they had to say. Personally I am not prepared to say there is very much in it, but I do think there is a good deal that is satisfactory about it. I do not intend to deal with the whole of the Speech, but would like to make a few remarks upon some of the matters there referred to. I believe we shall be talking about federation, or those who come

after us will be talking about federation for the next 50 years. I do not believe it will be an accomplished fact at that time. The Agricultural Bank will not, in my opinion, answer the purpose for which it was created, the amount of money which a man can obtain will not be sufficient to assist him to any extent on a farm. My remarks shall be very brief because the various items in the Speech will come before us in another form, and we shall have an opportunity of discussing them then. I think the time rather inopportune to propose reductions in the tariff, because when everything is flourishing no one feels the pressure, and I do not see why the duties should not be continued; I shall certainly oppose any reductions in the tariff. I am very pleased to see it is proposed to lower the railway rates, for if this colony is to progress, if these agricultural railways are to be a success, they must carry the products of the farmer at as low a rate as possible. In speaking upon this matter I must say there is a very general feeling throughout the colony that the railway department, is not carried on in the manner it should be. I am not prepared to say whose fault it is, though I have heard it stated that it was the fault of the head of the department; I believe there is a Civil Service Commission sitting, and it is probable that will throw some light upon it, and I think it wise to wait for the report of that Commission. The removal of the Government Workshops is engaging a good deal of attention at the present time. The hon. members for Nannine and Fremantle both tell us they know better sites than the Midland Junction, all I have to say is this, I shall be more inclined to accept the opinion of the Engineer-in-Chief than that of either of those hon. members. I do not profess to know anything about these matters, but when the time comes I think it most likely I shall support the Midland Junction because it is the junction of the three lines of the colony, the northern, the eastern and the southern. I consider that the hon. member for Nannine's remarks, as to all the materials required having to go through the city is nonsense, but as the hon. member for Sussex knocked that on the head I need not refer to it any further, or I could show that some of that material might possibly come from the eastward or northern or southern parts of the colony. The hon. member for Nannine talked a good deal about the proposed alteration in the Electoral Act.

I think it is quite unnecessary to make any alterations, all this talk about the alteration of the Act is mere bunkum. As to the Stock Tax I do not believe it makes a bit of difference in the price of meat in this colony.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Take it off then £4000.

MR. CLARKSON: It adds to the revenue, we have been importing a lot of stock lately, and while we furnish a market for stock owners in the other colonies, I consider we ought to derive some benefit. I suppose it will be considered that I am speaking as one of that solid majority of 18, to which the hon. member for Nannine referred, well, I hope the present Government will long continue to have a solid majority, for I consider it will be in the interests of the colony if it should be the case. I would like to tell that hon. member that although he puts me down as one of that solid majority of voters, yet I am just as free to vote as my conscience dictates, as any other hon. member. Although I sit on this side the House. I do not intend to prolong this debate, for I consider there has been a great deal of time wasted in discussing matters which will come before us in another form.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): First of all Sir, I should like to thank hon. members on this side and the other side of the House, for the reception they have generally given to His Excellency's Speech. We have heard during the last few days a considerable amount of criticism, and yet we cannot but be pleased that the Governor's Speech has been so well discussed as it has been at the beginning of this session. I cannot agree with those who think we have wasted the time, because it will save a good deal of discussion, and a lot of valuable time during the session,—far more, I think, than it has occupied now. I quite admit that in this Speech there is a great deal which was not unknown to hon. members. A considerable number of the earlier paragraphs are a resumé of what had taken place during the past year, or during the recess. To that some hon. members have taken exception. It would have been very easy for the Government to have left out of the Speech all reference to what had been done during the recess; they could easily have composed it of just a few paragraphs as to what they proposed for the future. I am aware that that is the custom in older countries, and in the mother country, with regard to the Queen's Speech, but it is not the custom in any of the Australian colonies. In all these colonies

