

the other places should not be overlooked. We want better organisation at our hospitals, and the system of red-tape which prevails burnt up. I have heard of things which are a discredit to the department which controls these institutions. If the Government would keep their servants up to date, it would be better. In the Perth Hospital, 67 out of 81 cases are suffering from typhoid; at Coolgardie, 37 out of 91 cases, and as regards Fremantle, I do not know the number. This shows that something should be done as soon as possible. With regard to the Agricultural Bank, I think it would be a good thing if the manager, now that we have agricultural halls, were to travel about and speak on the advantages of the bank. I hope that when the Fremantle harbor works are finished ships will be able to unload better than at present. Our railways are not carried on as satisfactorily as they might be, although there are many excuses for it. In any event, it is better that we should have goods waiting for trucks, than trucks waiting for goods. It is proposed to apply £1,000,000 to the purchase of rolling-stock, and this shows that it is intended to keep pace with the times. I might point out that there is practically no vote for immigration. At the present time it is difficult to get labor on the farms. In the past, I am aware that when people were brought out here they soon migrated to the other colonies, but things would be different now. If something is not done, we shall soon be in the position we were in when we started our railways. The men will leave the farms as before, in order to obtain higher wages. If, however, we get farm laborers from England they would be more likely to stay.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House at 10 o'clock p.m. adjourned until Wednesday, July 15, at 4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

TUESDAY, 14TH JULY, 1896.

Adoption of Children Bill; first reading—Powers of Attorney Bill; first reading—Summary Jurisdiction (Married Women) Bill; first reading—Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill; first reading—Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill; first reading—Address-in-Reply; resumption of debate—Adjournment.

The Speaker took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BILL.

Introduced by Mr. Moss, and read a first time.

POWERS OF ATTORNEY BILL.

Introduced by Mr. Moss, and read a first time.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (MARRIED WOMEN) BILL.

Introduced by Mr. Moss, and read a first time.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Recommended in His Excellency the Governor's message; introduced by the Premier, and read a first time.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE BILL.

Recommended in His Excellency the Governor's message; introduced by the Premier, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

THE ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The adjourned debate, on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, was resumed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mr. Speaker, perhaps at no time in the history of this colony was it more necessary that honorable members in charge of the responsibility of directing the affairs of this

country should enter upon their duties with more care than at the present time. There are seasons in the history of nations, as well as in the history of individuals, when there comes a parting of the ways, and when a step taken in a wrong direction leads to disaster, to turmoil, and to heartburning. I take it, sir, that we have arrived at one of these partings of the ways, to-day; and, in entering upon the legislative duties which fall to us in this session, we either make or mar the destiny of this country for many years to come. We have expected, sir, that the Government would present to the country a bold policy. We have expected, and have been led to expect, that the policy would be wide-reaching, and that it would in some respects stagger most men who heard that policy announced. Notwithstanding the expectation that thus was awakened, I venture to say that hon. members of this House, and hon. members of another place, and the country at large, were more than staggered at the proposals which were laid before the country in the Address which was read at the opening of Parliament. It will be necessary, sir, in order to do one's duty in connection with so great a question, to deal at some length with the proposals which are laid before the House; because the impressions which will go forth from the issue of this debate on the Address-in-Reply will necessarily very materially affect the issues of the Bills and questions which are referred to in that Address. We may, sir, I think, heartily join in the congratulations which are expressed in the outset of the Address, in reference to the financial position of the country. It is a matter for congratulation, and it is also a matter which is liable to lead to danger. Perhaps at no time—indeed, I may safely say at no time—in the history of West Australia was a Treasurer in such a grand position, financially, as the Treasurer of this colony is in to-day. We are fully prepared to admit that the finances are in an excellent condition. We are fully prepared to admit, of course, that all the laudation which has been expressed in reference to these finances are justly located on the head of the Treasurer and his colleagues in the Ministry. We must admit that there

can be no influence at work—that it is utterly impossible any influence can be at work—other than the influence of the Ministry, in bringing about this satisfactory condition of the country's finances; and especially when we have a Ministry of this particular character; a Ministry that is kaleidoscopic in its nature, and has for its policy a chameleon policy. The financial position and prospects of the country are undoubtedly great, and I am one of those who, perhaps of all members of the House, will be found optimistic in regard to its future. When the estimates of the Treasurer were laid before this House in 1894, and a loan policy of a million and a half was laid before this House, I then urged that the increasing revenue would prove itself sufficient for all the wants of unproductive works, and I urged the Government to cut out of the Loan Bill the half million of money which it was proposed to spend on unproductive works. Now, that forecast has been more than justified. The Treasurer is now in a position—though I located the years and the time when that money would be here and would be required—he is in a far better position than in the forecast which I then gave. Last year, when the Treasurer placed the Budget before the House, I again repeated that the Treasurer had largely under-estimated his revenue; and while I then admitted, and I still admit, that it was wise on that occasion to be rather under the mark than a little over, because there would be an attempt, of course, in the prosperous days, to make a combined raid upon the Treasury, I am still optimistic in regard to the revenue of this country. To-day, we stand at something over £1,800,000; and I suppose I should find some honorable members on the benches opposite (Ministerial side) jeering as they did last year, if I were to say that the revenue of this country in the year that is coming, including the additional railways that may then be in the possession of the Government, will be beyond two millions and a half. That, perhaps, is a forecast that may not be justified; but I venture it, sir, and I venture to affirm that the year's issue will prove that I am under rather than over the mark. Seeing, then, that I have no fears on the score of the future of this country,

or of its revenue, shall I be found to fear to go forward in necessary public works which are to the advantage of this country? I am also perfectly satisfied that there will be a very large increase of population in this country during the years that are coming, and from that standpoint there is somewhat of justification for taking a step forward. But, sir, what I desire to impress upon the House and the country to-day is that, while that step should be bold and fearless, it shall not be rash and unwise; and while we have large revenues to dispose of, and while we have a great and noble future, we shall not be found to frivolously waste that revenue in wild schemes, simply to gratify the sentiment of the hour. The next point I have to express congratulations upon is the new Minister. It may seem very peculiar, but in every session since I have been in this House, indeed since I have been in this country, Parliament has opened with a new Minister. There has been no resignation at the opening, but there has always been a new Minister. There has always been this process of reconstruction. Well, perhaps it is better than destruction, after all, for we might destroy and not be able to build up; but this process of reconstruction grows somewhat monotonous, and here we have it again. I am reminded, sir, of that statement we have read in holy writ, of a certain eminent lady of Samaria, of whom it was said, on the highest authority, that she had five husbands, and the one she then had was not her husband. Well, we have had five Forrest Ministries, and the one we have now is not the Forrest Government. But, notwithstanding the perpetual changes that are going on, the Premier is still at the wheel. The Attorney-General, acting as bowsprit of the ship, though somewhat threatened with a so-called resignation, is either holding on or is held on—I am not certain which. The fore-mast went a long time ago—the ship only had one jury mast—and it is our solemn duty to record that he has gone from us for ever. The hind-mast—he went a long time ago. And now, since we last met, the main-mast has been thrown over—shattered by the Premier's own hand. But still the Premier stands at the wheel, and looks out at the gathering night. He says "There are rocks ahead!" He

doubtless feels himself sufficiently competent to steer the ship clear of those rocks—let us hope that he may be successful. He stands at the wheel, and calls to the country: "All's well; all's well. I have half a million surplus, and three-quarters of a million loan money, in the bunkers of the old ship. All's well; all's well." Then he marches on to the quarter deck, and sings: "Colleagues may come and colleagues may go, but I go on for ever!" Well, sir, if this Ministry is not a good Ministry, it is not the fault of the Premier; he has changed it often enough. He has gathered his strength from all sides of the House—first from the Opposition bench; then from the Ministerial corner; then from the Opposition benches in another place; and last, but not least, sir, he has now—wondrous to behold!—been able to recruit his Ministry from the direct Ministerial bench behind him. The Ministry may hope that at last there will be peace. Well, sir, I venture to assert that this kind of Ministerial reconstruction is unique in the annals of British institutions. There is nothing like making history, sir, so long as you make it good; and one thing is pretty fairly certain, that when it is necessary to make history, the honorable the Premier is fully prepared to do his duty in that particular respect. Precedents go for nothing; practice—well, our practice is of course the best practice. Heterodoxy is your doxy, orthodoxy is my doxy. The Ministerial practice is correct practice, and who will say nay? Yet I venture to say that in other hands, less wise, this continual process of reconstruction, and especially during the recess, will be found dangerous to any country, and consequently I think that on every occasion it is one's duty to enter, if not a strong, at least a mild, protest against this practice. Turning now from the composition of the Ministry to the actions of the Ministry—this good Ministry which has so often been reconstructed; this best of all possible Ministries in this best of all possible Parliaments, and this best of all possible worlds—because all things require to be tested, and it is an axiom in politics, as elsewhere, that by their fruits shall ye know them—now, tested by this principle, what do we find? I venture to assert that a sentiment

expressed to me by a gentleman a while ago is not far out, when he said the administration of this country is something atrocious, from beginning to end. Well, we begin with the Treasury, and, linking it with the Works Account Department, there is something going on in connection with the Treasury and the Works Account Department that is lamentable in the extreme. The conditions are these—not to speak of such things as the Auditor-General refers to in his annual report on the public accounts, of lost ledgers, of lost pass-books and missing balance-sheets, but to speak of daily events—contractors cannot get their money, although the Treasury is overflowing; the payment of accounts for work done cannot be got when due, and as a consequence the contracting of the public works of this colony is being thrown into the hands of capitalists, adversely to the other contractors, because only the men of means will be able to endure the strain, and worry, and loss, and delay now experienced in the settlement of public accounts for work done. Only such men as these will dare to tender, and as a consequence public works are being taken at a price higher than need be given, and public loss is the consequence, because of a system which will only allow accounts to be paid on one particular day of the month, and even then only those accounts that are in by a certain date. If we pass on from the Treasury to the Works Department, here we have a weariness of the flesh. Even according to the evidence, the able evidence, of the hon. member for the Moore, who is entrusted with the moving of this Address-in-Reply, in that sardonic manner which is his custom, he presented to this House the picture of a long-suffering public waiting at the door of the Public Works Department, begging to have certain works done, and hearing some somnolent individual inside crying, "You have waked me too soon; let me slumber again." Well, I venture to assert that it was a true picture of a real fact. Works!—why, if you look at these proposals which are laid on the table of the House, one would imagine that the Public Works Department was prepared to take upon itself the whole work of this and half-a-dozen other colonies, without hesitation and without

reserve! And yet there are public works which have been on the board 18 months, and which, I question not, are not yet done. At any rate, we voted public works last year of which we hear nothing, and whether they will ever be done, or whether they are even yet begun, is a question known only to futurity. If we take the survey of the operations of the Works Department outside, we find the monuments of failure are strewn all over this country. We need not go far to find the beginning of a wretched orderly room, placed here on the very best piece of land which the Government possess, and occupying the whole space, yet lying there for months unfinished—and let us hope it never will be finished. All over this country monuments of failure, of wrong, of waste, of ruin, lie at the door of the Works Department. If we turn to the Works Department and to the Railway Department, we find there a hopeless muddle, producing ruin to individuals and loss to the State. I am prepared to admit that the present Minister for Railways tries to do his duty, and when I say that, I am not prepared to admit that the former Minister of the department did not try to do his duty. I believe that efforts are being made to improve the departmental management, but all its connection with the public is a hopeless muddle. If we turn to our genial friend who presides over the somnolent and lethargic Lands Department, the best that we can say of him is that, if he has never done any good, he has never done any harm, unless he is to be held responsible for such occurrences as that about which a rather amusing story is told by a Coolgardie paper. "About a fortnight ago," says the paper, "some cases of apples which had been imported from South Australia, and brought to Coolgardie, fell into the hands of the police as contraband goods. They had been imported as preserved apples, thus evading a section of the Import Duties Act. We had an opportunity of seeing the apples; there were twenty-four cases of them, and they were of the finest description. Judge of our astonishment when we heard that the whole of them, cases and all, had been destroyed. It appears that the inspector wired to Perth for instructions concerning their disposal, and an order was re-

ceived from the Secretary of the Bureau of Agriculture to have them burned. This dog-in-the-manger policy had, of course, to be carried out, and the melancholy spectacle was presented of the police carrying away to be burned a quantity of valuable fruit." [THE PREMIER: That was at Albany.] The man who saw the apples surely ought to have known where they were, and he said that they were at Coolgardie. Now, if the apples had been destroyed at the port, it might have been said that there was a possibility of the Codlin moth or some other pest of the orchard being introduced, to the danger of the hardy peasantry of this country. But will any man possessing any intelligence say that there was any danger of the Codlin moth climbing over the mulga for a distance of three hundred miles to get to an orchard? Therefore, I say that it was an act of wantonness to destroy fruit which is necessary to preserve the lives and the health of the people on the goldfields, where fruit is very scarce. [THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You can't give apples to typhoid patients.] I have not yet heard that the gentleman who acts as legal adviser to the Government has qualified as M.D. [THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No; but he is qualified by common sense.] Let us turn now to that wretched concern which we term the Post and Telegraph Office, and about which the curses of the public have been loud and deep. It is unfortunate that, while complaints against the administration of the department have been so strong and general that the Postmaster-General should have stated that he despised the criticisms of the public and the press—[THE PREMIER: Oh, no, no.] But I say yes. [MR. SIMPSON: The statement was made in every paper in the country.] [THE PREMIER: But there were no reporters present.] I affirm that it was made; it was made in the presence of hundreds of witnesses, and I defy the Government to dispute it. The incapacity of the department causes serious loss to the people. I have received a letter, with which I shall not now trouble the House, giving a case in point. A man who had been advised that a registered letter awaited him at the Post-office made application at the office, and was told that there was no letter for him. He was advised by telegram that the letter

had been duly posted. He made a second application, and was again told that there was no letter. He produced the telegram, and demanded that there should be a search; then the letter which contained money was found, but too late for the purposes of the recipient, and the result was that he lost £150—a very serious loss to a working man. This is a sample of the way in which hundreds of pounds have been lost by the public during the year; in fact, what this country has suffered through the *laches* of the postal service is beyond description. If there was any possibility of the department being materially altered, we might hope for better things, but all the adverse criticism has failed to make any impression upon the Minister, who supports the Postmaster-General, while the department is thoroughly disorganised. There is not a single branch of the department that is not a hopeless wreck, and the public, who ought to be aided and assisted by the Post and Telegraph Offices, are injured by the mismanagement of the department. Now, if we move on to the Mines Department, all I can say is that, if one-tenth of the statements which are made in the public press about the Minister at the head of that department are true, he should not continue to hold his position. It is said that the department is full of rottenness and corruption. [THE PREMIER: Who says that?] Well, perhaps the Premier, who sits for Bunbury, will be perfectly satisfied with the authority of the *Bunbury Herald*, which, under date July 3, says:—"The matter now stands thus: The Minister is charged with allowing himself to be influenced in matters which come before him for appeal by the interested parties. The department is declared to be rotten from top to bottom, and still the Minister refuses to vindicate either his own honesty of purpose or the honesty of his department." The Premier could not have a higher authority than the *Bunbury Herald*. [THE PREMIER: It is a very good newspaper.] The *Herald* would not willingly publish a single statement that was derogatory to the Government of which the Premier was the head. Well, the goldfields know something about this question. What do we read in the goldfields press? *Hannan's Herald* of June 30, in a trenchant article, says:—"We