it is customary for the Governor's Speech to be of considerable length, and to go into details of what is proposed for future consideration, as well as to refer to what has been done during recess. It is true, as I said just now, that a good many of the paragraphs at the beginning of the Speech relate to things that have been done, or are being done. I altogether join issue with those who say there is not much information in the Speech with reference to proposals for the future. I do not suppose it was expected that there would be so many projects in the Speech this session as there were last, because then we were beginning a new Parliament, with an entirely new programme of public works, and although at that time the chief features had been disclosed in Ministerial speeches in the country, still there was probably more novelty then, than in the Speech before us now. The Government do not claim any undue credit for themselves, and I am glad that no word has been said in this debate suggesting they have done so, nor for anything they had done, or proposed to do in the future. We have taken our stand, and we take it here to-night, upon what we have done, and what we propose to do. Hon. members should realise, and especially those hon. members opposite who have criticised us most, that we are not on these Benches by any virtue of our own, but simply and solely because we possess the confidence of the hon. members of the House. We sit here by no other right, and if hon. members are not satisfied with the way the business of the country is carried on, they have the remedy in their own hands. It has been said by one or two hon. members that the members of the Government are unpopular in the country, and when asked where, they replied everywhere. It may be so, but I think not; I have had no evidence of it, and I do not believe it. If we were unpopular in the country, we should most probably be unpopular among the representatives of the country, in this House and I think it is foolish, to say the least of it, for anyone to say we are unpopular in the country while we retain the confidence of this House. You may say what you like, but the country is here, represented by members from the various constituencies, and during this debate there has been no good reason given for any such accusation, as that we have not the confidence of the people of the country. I am glad, that as a Government, we have a

very good tale to tell. We have a revenue of over a million, more than £100,000 over a million. The revenue of this country is eleven hundred odd thousands of pounds, and we shall have a balance in hand—I cannot say exactly, because the accounts are not yet before me—but we shall certainly have a balance of over a quarter of a million, and I shall not be surprised if we have a balance of £300,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then there is no need to borrow more money.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir John Forrest): We have been able to say with authority that the revenue from the railways this year will not only pay working expenses, but will also pay interest and sinking fund on the capital expended in their construction. We did not put those words into the Governor's Speech without authority. The information was supplied by those responsible for the railway accounts. We propose to reduce taxation. A good deal has been said about that proposal, perhaps more than was necessary to be said at the present time, seeing the Bill is on the table of the House now, and other opportunities will be afforded to discuss the matter. The Government desire to reduce taxation, but when there were so many demands for expenditure all over the colony, we had to consider the question how far we could reduce taxation, consistently with the expenditure that must be undertaken on public works all over the colony. We are glad to say the public works of the colony are progressing. The railway to Coolgardie has been let at a low rate, and I have no doubt the railway to Cue will be let at a reasonable price. We are able to tell of prosperous goldfields, and increased population; and, although some may question it, we have a well-to-do and contented people all over this colony. The only hon. member who, as far as I could judge, really wished to be severe upon the Government—and I listened to the debate very attentively—was the hon. member for Albany. I do not know why, but he seems to have set himself to work in a way that I think is scarcely justifiable. He is going to turn the Government out. He has given us fair notice; but if I may make a remark about the hon. member for Albany, and the hon. member who sits alongside of him (Mr. Simpson), it is that they will have to wait a long time before they can do it. They have not won their spurs in this country yet, and

the country is not prepared to trust them with the management of public affairs.

MR. SIMPSON: What about the last two elections?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I say the time has not come when it would be safe to trust those hon. members with the management of the public affairs of this colony. The hon. member for Albany went on to talk about finance, and to give the Government advice on that point, yet I never knew that that hon. member was famous as a financier.

MR. LEAKE: This life is full of little surprises.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think I need discuss the point as to whether the hon. member for Albany is an authority on finance any further. It is a curious thing that the two hon. members who criticised the Government most severely should be the hon. members for Albany and East Perth, yet the one said we were unpopular in the country, and the other said we had the confidence of the people. I should say that the hon. member for East Perth was more correct in his remark; but I would advise those two hon. members to consult together a little more, and not to express views so absolutely opposed to each other. The hon. members for Albany and Geraldton sought to attack the Government by referring to what they termed dissensions in the Cabinet.

MR. SIMPSON: Hear, Hear.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): All I can say in reply to that is there never have been any dissensions in the Cabinet. I have sat in Cabinet ever since we have had our present form of government, and there has never been an instance of dissension; whenever Ministers have differed in opinion it has always been in a most friendly and courteous manner. There has never been anything but the most cordial relationship, both politically and otherwise.

MR. SIMPSON: What about the minute to the Minister of Works' department?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That did not give rise to any difference of opinion at all.