may at a future date have a sensational story to relate of how a prominent gold-fields official levied blackmail on his political chief in lieu of dismissal. Despite desperate attempts that are being made to gag the press, investigations must follow, after which a healthy Government Department will spring up from where a state of chaos and corruption now prevails." I hope the Premier will admit the authenticity of a document signed by the Under-Secretary for Mines, which is published in the *Coolgardie Pioneer*. It says that the Minister has been influencing the Warden prior to the hearing of the evidence in a case that was to come before the Warden for his decision. The article is as follows:—"I beg to inform you that the Minister considers McDonald has no claim to excess on the application for 1640 beyond his pegs, and that Parkes' application for a small triangle adjoining 84 should be favored.—Signed, HENRY PRINSEP, Under-Secretary for Mines. 27th April, 1896." The important point in connection with this epistle is the fact that the matter did not come officially before the Warden until May 15, and therefore the Minister has apparently been giving instructions as to what the verdict should be nearly three weeks before the hearing of the case! The public are rapidly losing all confidence in the purity of the Warden's Courts and the tenure of properties held under lease from the Crown. This scandalous state of affairs illustrates in the most forcible manner the necessity which exists, and to which we have frequently referred, of divorcing the administrative from the judicial side of the department. Apart entirely from the merits of the present case, the position of the Minister and the Wardens is an anomalous and dangerous one, and the only remedy we can discern is to place this important branch of the magistracy either in a position of independence, or to put it under the control of a specially-appointed Supreme Court judge. The atmosphere at present is be-fogged with suspicion, and must be cleared at any cost, let who will suffer in the process. Parliament will re-assemble shortly, and if there is a member in the House who is worth the few gallons of air he breathes, that man will see it to be his plain and absolute duty to do his best to ventilate

this matter, and, if needful, to block all business of whatsoever kind until this unsavory business has been made the subject of an exhaustive and public inquiry, and until some radical remedy has been devised, which will render impossible such happenings in the future. We must either find a remedy, even if it means the remodelling of the entire department and the retirement of its present chief, or we must be prepared to lose the fertilising stream of capital which has hitherto been of so much benefit to Western Australia. Whether the existing controversy wrecks Mr. Wittenoom's career as a Minister matters not one iota. What we have to see to is that the distrust of the Department of Mines now prevalent does not wreck the gold-mining industry. Mr. Wittenoom has had a very good innings, and the time has now come for him to shuffle off the stage of public life to the accompanying groans of the people, or, like Mr. Venn, be ignominiously sacked in his nightshirt, or even *minus* that unromantic garment." [THE PREMIER: What paper is that?] The *Coolgardie Pioneer*; the hon. member has never heard of it, but possibly he will. It is clear that such statements as these cannot be passed lightly by, but I am sure we shall all be gratified. None will be more so than myself, if it should be proved that every statement that has been made in the press against the Minister of the Mines Department is a false one. But these statements should be either supported by evidence or withdrawn. If the Ministry is not prepared to take the necessary action to bring the allegations before a board or a court in this colony, in order to investigate statements which are so derogatory to the public honor of this most important department, I deem it to be the bounden duty of members of this House to take care that the charges shall be inquired into by a competent board. Unless this House is prepared to take this step, it will be impossible to dissipate the gloom which surrounds the department and the Minister while such things are written and published and remain unchallenged. Even yesterday, in a paper which is in the hands of the Premier—I mean the *Daily News*—there were comments reflecting upon the non-payment of overtime in the Police Depart-

ment. I will not trouble the House with the statement, but the substance of it is that there is something wrong in this Police Department, that requires investigation. It is declared that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in the department, and that a great deal of overtime duty is done that is not paid for. In regard to the police, I am an eight-hours man, and I believe that, if eight hours are enough for an ordinary man to work, they are enough for the police. This department, which is under the control of the Premier, is one that I have had to ask questions about for the last two years. Although it has hitherto been denied that the police of this colony have no Sunday off, it now appears that they do work seven days each week. The police form part of the public service, and I think that we should not expect the members of the force to work a day and a half for a day's pay, any more than the members of any other department should be expected to do so. It is also stated that, in the matter of promotion, experienced men have been passed over in favor of those who have not been so long in the service; but I will pass this for the moment, as another opportunity will be afforded of discussing it. If the defects which were complained of were condemned by the Ministry; if they said honestly and fairly, "Well, gentlemen, we have left undone that which we ought to have done," then people might be disposed to hope for better things; but we are called upon to take off our hats and shout "hurrah!" for the only perfect Ministry that the world has ever seen or ever will see. To come to the vice-regal Speech, I may say that I look at it with some disappointment: it is big enough - there is enough of it; but I am disappointed with it because there are not more distinct statements in it upon important things which we expected to see in this Speech as an indication of what the work of the session was to be. In the Mining Department there has been a great deal of room for misreading Clause XI. of "The Goldfields Act." There has been deputation upon deputation to urge the amendment of this clause. One of these influential deputations waited not only upon the Minister for Mines, but upon the Premier, and it was most distinctly understood that during this session, Parliament would be asked to pass an amending bill

in order to make the interpretation of Clause XI. clear, and in accordance with the wishes of the goldfields. I had also hoped that in view of the danger that was escaped in connection with the Hampton Plains Syndicate, in connection with the vexed question of mining on private property, and the proclamation of the Dandalup goldfields, steps would have been taken to afford protection, which had been found to be necessary, during the recess. After all the risk we have run, I thought the Government would have taken some action to deal clearly and conclusively in regard to mining on private properties, by bringing in a bill to clear away the difficulties surrounding the question, but we have no indication in the vice-regal Speech of their intention to do so, nor for correcting any of the defects of the Mining Department. We are not assured, nor led to expect, that there will be any change in the administration of the Mines Department, but we are informed that some attempts are to be made to give increased representation to the goldfields; but it is not promised that increased representation shall be upon the basis of population. Nor is there any indication that the Government propose, in bringing this reform of the Constitution before the House, to touch those vital questions which are before the country, and which are occupying the public mind. We find ourselves to-day in a position that is most peculiar. I have again to refer to the condition of representation in this House. I have the figures up to the close of the year 1895. The total number of electors upon the rolls in December of that year was 15,029. The members of the House were elected in this way: that 11 members sat for 1,188 electors. If we add six more to this number, making it 17, or a clear majority of the members of the House, that is 17, they would, upon the same proportion of votes, sit for 2,786 voters. If we go a step further and take in 27 members of this House, we find that those 27 members sat for only 7,567 voters, and the remaining members, namely six, sat for 7,467 voters. Now I say that this is an anomalous position, and that this country is not satisfied with the House, and it will not be satisfied until it obtains something like equitable representation.