MR. SIMPSON: No, the other man swallowed it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member for Nannine, I think it was, found fault with the action of the Government in changing the titles of a number of executive offices.

MR. LEAKE: No: I am the culprit again.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I wish the hon. member had looked up the Constitution Act; for then he would have seen there is nothing to hinder the changing of titles when it is found desirable to do so. I think that, instead of being blamed for doing this, the Government deserve some consideration for having obtained what the House really desired, namely a Minister for Mines, without adding to the expense of the Executive Government. We have the same number of Ministers—five—and yet have a Minister of Mines, and a Minister presiding over the postal and educational departments as well. I think the arrangement is one that will work well, and be satisfactory to hon. members and the whole colony. With reference to the remarks of some hon. members, that the tariff reductions, as proposed, are not extensive enough, I wish to say, as I have already intimated, we cannot do everything in that direction this session. We have made a beginning, and in the right direction; we have not tried to reduce the amounts on tea, coffee, sugar, kerosene, and other articles named, in the Bill, but we have struck them off altogether. We have abolished them, and that is a move in the right direction, and as time goes on and the finances of the colony will permit it, we shall certainly make more reductions in the same direction; and all I ask is that hon. members will not interfere too much with the financial arrangements of the Government in this respect. Let us have another year's experience before going more deeply into this matter, as even these involve an amount of probably £40,000. I do not intend to refer to the question of the removal of the workshops from Fremantle, except for one reason, and that is to reply to the remarks of the hon. member for North Fremantle, Mr. Moss. He charged me with not having kept faith with the people of Fremantle, and in not having kept my word. I throw it back at him, and utterly repudiate the charge. The accusation is entirely unfounded; there is not one iota of truth in it. I am quite willing to allow that he may have said what he did with the best of intention, but he is thoroughly mistaken. All I promised is contained in this paragraph taken from the *Daily News*. I said the Government would willingly submit this question to the decision of the tribunal which alone could settle it, viz., the Parliament of the country. If the deputation was willing that this course

should be adopted why all this trouble, for everything had to be subordinated to the wishes of Parliament. Parliament governed everything, and was over all. The removal of the workshops should not take place till Parliament had approved of it. A few plans might be made, but nothing should be done which would in any way interfere with the decision of Parliament when it met. This was not a question which Ministries were made or unmade upon. It was a very small matter. Parliament would be asked to approve of the Government proposal, and if hon. members, in their wisdom, considered a better site than the one at Midland Junction was obtainable, no one would be more pleased than himself, and he would at once accept their verdict. Those were the very words that I used to the people of Fremantle. I was willing to submit the whole thing to Parliament, and I maintain we have kept faith, notwithstanding the dam that has been built at the Midland Junction site across an excavation or hole, to give a water supply for the engines, which is necessary, although outside of the question of the Railway Workshops. Full instructions were sent to the railway department, and I believe those instructions have been observed to the letter: and the hon. member for North Fremantle has no right to say—indeed I will not allow him or any one else to say so without protesting—that I have not kept my word to the people of Fremantle when they waited upon me. As I said just now, I do not intend to deal with the question of the removal of the Workshops, because another opportunity will be afforded when we have all the information and all the facts before us. I cannot allow this opportunity to pass, however, without a word in reply to the hon. members for the Murray and for North Fremantle in the aspersions they thought fit to cast upon Mr. Allison Smith. I had a good deal to do with sending the request to Victoria for the loan of that gentleman's services, and I do not think it right, I do not consider members were justified, in casting such epithets at him as they did. He came over here at the invitation of the Government, without any expense in the matter of salary, for the Government of Victoria paid that, whilst we only had to pay travelling expenses. He came here, he carried out his duties and went away, and the Government offered him an honorarium of £100 which he accepted. That

was all that was paid to him, and it seems to me to be the greatest discourtesy, not only to him, but also to the Government of Victoria, that hon. members of this House should abuse him; for it is not criticism, it is abuse. He has been told he was a failure, he was incompetent as an engineer, and things were said that ought not to have been said, except under great provocation and necessity, but in this case there was neither. It seems to me we have not merely to look at the man himself, but at his report. Let us deal with that, and do not let us cast aspersions upon the character of a gentleman whose services were lent to the Government at their own request.