Taxation is going on at the rate of over £6 per head in this colony. There are 125,000 people here to-day, and there are only 15,000 people out of the 125,000 who have any votes in the expenditure of the taxes of Western Australia. And I say that such a condition of things cannot be allowed to continue in this country, and that if the Government will not face the question this session, difficulties must necessarily arise. Now, I for one am not prepared to put up with a mere make-shift measure. This reform of increased representation is demanded by the country at large. This reform I urged upon the country during last session, and the preceding one. This reform I have discussed upon the platform in my own electorate, and this increased representation is a reform that has been discussed at the largest meeting ever held in this colony—in the Town-hall of Perth, and I say that this condition of the unequal voting power of the people must be altered; but the bill which the Government proposes to bring in is only a make-shift measure which cannot be satisfactory to this House, and it certainly will not give satisfaction to the country. In the reform there must be complete representation of the people, and not of vacant land. There must be a full representation of the people upon the basis of population, except in the case of the Nor'-West, which I admit to be, from its isolated position and sparse population, a peculiar one. I admit the justice of dealing exceptionally with the Nor'-West, and I shall be quite prepared to do so. As far as the mass of people of the colony is concerned, there is only one equitable principle upon which representation can be based, and that is representation on the basis of population. The goldfields population, as I have the figures before me to prove, contribute more than half of the revenue of this colony. Now these people, by reason of their avocation, cannot settle in any one district for a sufficient length of time to enable them to obtain votes under the present law, but what is demanded by the goldfields districts, and what is equitable to the men who reside and labor in them, is that the possession of a miner's right shall be accepted as a taxpayer's right to vote, and that

the names of the holders of such rights shall be sent to the Registrar for registration, so that they may take part in the election of members for the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. Only in this way can we obtain a fair and equitable vote for the mining districts. In criticising the administration of the departments, I am ready to admit that some of the defects which have grown up are due to the fact that Ministers have too much work to do. I am willing to give them every credit for having done their best to cope with a rapid increase of work, but if a Minister finds that he is overtasked, he should resign some of his functions. For example, the Minister for Mines might give up the control of the Post-office, allowing the Postmaster-General to be elected as the Ministerial head of that department, and that would give us an opportunity of saying what we think of his administration. In his present position he is simply sheltered by his Minister, but if he had a place on the floor of this House as ministerial head of the department, we could speak plainly about him. What I ask for is that, if we have increased representation, there should also be an increase in the number of Ministers, so that the work of their departments may be properly done. And next I ask that, while the amending Electoral Bill is before the House, there shall be a complete and final and total abolition of plural and proxy voting. [THE PREMIER: There is no proxy voting.] I ask hon. members to note that the Premier of this colony says there is no proxy voting under the present Electoral Act. [THE PREMIER: What do you call proxy voting?] Why, proxy voting means voting by proxy, by deputy. I am not prepared to enter into hair-splitting, nor to straddle on a rail. Also, I wanted to see in this Speech some indication that there is going to be an alteration in the tariff, and the abolition of the oppressive taxes levied on the cost of living, while there is no possibility of the country producing enough food for its people. I hope that the time is coming when the Ministry will have courage—for it will require courage—to relieve the people who live by their labor on the goldfields of an artificial price of food. I hope that when this tariff reform comes it will be thorough, and that it will

include the abolition of duty on mining machinery, to assist the mining industry. There is another thing which does not appear in this Speech which I had hoped for and expected to see. Very much has been said of the difficulties of which the members of the Civil Service are so loudly complaining. In fact, from the remarks made on the floor of the House, I had the conviction, although it may have been a dream, that Ministers had pledged themselves to a reform of the Civil Service. [THE PREMIER: We were waiting for the report of the Civil Service Commission.] The Commission! Why, it is a patent whitewashing machine adopted by every Government that wishes to hide defects. I find the system of the Civil Service is absolutely destructive of efficiency; men are promoted by favoritism and not by merit. [THE PREMIER: Oh!] If the Premier does not know it, I know it. It is somewhat strange that a private member of this House should know these things without Ministers knowing them. I know it, and I can produce instances. I want to see something done to put the Civil Service upon a proper basis, and I hope that the Government will not allow the session to pass without doing it. I want to see some scheme adopted for putting the Civil Service upon some distinct, equitable basis, so that the service may be treated as a public service. In private life, when we engage a servant we see that he does his work, and we pay him for it. Now, in these departments of the State there are many men who do not do an honest day's work for a fair day's pay. (Hear, hear.) And there are men in the Civil Service who are doing a day's work for half a day's pay. (Hear, hear.) The men are not properly paid; they are submitting to the sweating system of the Government. (Hear, hear.) There are other men who do not do half a day's work for their pay. These are things which are bringing disorganisation into the service. I am sorry to have to relate them, but it really is the duty of Ministers to know these affairs, which are open secrets as well as known to private members. It is known to all intelligent men in this country that these conditions do exist. Although we are few in number on this side of the House, we must continue to agitate until a sense of righteousness and in-

tegrity comes into the minds of the Ministry upon this question. We want a good day's work out of our servants. I do not want any individual, whether a servant of the State or not, to work nine hours and receive only eight hours' pay. At the same time, I do not think we are willing to pay any man for working eight hours when he works only five. This requires to be altered. Appointments should be made after examination, and promotions made upon merit, and not by favoritism. Efficiency in the service can only be secured in this way. We also want the officials in the public service properly paid, and to get the best talent for our money. There are a few other things which I expected to find in the Speech. I expected and hoped that the hon. the Minister for Railways, on the first occasion of his assumption of office, would have proposed a railway—I am almost afraid to say it—from Coolgardie to Dundas. We have a railway here spoken of—and we are always grateful for small mercies—from Cue to Nannine, which, however, forms no part of the Government scheme, and it is not to be built out of borrowed money. I did expect the Government would have had the courage to face the expansion of the railway system to Lawlers, where a large centre of the mining industry has sprung up. However, the Government have seen fit in their wisdom to open a Warden's Court in that district, yet we hear nothing whatever to indicate that this large centre will be connected by railway.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: We want a bigger loan.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You might as well have made it five millions. I say that the railway should be continued towards Peak Hill, where one of the richest fields in this colony is only waiting for the necessary development which railway connection would bring. There is not a single word about the intention of the Government in regard to extending the railway in this district, which I have the honor to represent. The Government have not even faced the requirements of Pilbarra in this respect. The hon. member who represents that district is not now in his place, but I may say here that we had almost a pro-

mise from the Government last session that the Northern Railway would be extended to Pilbarra. Then the hon. member who sits for Plantagenet, in a notable speech away on the coast, practically led the people there to believe that the Government were pledged to a railway from Esperance to Dundas. What has become of that promise, for the people took it that way? Either the hon. member was indistinct in his remarks, or the people over-sanguine as to his utterances; but the result was the same. The people held a high jubilation over their expectations, and some of them did not "go home till morning." There is another question, a grave question, which must come under the cognisance of this House: that is the oft-repeated question of the Midland Railway. We have nearly paid up to the limit of the interest, something like £18,000 out of £20,000. The land is locked up, that land which the hon. gentleman who sits on the Ministerial side of the House would like to hand over to the "hardy peasantry," the "basis of the agricultural interest and of national life." We have heard these utterances often in respect to the lands of the country, which have to be opened up, and here, where a railway does exist and agriculture would be remunerative, we go on paying the interest under this wretched guarantee, and not a single member of the Ministry has the courage to enforce the rights under the guarantee. I hope that the Government will have courage in this matter, and when the time comes they will exercise their rights and settle the agricultural laborer on these lands, and so create the "hardy peasantry," the "great stay of the agricultural interest." We have learnt from the press that the Government intend to buy the Great Southern Railway. Given a fair and equitable price, and upon equitable conditions, I should be disposed to support them in that proposal. Although the press has said that, and although some of the Ministry hinted at the same thing, there is not a single word about it in the Speech; but when I turn over the page, I see that the Government propose to construct a large number of agricultural railways. [THE PREMIER: Out of the revenue.] Yes, out of the revenue, which probably we may want

for some other purpose. In connection with this proposal to construct agricultural railways, the question presents itself—Are we in this House foolish enough to vote money for agricultural railways? Are we to be asked to sanction the raising of money for this purpose? Is this a dark horse in the Ministerial programme? For if the Midland and Great Southern lands come back into the hands of the Government, the necessity for these agricultural railways ceases to exist, for we shall have enough land opened up for the next ten years.