AN HON. MEMBER. Not the last time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No, not the last time, but you have not seen any report of the last time, you are dealing with his report when he came here at the invitation of the Government, to report upon a site for the workshops.

MR. LORON: He was accredited by Victoria.

THE PREMIER (Sir Hon. J. Forrest): Yes, he was the head of the Locomotive department there at that time, and we thanked the Government of Victoria for lending us his services. With regard to the observations of the hon. member for Nannine, it seems to me that very little exception can be taken to them. I do not think anyone in this House will take any serious objection to the way in which he dealt with the matters he brought forward. Of course he did a little bit of fault finding. He told me I had made a bad estimate of revenue because I estimated £900,000, and it proved to be £1,100,000. I am prepared to agree that it was not a good estimate; but it erred on the right side, and we must remember in these moving days, it is not so easy to estimate the future as it used to be, and we had better err, if at all, on the right and safe side. I shall be glad if the estimate I make this year has an error of the same kind. I will try, at any rate, not to over estimate. There is just one thing I did not like about the hon. member's criticism, though I have no doubt he did not mean it. He seemed almost sorry that the Government had had such a good year. It is too utterly ridiculous, of course, to think he was sorry; but there did seem to me a sort of under current, as though he would have preferred to have had it otherwise. I have another little fault to find with the hon. member. This too was, no doubt

quite unintentional, for when one wants to make out a good case every available thing is brought in. But he does not read the Speech in the way we read it, for he tells the House the Government are opposed to federation. I do not think any one could say that by simply reading the Speech. I have stated on many public occasions that I am in favour of it, and look forward to the day when we shall not simply be one of the group of the colonies, but when we shall be one great nation. I think it was the hon. member for Geraldton who said, truly, that the lines which separate us are imaginary lines on the map. We are all one people, sprung from the same race, with the same traditions, speaking one language, having one aim, and everything in common. Why then, should we be separated in the way we are? I do not consider, however, that we in this colony should seek to take a leading part in this great and important question. We have only had the control of our own affairs for some four years, whilst the Eastern Colonies have had thirty or forty years of self-government. Looking at all the difficulties that beset the question, I do not think it is for us to rush in and say we are in favour of federation, and ask them to federate with us. Any reasonable man will say we are only just commencing our career, and we hope to follow rather than lead.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We don't ask you to lead.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It seems ridiculous to me to think that we, who have only just been released from the tutelage of Downing-street, are going to lead the great colonies of Australia in the matter of federation. The only reasonable course for us to adopt is to wait the lead of the older colonies, and then join in afterwards. Has not that been the course pursued in other instances that we have on record? Was it not so with British Columbia? It was a considerable time afterwards that they joined the provinces of Eastern Canada, and why? Simply because they were isolated. It is so with us. We have no communication by land with the other colonies. We might as well be an island in the ocean a thousand miles away. Why then, rush in and take part with the other colonies that have millions of inhabitants? Let them arrange the terms of the contract and we can join them afterwards, if we choose. I was sorry to hear from the hon. member for Nannine that

he was opposed to the establishment of a mint, and I hope he will come round before the Bill is introduced to the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No, no. I said it would not pay.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I understood the hon. member to say that as a goldfield representative he would be expected to support it, but that he could not. He said he believed that Western Australia had the largest goldfields in the world, and that being so, I hope hon. members will not object to the expenditure for establishing a mint in this colony. There is another question which I have much at heart, viz., the Bridgetown Railway, which the hon. member was opposed to for a curious reason, that it was not viewed favourably in another place.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am sure the Hon. the Premier does not mean to misrepresent me, What I did object to was that the Ministry had taken steps during the recess which were calculated to irritate members in another place.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): All I have to say is that the money was provided, and this House was promised that the surveys should go on during the recess, and we have done no more than we promised. With regard to provision for the railway, there was some £15,000 upon the loan estimates, which the Government were charged in another place with trying to get by a trick, by getting the rails ordered, so as to put the other House in such a position that they could not refuse the Bill when it came along. That was not the intention of the Government. When it was pointed out how some members of the Upper House viewed our action, we arranged that not one single penny should be spent until the other House had approved of the Bill for the construction of the line, and not one single penny has been spent, and we have no intention that it shall be, although we have had the opportunity of buying the rails in a very cheap market. The next hon. member to whom I want to say a few words in reply, is the hon. member for East Perth, who made a long speech. If hon. members will take the trouble to turn up *Hansard* for last year, and read the speech which the hon. member for East Perth made at that time, they will find it is the same speech; exactly the same ideas were expressed last year that he has expressed this year. At any rate, the hon. member seems to have some consistency in regard to

the views he expresses. I am afraid, though, it will be a long time before the people of this colony will follow him in his ideas. There is one thing about him I do not like, and it is his arrogance, his dictatorialness, as if he were some Sir Oracle, who had had large experience all over the world, and was in a position, to tell us exactly what to do. It is the same now as when he first entered the House. I remember when I first entered this House I was exceedingly nervous and reticent. Not so the hon. member for East Perth, for nearly the first word he used was "disgust." He was disgusted with the Government, and disgusted with everything else. He tells us the tariff revision is not in the interest of the working man; if it is not, then I do not know in whose interest it is. It is for everyone. There is not a single person in this colony who does not use tea and sugar, and surely everyone will derive benefit by the removal of fourpence a pound duty from it. Every housekeeper in this colony will get it cheaper in the course of a few days. Then he told us he was opposed to the Stock Tax, but my friend the Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands has completely knocked all the argument out of that matter, and we must keep those who speak on this subject to the point, and not allow them to go into high flights of oratory. We must keep them to the fact that the duty is one and three quarter farthings, or nearly a half-penny in the pound and no more, and any one who tries to work it out any other way is not acting fairly in the matter. The hon. member seeks to pose as a friend of the working man. He said he was generally considered the working man's member. I do not believe he ever did a day's physical work in his life; that is not as a working man does. What has he ever done for the working man? Let him tell us to-morrow? Until he can tell us of something worthy he has ever done for the working man, I will not recognise him as any better friend of the working man than I am myself. He says we ought to undertake certain social reforms, but I ask him if any single thing that he advocated in that direction has yet taken place either in England or any of the other colonies? Were there ever before such foolish suggestions seriously made in any Parliament? He asks us to go in for new legislation on the lines which are agitating the more thickly populated parts of the world, but in this great country, where we

have room for all, why go in for these things, when the people are not suffering. If we were to introduce legislation, as desired by the hon. member, would not one of the first questions in this House be: Is there any pressure? Is there any demand for this? If not wait until there is. Then the hon. members said he did not believe in party Government; but I take exception to that statement, for if there is in this House any hon. member who is more a party man than any other it is that hon. member himself. When he entered the House, if he had sat then where he is sitting to-night (Government cross front bench) would he have said he was disgusted with the Government, before three words had come out of his mouth? He told us on that occasion we were utterly ignorant, utterly wanting in knowledge or industry, and that he could let us choose which suited us best. That was nice language for a new member to use towards men who had sat in this House for years.

MR. JAMES: I rise to a point of order. I think I said politically ignorant.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Well I will give the hon. member the benefit of the doubt, but I don't see where it comes in when he said we were "utterly" ignorant. I think it was a very improper thing to say, on the part of any one upon the first occasion of addressing this House, I consider it was a piece of impertinence, a piece of bombast, and neither did him nor his constituents, nor this House, any credit. It only shows he was a bit of an upstart.

MR. SIMPSON: That is creditable to a Premier.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I ask him if he would have made that speech, if he had sat where he now sits. He tells us he is no party man, and does not believe in party politics. I ask hon. members to judge. I now come to the hon. member for Geraldton, who spoke of the high handedness of the Premier, referring to a difference between me and one of my colleagues. All I can say is I did my best to place the Cabinet in a position to carry out the work of the colony. I certainly did not intend to take any high-handed action with regard to any one. If I did so it was an error of judgment, and my action was misunderstood. I had to make the changes, and I should have been unfit for my position if I had not taken the responsibility in that matter.