THE PREMIER: We intend to open up the whole country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We have no light upon the intentions of the Government with regard to this question. I say that that is a grave omission—grave in this sense, that the withholding of the information which we desire materially affects the position which hon. members on this side of the House will take up concerning the proposals of the Government. Certainly, the Government should at the very outset have placed this information before us.

THE PREMIER: We will tell you in a few days.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Coming now to the Address itself, we have at the very first of it—in Clause 2—one of those manifestations of the chameleon policy of this Government. Hon. members on this side of the House have urged the question of Federation at great length upon the Government, but were treated very coolly indeed—[THE PREMIER: No.]—and yet we have here, as the first plank in the Government platform, this question of Federation. I am very glad to hear that the color of the animal has changed—[THE PREMIER: No.]—and that the influence brought to bear has been sufficient to move them to something worthy of commendation; also to find that hon. members who hold such an important position as the Ministry do can be influenced by minor considerations, reached by public opinion, and take suggestions from sources other than the concentrated wisdom on the other side. I congratulate them upon this change. We are now told that the question is occupying the attention of all the other colonies. Before I leave this question, I want to suggest that when the

question comes before the House I hope the Government will be in earnest over this question, for I don't believe in half measures. I hope the Government will go either for it or against it, and let us know their true position. I suppose it will be admitted by all capable of judging that Sir Samuel Griffith, Chief Justice of Queensland, is the man above all others in Australia who has the broadest grasp of this Federal question. In a recent speech made in his capacity of President of the School of Arts in Brisbane, he gave some very striking figures upon this question, and I have a particular desire to call the attention of the hon. member who sits for the largest constituency in this House (the hon. member for West Perth) to the statement which this authority makes. The figures are analysed, but I will not deal with the proposed scheme, or what, in its results, it will lead to, but before placing these figures before the House I want to state that there is a general misapprehension in the public mind with regard to what is involved in this question of Federation. There is an assumption that the whole of the revenue of the colonies will have to be pooled. I deny that. All that is intended to be pooled is the revenue from the posts and telegraphs, customs houses, and inland excise. Sir Samuel Griffith says that the proposed scheme would leave Victoria the loser to the extent of £239,000. I think it is a remarkable feature of this question that the most enthusiastic colony of the group is the one that will lose most by it, so far as mere figures are concerned. Next on the list is Tasmania, which will lose £29,000; following her South Australia, which will lose £28,000. Queensland—and, strange to say, the attitude of Queensland has not been hurried—Queensland will gain £56,000, and Western Australia, concerning whom it is said to enter into this Federation would be a disadvantage and a loss, will gain £19,000 per year. These are the results which so able a man as Sir Samuel Griffith, a man who has a broad grasp of this question, has worked out recently—worked out with a most careful analysis of the whole question and its difficulties. What I particularly want to call the attention of this House

to is that, in entering into this Federal Union, the great bulk of our revenue, which comes from the goldfields, would not be touched; only that which comes from our Customs house, post-office, and excise. [THE PREMIER: How much revenue?] As much as you want; you would have an ample revenue, even leaving the Customs out. The receipts from land rents this year will be £100,000.

THE PREMIER: That's not mining.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The point I want to get at is this: If these colonies are going in for Federation it would be, in my opinion, the utmost folly for us to lag behind, or otherwise to allow the colonies to federate without our having a voice in the construction of that Federation scheme. If the colonies are not unwise and unfair—which I do not believe they are—I believe that the gentlemen who will meet in that Federal Conference will weigh the interests of this colony as carefully as those of their own; but if they are not so honest as I believe them to be, or biased on behalf of their own individual colony—and we cannot expect that the actions of all the representatives of the other colonies will be satisfactory to us—we have an opportunity by our representatives of obtaining equitable terms and obtaining justice for our case. It would be most unwise to allow that opportunity to pass without being represented at that Conference. I am all the more pleased to say now, because there is so much in the Speech with which I am not pleased, that I have the greatest pleasure in having the opportunity of congratulating the Government on this change of policy—[THE PREMIER: No.]—in reference to this great question; and I hope now, having taken this step, that they will go on and make such a selection of gentlemen to represent this colony in the Federal Conference as will be worthy not merely of the present, but coming generations. I trust the popular basis will be agreed upon, and if the case is stated as it should be by the gentlemen sent, that a fair decision will be arrived at, and that a fair, equitable examination of our case, our difficulties, and our prospects, will be entered into by that Conference; and I think we may safely trust our case in the hands of the hon. members who will be appointed to represent us on that occa-

sion. The next question that is presented to us is in Clause 3. I have already had occasion to notice it personally, and I wish to notice it again: "The rapid development of the goldfields, and the large population residing upon them, has made it imperative to increase their representation in both Houses of Parliament, and a Bill will be submitted to you giving greater representation to the goldfields and other important localities." I congratulate the Government upon taking this step. I trust it may be that my fears will be dispersed, and my unexpected hopes realised as to the time when this Bill is to be introduced. It must be immediate. If the Government have considered the vastness of their proposals, they must have been considering the question for a considerable length of time, and what surprises me is that they had not the courage to call the House together earlier in the year, knowing, as they must have known, that increased representation is desirable—they deem it necessary, at any rate. So great was the call on loan funds expressed in the Speech that I am surprised that the Government had not the courage to call the House together, and present this Bill, so that it might have been passed earlier in the session, and an adjournment could have taken place, and hon. members elected under the increased representation could have joined in discussing these important questions. We have now to take things as they are, now that the Government propose to increase the debt of the country from £36 per head to £81 per head. The Government propose to borrow two and a half millions for one scheme alone—in all, there will be five millions, doubling the debt of the colony.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have not borrowed it yet.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Premier has given himself away most rashly over this proposal of the Government to commit this colony to such a vast sum upon a miserable franchise of 15,000 electors. [THE PREMIER: No.] Yes. It was only 15,000 when the House was elected. The Government propose to the people of this colony, and the people who have come here from colonies burdened with taxation, to raise

this amount without giving them a voice in the spending of the money. [AN HON. MEMBER: They might make it more.] Hon. members need have no fear in this respect. I am a Victorian, with some experience of that colony, and I believe there are some 40,000 Victorians in this colony to-day; and I am afraid the people from that land have had too much experience in State borrowing. I wish to record the fact here that, in this respect, Victoria stands at the bottom of the list, and not at the top. [THE PREMIER: Everyone knows that.] The people are to be pledged to works which it will take probably seven years to complete, and yet we have no indication that the Government intend to increase the representation; on the other hand, we have reason for believing that they intend to make this measure the last Bill of the Session—[THE PREMIER: Not at all.]—to raise the whole of the money, and commit the country to this expenditure without allowing any of these people to have a voice in the matter. If the Government will do what I urge them to do—make this Bill the first Bill of the Session, ask for a vote to carry on the Government of the country, and then adjourn the House until members elected under that Bill disclose their intentions—I will be prepared to support the Bill, provided that it is just. But if it means that the Government want to lock the stable door after the horse is stolen; if it means that a majority in this House, which is not representative of the people, is going to commit this country to works seven years ahead, and incur a debt which, even taking the present population basis, would still be higher than the average national debts of Australia—if the Government take upon themselves the responsibility of doing this before they allow the goldfields and other large centres of population to have fair and equitable representation in this House, with other interests, it will be unsatisfactory, and cannot be sanctioned. If increased representation is to take place at all, it ought to be immediate. The Government proposals are vast. They tell us that two and a half millions are needed, to supply water to Coolgardie, but the Government must know that two and a half millions will do nothing of the kind—

THE PREMIER: We do not know anything of the sort.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Government ought to know that.