MR. LEAKE: Why not have consulted Parliament?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It is not usual. The usual course is for us to take the responsibility of the action and ask Parliament to approve afterwards. I say it is thoroughly unconstitutional in such cases, and highly improper, to consult Parliament and ask them to approve or disapprove before action is taken. Then the hon. member tries to make mischief in the Cabinet by calling my friend the Hon. Minister for Mines the "Junior" Minister. He says it is not right for the Minister in the Upper House to be the "Junior" member of the Ministry. I do not know what he means by "Junior," because as I understand the situation, the members of the Ministry are all equal, no man takes precedence of another in Cabinet, one man's voice and influence is as good as another, and we are colleagues, all working for the one end—the best interests of the colony. With regard to the position of the Minister in the Upper House, there is no rule as to which Minister shall represent the Government in the Upper House, sometimes it is the Postmaster-General and sometimes the Premier himself; but whoever it is, according to the usage in the other colonies, he has no precedence in the Government because he happens to be in the Upper House. With regard to the Electoral Act, of which so many hard things have been said, such as that it was a disgrace to the country—

MR. SIMPSON: Hear, hear.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): All I can say is, that although there are some little defects in it, yet the Act we have here is the law now existing in Queensland. The only difference is our Act has been made to apply to two elected Houses, whilst in Queensland they have a nominated Upper House; otherwise it is copied almost word for word from the Queensland Act. It may not be as good an Act as it might be, but I do not think it deserves the abuse that has been heaped upon it. Anyone wishing to be enrolled need have no trouble whatever.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No miner can get on.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Then the hon. member waxes wroth against my hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways. I have no doubt but that in his department, which is a growing department, and growing very quickly, there are lots of things that do not quite please him. There must be in so rapidly growing a department, but I am sure he is

anxious and desirous to do his duty. I consider that some of the language of the hon. member for Geraldton referring to the Hon. Commissioner of Railways was not Parliamentary.

MR. SIMPSON: Why did you not call me to order then?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think I ought to have done so. He waxes wroth on another point; but fortunately for me I am behind the scenes. He referred to resumptions of lands on the Bunbury resumption and the correspondence within the departments. I tell him to call for that correspondence; he can have it all. I know what he is driving at; A scandalous report has been circulated to the effect that before the general election I sent a telegram to my friend the Attorney-General saying I thought we had better pay certain arbitration awards, because the elections were coming on. I dare say the hon. member thought I did not know what he was referring to, but I managed after a good deal of trouble to find the telegram, and if the hon. member asks for it he shall have it, or I will lay it upon the table to-morrow without being asked. He makes a mistake if he thinks he can find a flaw in my armour; he can ask what questions he will, and if I cannot give satisfactory answers, I will vacate my seat. He has some cock-and-bull story about £27,000 being available for rolling stock when last year there was voted £174,000 to provide rolling stock.

MR. SIMPSON: Will you produce evidence on the point, because if you will not I will, for I have it here.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Then place it upon the table of the House. I know the circumstances of the colony change very much, and rolling stock intended for a certain railway is not always used for such railway. I have no doubt the Hon. the Commissioner will this year ask me for a tremendous amount for rolling stock, for, as everybody knows, we are short of it. I do not think I have anything more to say as to the criticisms of hon. members. I welcome the observations that have been made by my friends the leader of the Opposition and the hon. members for the Swan and the Moore, and others. I think hon. members generally have treated the Government fairly and generously, and I thank them most heartily for their kindness and confidence. We must always remember we are

in an age of change, everything is changing, and yet as the Hon. the Attorney-General said, we have tried amid it all to keep the head of the Ship of State straight. Even the revenue, which is now up to £1,100,000, indicates great changes. Then too we have had enormous loan expenditure authorised, over three millions, and a great part of this has been spent. No doubt but there are shortcomings, we cannot look after everything and see it as we would desire, but I believe Ministers have given undivided attention to their duties and have tried to do their best to promote the best interests of the colony. I believe there is a bright future before us, brighter and better perhaps than any of us can imagine. When we remember the vast area of gold-bearing country, stretching from the far away Kimberley, to Dundas, who can say what the probabilities of our future may be. In conclusion I can only say that I am pleased to see those who are coming to our shores, and I extend to them a hearty welcome; I hope they will join hands with those already here, and become West Australians. I hope, also, that old colonists, and old colonists' sons, will have a good large share in the prosperity which the new developments are bringing upon us.

Motion put and passed.

Question—That the Address-in-Reply be adopted—put and passed.

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

LICENSED SURVEYORS BILL.

Introduced by Mr. RICHARDSON and read a first time.

EMOLUMENTS AND PROPOSED REDUCTIONS OF SALARIES OF AUSTRALASIAN GOVERNORS.