THE PREMIER: We have every reason to know, and the reasons on which these conclusions are based can be repeated at the proper time, and you will have an opportunity to discuss them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not an engineer; still I would like to say that it is a most remarkable thing that we are now entering upon a Julius Vogelian policy, and the hon. member who sits for North Fremantle knows something about it. It is most extraordinary that the engineer who is at the head of the Public Works Department carried on the works under the policy which brought New Zealand to its knees. [THE PREMIER: No.] The Government are taking the same step which was taken by the Gillies Ministry in Victoria. We have now come to the parting of the ways, to what in the past has led two great colonies to destruction, and yet, with all this experience before us—and hon. members in this House know what the evil effects of this policy are—the Government, in making these proposals, are going in the way leading to the same results. And these proposals are made at a time when we have people here from New Zealand who know the evil effects of that policy, and people from Victoria who know the desperate consequences of that policy, and yet who have no voice in the decision of the question. For that reason I shall protest, with all the powers I possess, to delay the loan policy—good or bad—until there is equitable representation in this House, and I shall give this Government no rest until they give an assurance of one of two things—either that they will give increased representation and consider this question afterwards, or that they will abandon their present proposals for this session of Parliament, until equitable representation is given. This is my position, and I repeat that representation must be immediately increased if the present proposals are to be passed. There is neither fairness, nor right, nor justice, nor reason in asking this House—a House to some extent non-representative of the people—to commit the colony to a larger expenditure than the

total present debt of the colony, without a single voice from the people who will have to pay the taxation. This question is too vast to be submitted to a House like this. It would only be a proper course, before entering on the discussion of such vast questions as the proposals contained in the Speech, that the House should be dissolved and the opinion of the country obtained on these questions. Not in the whole of the Australian colonies—I may say in the world—was ever such a proposal, in its relative conditions, laid before a House of Parliament since representative government was founded.

THE PREMIER: You don't know anything about it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But if the Government deliberately propose to double the national debt at the very time that they admit that the House is not representative of the people, at the very time and in the very House that they see the vast increase of population renders it necessary that there shall be increased representation, I say such an outrageous proposal was never submitted to any Parliament. Increased representation must be immediately dealt with. If the Government proposals were wise I would support them, but they are not. I say again, it would be unjust to commit the country to seven years' financial expenditure. The situation is of the gravest character to this House, which I hope will see the justice of my contention. I trust that the Government will earnestly consider this view of the question, and I say again that the only proper course, the only righteous course—[THE PREMIER: Don't use that word.]—I repeat, the only righteous course, the only just and honorable course which the Government and the gentlemen who represent the people in this House can take, is to give increased representation first, and then deal with the borrowing policy afterwards.

At 6.30 p.m. the Speaker left the chair.

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

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mr. Speaker, when the House adjourned, I was endeavoring to show that the Government

admitted the necessity of increased representation, and yet they propose, in a Parliament that is in its third session, in a Parliament that does not represent the people of this colony, in a Parliament that was elected at the time when there were only 15,000 voters on the rolls—they propose, I say, to commit this country to a duplication of the debt, and to a public works policy that will take over seven years to carry out. I say that the situation is of the gravest possible nature. There is not the slightest possible need to hurry over these works, for if the Bills were all passed this week, the Public Works Department is now overcrowded with work—work that it is unable to bring out; work that it is unable to carry out—and although the department is spreading itself over the city, by occupying branch offices in every available place, in the endeavor to cope with the constantly-increasing public works, yet the department is unable to overtake all the work already sanctioned by Parliament. I say that with the different works authorised, and yet remaining in this condition, there is no necessity whatever to hurry these new works which the Government propose, even though these works were of the most urgent character, for the reason I have just stated, that the Public Works Department has more than it can do for a considerable time ahead. Therefore, there is ample time for the Government to take the course which I have suggested—that is, to give increased and equitable representation in this House to the people of this colony, before the Government attempt to raise a loan of this magnitude, and undertake this list of very questionable public works. A Supply Bill, I hold, should be passed, and a reformed Constitution, on the basis and on the lines which I have suggested, should be passed, and then this House should adjourn until those members created by the reformed Constitution are able to take their seats in this House. So serious, so urgent, so important to the people are the proposals of the Government and so dangerous in their nature, that it would be well for this House to be content with voting the supplies for the year, and going to the country without passing another Bill. I come now, sir, to the position in which we stand to-

day. Our present population is 125,000. [THE PREMIER: 130,000.] The honorable gentleman knows better than the Registrar-General, for I got the figures yesterday. [THE PREMIER: I got them to-day.] Then I suppose they have increased by 5,000 since yesterday. [THE PREMIER: 130,000 are the figures I got.] Perhaps the Registrar-General favors the Government with larger figures than he gives to this (the Opposition) side of the House. But admitting that there are 130,000 people in this country, that number only accentuates the position, for then there are 115,000 people in this country not represented in this House, and 15,000 people on the rolls are to commit the country to the vast loan policy and the very questionable list of public works proposed by the Government. Therefore, taking the figures of the Premier, that our population is 130,000, our present indebtedness for 130,000 would be £24 per head. The Government proposals would add £44 per head to that amount, so that this list of works and this debt which the Government propose—and it must be taken into consideration that the estimates of cost which the Government say they can do these works for are far below the actual amounts which will be required—but supposing the estimates are accurate, the very least this country will be called upon to saddle itself with as a national debt will be £67 per head, although on the basis of my figures the debt will be £81 per head. Still, assuming that the alteration which the Premier makes, and even assuming that by the end of the present year our population should increase to 150,000, which would mean a greater rush of people here even than in the past year, then the national debt would be £67 per head. Now, sir, what are the effects of a loan policy? I said on a former occasion in this House that the natural effect and the universal effect of a loan policy is to increase imports and to decrease exports. Now we have, happily, laid on the table of the House the report of the Collector of Customs for the past year, which gives us this additional evidence, that the result of our loan policy up to date has, during the past year, made itself felt upon the imports and exports in a marked

manner. Taking it upon the basis of population which the Collector of Customs gives, the imports have increased 45 per cent., but the exports, in the same time, have decreased 14 per cent.; so here we have over 50 per cent. variation in imports and exports as the direct effect of the loan policy. It is a universally established principle of political economy that when we borrow money, necessarily exports decrease, because exports are simply payments for debts abroad. Now, if this process goes on, as the result of this free borrowing, then instead of the conditions which the Premier desires to bring about in this country—the creation of a hardy peasantry—that result will not be brought about, because this policy will destroy the very conditions which the Government are endeavoring to build up. Let us compare this with other Australian colonies in respect of population and indebtedness. Queensland, at the present moment, stands the highest on the list of national debts. In round figures, and taking the latest information I have to hand, the indebtedness of Queensland stands at £71 per head; that of South Australia at £66 per head; New Zealand, £61 per head; Tasmania, £50 per head; New South Wales, £48 per head; and Victoria, £44 per head. The huge national debt of Great Britain is under £17 per head. The average national debt of all Australia to-day is £40 per head.

THE PREMIER: More than that.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: That is less than the lowest you have quoted.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not make that calculation, and perhaps it is not correct. However, the point I wish to make is, that the national debt of this country will be far above the average of all Australian debts, and it will place us at the very top of the list, instead of being where we now are, at the bottom. Now, is there anything in the conditions of this country that should demand and justify our taking this responsibility at this moment? Are the works which the Government propose of such a character that, at all hazards, at all costs, we as a House, and this Government in particular, should land this country in a national debt which will be higher than

the highest national debt of Australia, and that upon a representation such as I have referred to, when 115,000 of the people have no voice in the question? We have seen the effects of boom policies elsewhere. Surely we can profit by the experience and the failures of others. Surely it is not necessary for us to pass through the same distressful situation, in order to be convinced of the fallacy and the mistakes which other colonies have made. Referring to the charge which has been so frequently made on the floor of this House, and especially from hon. members on the Ministerial side, that the new-comers have not come to stay, and that as soon as they have made a little money, which they want to make, they will leave this country, I would like to point out that the very conditions thus complained of are the conditions which this policy is likely to produce, and that the effect will be, that while some few persons will amass fortunes at the expense of people who cannot leave this country, the burden of these works will have to be borne by those who are fixed in the country. For myself, I came here to stay and cast in my lot with the people of Western Australia, and I desire to do the best I can for the country in which I live. Therefore, linking myself with others in the country, I say we should have to undertake the burden of these works; yet, in saying that, I hope and believe that the prosperous times which are before us are such that even this disastrous policy will not land us in the extreme conditions in which other colonies have been landed. But is this a reason why we should throw away our patrimony? Is that a reason why we should spend the ever-increasing and splendid revenues from our goldfields upon a lot of useless public works? Is it any reason why we should be extravagant, because we are successful? I say the policy is disastrous, and its worst danger is to the Western Australians, whether native-born or settled here by adoption. I want to make the statement that I look upon all the works in the list as absolutely unproductive works. I do not see one in the list that will produce the interest and sinking fund which will be involved in the construction of the works named in His Excellency's Speech. We

come now to the crux of this address, and that is this water scheme for Coolgardie goldfields. I have met with a great many people out of Coolgardie, residents on the fields, or connected with them, including some of the best thinkers, and the ablest engineers of those fields—I have consulted in the widest possible way the people whom I have met, and it is a remarkable thing to me that I have not met with one single mining man connected with the fields that does anything else but laugh at the preposterous proposals of the Government. They absolutely hold them up to ridicule. I will read to the House a statement made by a gentleman who is a strong supporter of and strong believer in and strong personal friend of the Premier; and what does this gentleman say? Here we have the opinion of a man of experience, and whose word is of weight. I refer to Captain Oates. In a printed extract, which I will read, the question is asked of Captain Oates, what does he think of the proposed water scheme of the Government? His answer is: "The proposal to expend several millions of money on the fanciful project of a departmental engineer is simply outrageous nonsense. It is a scheme of madness." I have used strong terms in this House to-night, I know, because I thought the case warranted them, but I have not, and cannot, use terms stronger than those which are used by Captain Oates. No man can doubt his sincerity, or his ability, or his knowledge of the feeling of the fields, which is, perhaps, greater than that of any man in the country. And yet I want to call special attention to this extract, in which he says it is a scheme of madness:—"The attempt to carry it out would deprive us of British co-operation for many a long day. Few people would trust us with money to be wasted wholesale. The proper system to adopt, at any rate at first, is one which would conserve the natural rainfall, which may be taken, one year with another, at ten inches. There are numerous places—such, for instance, as the lakes—where dams and excavations of about 20ft. could be made as catchment basins. Beneath the surface soil is frequently a layer of gravel, and beneath that again clay. The water stored in this way would run back into the

gravel, no doubt, but as soon as the store was exhausted to a lower level, the gravel would yield back all it held. The clay bottom could easily be made retentive, and the expense of the system would at least be manageable. The Government engineer talks of millions as if they could be had for asking, and involved no annual burden of interest. Again, the Government might advantageously subsidise companies willing to sink a thousand feet or so in the search for water, and in this way the utmost resources of the goldfields might be developed naturally and at a reasonable cost." Now, that is not my opinion, though it coincides accurately with it.

THE PREMIER: What date is that?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was put in a newspaper which bears date July 4th.

THE PREMIER: Before the Government scheme was made known.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Oh, no. Everybody knows and has known what the Government scheme is. It is to bring a river of water through a 3 feet 6 inch pipe, from a gathering ground on the Darling Range to the top of Mount Burges. Everybody knows that, and I say this scheme is not approved of by the very people on whose behalf the Government propose to construct the works. Then, despite the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief, the works never can and never will be constructed for the money.

THE PREMIER: That is rather rash.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The conditions which will be made by this loan policy, of rushing a mass of people into this colony, simply because of the expenditure of loan money, will raise the price of labor, raise the price of goods, and bring about a state of things that the calculations of to-day will be an utter fallacy if trusted to for many years to come. Then, I say, in the estimate of cost no account is taken and no provision is made for the necessary reticulation. How can we adopt an estimate as accurate for a system that is absolutely new, because nowhere in the world has water been raised to this height, and carried to this distance? I know there have been experiments of the kind, in the pumping of oil through pipes, in America, where the resources of the oil companies are very different from

the resources of 125,000 or 130,000 people, who have also other public works to attend to. Then come other questions arising out of this. There is no allowance for reticulation, and I say also the cost of maintenance is an unknown quantity. What may happen in the future—what breakages may occur—what difficulties may arise—no engineer in the universe can foretell, and we are asked to commit ourselves to a new scheme, which is simply an experiment, and the consequences of which, and the results of which, and the success of which we simply know nothing about. It is an absolute leap in the dark, and yet on the opinion of one man, the Engineer-in-Chief, we are to commit this country, first of all, to a distinct loan of two and a half millions, and even the Engineer-in-Chief's figures as published some time ago are much higher than that. [THE PREMIER: No, no.] Well, I say some engineers, who are equal in ability, if not in public estimation, affirm in the most positive manner that these works cannot be constructed for the money. How do we know the conditions upon which 350 miles of pipes can be manufactured elsewhere, shipped to this country, and carried to the place where required? On the item of labor alone, I say it is utterly impossible for any engineer to forecast the labor and other conditions which inevitably surround this question. So far as this House is concerned, we have, happily, a gentleman here of some experience and knowledge in such works, and I trust that when the hon. member for the Murray speaks on this question, he will give some practical information in reference to the cost and other conditions for the making and laying of these 350 miles of pipes. Notwithstanding that the engineer says these works can be constructed in three and a half years, I say that, besides the Engineer-in-Chief and the members of the Government, there is not one man in the country who believes these works can be constructed in the time stated. But what Coolgardie wants is immediate help. The people on those fields do not want the promise of water that is to reach them seven years hence. Yet, if the scheme is begun to-morrow, not a gallon of this water will reach Mount Burges within the next seven years. [MR. SIMPSON: Never, I hope.] I have here a full return show-