Mr. RANDELL, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in order to enable Parliament to decide the proper amount of salary and allowances to be made to any Governor of this Colony hereafter to be appointed, this House is of opinion that the Government should at once obtain telegraphic information from all the Australasian Colonies, giving all particulars as to the salary and allowances paid to the Governors of those Colonies, and also of any proposed reductions in such salaries and allowances. Such information, when received,

to be laid upon the Table of the House."

Question put and passed.

EXTRA COST OVER CONTRACTS FOR CUE AND COOLGARDIE PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Mr. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, moved, "That a Return be laid upon the Table of the House showing extra costs incurred by the Government on original contracts for public buildings at Cue and Coolgardie."

Question put and passed, and return laid on the Table.

OPERATIONS AND COST, ETC., OF AGRICULTURAL BANK.

Mr. LOTON, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid on the table, showing—

1. The number of applications for Loans made to the Agricultural Bank to June 30th.
2. The amount applied for in each instance.
3. The number of applications approved in full or in part.
4. The number refused.
5. The total amount loaned and paid.
6. The rate of interest charged.
7. The number of loans applied for in each Electoral District in which applicants reside.
8. The amount expended in salaries.
9. The amount of travelling expenses and allowances.
10. The amount of all other expenditure.

Question put and passed, and return asked for laid on the table.

ALTERNATIVE PLANS (SMITH'S & MATHER'S) OF PROPOSED RAILWAY WORKSHOPS.

Mr. JAMES, for Mr. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, moved, "that the following plans be placed on the table of the House:—

- a. Plans, Specifications, and Estimates of proposed Railway Workshops, executed by Mr. Mather, Locomotive Superintendent.
- b. Plans, Specifications, and Estimates of proposed similar constructions, executed by Mr. Allison Smith."

Motion put and passed.

RETURN SHOWING TRAFFIC RECEIPTS, &c., IN CONNECTION WITH SOUTHERN CROSS RAILWAY.

Mr. MORAN, in accordance with notice

moved that a return be laid on the table of the House showing,—

1. The amount of money received by the Government for the hire of rolling stock for goods and passengers.

2. The amount of traffic over the said line since its control by Government, and the total earnings of the line for goods traffic, and also for passenger traffic to the end of June last.

3. The total amount of through and intermediate traffic (passenger and goods) on the Fremantle—Northam line, giving separate Return showing through traffic to Southern Cross, and also a similar Return as regards the Beverley to Northam, via Spencer's Brook line.

MR. MORAN: Sir, in moving the motion standing in my name. I am not particular as to the form in which the first part of my motion is expressed; all I desire is information as to the amounts received by the Government for the use of trucks.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I will endeavour to get the information for the hon. member. I think Mr. McDowell will be able to give us the information. In all such cases as this, it is desirable that hon. members should say exactly what they require, because it is impossible for the Government to know what is in their minds.

Motion put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.48 p.m., until 4.30 p.m., the following day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th July, 1895.

Presentation of the Address-in-Reply—Erection of Railway Goods Shed at Wonnerup—Completion of Boyanup-Busselton Telephone line—Stationing of Railway Engine at Busselton—Detention of Busselton Goods at Bunbury—Granting of power to Civil Service Commission to administer Oaths to witnesses—Public Telephones: Cost of upkeep, etc—Times of arrival of Trains upon Bunbury-Busselton Railway—Excise Duty upon Ale and Stout—Standard Time Bill; in committee—Uniforms Bill; second reading; in committee—Excess Bill, 1893-4: second reading; in committee—Agent-General Bill; second reading—Post Office Savings Bank Interest Bill; second reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 p.m.
PRAYERS.

PRESENTATION OF THE ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

At twenty minutes to five o'clock p.m., Mr. Speaker, accompanied by members, proceeded to Government House to present the Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Administrator, and having returned,

MR. SPEAKER reported that he had, with members of the House, waited upon His Excellency the Administrator, and had presented to him the Address of the Legislative Assembly in reply to his Opening Speech, agreed to by the House yesterday; and that His Excellency had been pleased to reply as follows:—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

I thank you for your Address in reply to my Opening Speech, and for the assurance of your desire to deal with all questions that come before you in such a manner as may be most conducive to the continued prosperity of this portion of Her Majesty's dominions.

Government House, Perth, 4th July, 1895.

ERECTION OF RAILWAY GOODS SHED AT WONNERUP.

MR. COOKWORTHY, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways, whether it was the intention of the Govern-