ing the working of the Coliban water scheme, in Victoria. It is intended by the scheme proposed for this colony that the charge for water, when it gets to the goldfields, shall be 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons; but I say that, by the time the water does reach the fields, the results of private efforts made in the meantime will be that nearly all the mines around Coolgardie will be pumping water for their own use, and sending it down the streets of the towns. [THE PREMIER: Salt water?] Well, if it were only salt water, the cost of condensing would be less than 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons. However, it is proved by distinct reports, made by eminent engineers, that it is possible to obtain water on the fields; that at Mount George it is possible to store water and bring it to Coolgardie. But that is not the question. I say the mines will be down on water years before the Government water supply reaches Coolgardie. The next thing I say, and I have figures here which will bear me out, is that the proposed reservoir is not a catchment area, and will not produce sufficient water for the wants of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie alone. And let it be understood that it is intended to reticulate the towns of Northam, I suppose, and Southern Cross on the way. At all events, the Government engineer intends to supply his trains on the railway. The waste and the friction are questions which have not been fairly estimated. Coming to this Coliban scheme, of which I know, unfortunately, a good deal, let me just place before the House—and I do hope honorable members will take notice of this fact—that the Coliban water scheme, which is, perhaps, the best and most perfect water scheme in Australia, is an open-cut, gravitation scheme. The thing I want this House and the country to notice is this, that suppose these works proposed by the Government were completed, we should have a constant heavy cost for pumping; whereas, when the Coliban water scheme was completed, the cost of maintenance was very small indeed, the water going by gravitation, and the cost was finished. I am free to admit that if this were a gravitation scheme, instead of a pumping scheme, it would not receive the opposition that it will receive from me and other members on this side of the House;

for though the first cost might be beyond our means, that cost would be ended when the works were finished. But the greatest cost of this scheme is that it will be a perpetual charge; that the pumping engines will have to be kept in order; that the machinery will be liable to break down and throw the whole concern out of gear; and that, in order to carry out the scheme in a practical manner, there will have to be a duplication of pipes and a duplication of machinery, for it would never do to trust the large populations that will be up there upon a single pipe and a single set of machinery. Consequently, it is not a question of 350 miles of pipes, and it is not a question of a 3 feet 6 inch pipe, because such a pipe would never convey the required quantity of water necessary for the two places I have mentioned. I am in a position to prove some of these facts. The Coliban scheme was passed in 1865; the head works were finished in 1870; and as it took five years to complete the head works of that scheme, it will take quite five years to complete the head works of this scheme.

THE PREMIER: That was all cement work.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The next fact in the Coliban scheme is that the first water which reached the first town on the route (Castlemaine) reached it in 1872. That was seven years before the first gallon of water in that scheme reached the first town on the way. Yet upon the *ipse dixit* of the Engineer-in-Chief that he can take, from the Darling Ranges, five million gallons of water per day, and carry them 450 miles, the Government proposes to undertake the work. The thing is a rash absurdity. It never has been done in the history of the world, and it never will be done. Now, the fact that I have to bring before the House is this: that the first gallon of water from the Coliban reservoir was run into Bendigo in 1880; 15 years after the bill was passed through Parliament. Now I know the difficulties; I know what Bendigo was at the time. The wants of Bendigo were as serious, at that time, as the wants of Coolgardie are to-day. The people of Bendigo were willing to pay any price for water, if the Government would only give it to them. The Government started works, borrowed money, went to work to do the work that was

asked of them, in the same way that this Government wishes to do, and found the same labor difficulty in the way of carrying out the project that will be experienced here. It is a question that will have to be faced—How will you obtain the labor to do the work? Now you bring the people—these men who would construct the waterworks—into this country, into this land of gold, and you expect these men, according to the scheme that is mentioned in the Speech, to work for ordinary wages. How can this be expected, when the men are taken to the very place where the mines are paying miners four guineas per week? I venture to say here that the estimates of the Engineer-in-Chief are based upon a wages calculation that is about half the price of the rate of wages ruling on the goldfields. What the Government will have to pay for their waterworks must be in unison with the labor rate of the goldfields; otherwise men will leave the work and go to the mines. And, secondly, I say that the estimates are wrong, as I have already stated. In Bendigo, they had to get the water from the Coliban, while they were only 43 miles away from the capital. As a matter of fact, the contour survey of the reticulation gave 81 miles. Now, if it takes a strong Government like that of Victoria, at the time when the Coliban scheme was started, 15 years to take water by an open cut 81 miles, how long is it going to take us to carry water from the Darling Ranges, through pipes, 350 miles to Coolgardie? Now I come to the question whether this proposed waterworks scheme will be reproductive. The Coliban water-works cost £1,069,254, and the gross annual revenue is only £19,500, the working expenses amount to £8,800 per annum, leaving a balance of £10,700. The interest on the loans obtained to construct the works amounts to £47,372, leaving an annual loss upon the income of the water-works, represented by the interest, of £36,700. Now, I do ask the House to take into consideration these facts. The Coliban scheme embraced the carrying of the water 81 miles through an open cut; it was undertaken in a most flourishing time of Victoria's history. The Government had unlimited money. At a cost of over a million of money an open cut was made for 81 miles, and the gross income

from the outlay is only £19,500 per annum, leaving a burden upon the country of £36,700 every year. Now I ask the House to take notice of these facts, which are authenticated by the official report. I have taken the trouble to obtain from Victoria a copy of this report, and I shall place it before the House and the country during the Session. The return shows that the total income received by the Coliban waterworks from mines is only £2,500 per annum, yet here was a mining community which, at the time that it sought to obtain a water supply through this means, professed itself ready to pay 10s. per 1,000 gallons, but when they got the water they would not take it at one-half that price. Now the same conditions were found there that will occur here, if the Government go to the London market to borrow two and half millions to carry out this wild scheme. The price of the Coliban water at Bendigo is only 3d. per 1,000 gallons, while for irrigation purposes the price is only 0½d. per 1,000 gallons. The daily supply is ten million gallons from the basin covering 112 square miles, and having a rainfall of from 30 to 42 inches. Can our Government say that they have 112 square miles of catchment area for their scheme, and that they have sufficient rainfall? [THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: You must count what runs to waste in the winter time.] Possibly. [THE PREMIER: The ground is 100 square miles.] I doubt it. The population proposed to be served by the Coliban scheme was 40,000, and what I want the House to note is this, that in 1879 and 1886 this water supply almost failed, as there was only two weeks' supply left in the reservoir, when rain came, at the rate of 10,000,000 of gallons per day. Is it possible that the Government can show to this House that they can supply ten millions daily from the scheme which they have outlined? [THE PREMIER: Yes; certainly.] You cannot make this scheme effective, and there is no use spending money on it. Supposing the scheme is completed; supposing that the prophecy of the Government should come true; supposing that in three and a half years the people of Coolgardie do get the water; supposing that they are consuming five million gallons per day, and that there are 40,000 people

in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, the Government have got to serve Southern Cross from the supply in the Darling Ranges, as well as their own railway service. How, then, can the scheme be described in any way as a goldfields scheme? From their standpoint it is simply a water supply for Coolgardie, and we are asked to tax the country for an outlay of two and a half millions for the benefit of Coolgardie. Then the next thing I want to say is this, that any public works of this character should be made reproductive, but when once such a work is carried out, the rates agreed upon are greatly lowered. We have experience of this in Victoria in connection with the Irrigation Trusts. The people sent men into the House to support irrigation schemes. Parliament sent Mr. Deakin to the Pacific slope to see the fruitfulness of the land as the result of irrigation, and he came back with such a glowing report that Irrigation Trusts were established, the people professing themselves to be only too willing to pay for the privilege of artificially watering their properties. What has been the result? Supreme Court writs have been issued upon farmers for their arrears of rates to the Trusts, and political influence has stopped these writs from going into court. That has been done. It is being done, and it will be done in Western Australia. [THE PREMIER: The mines will pay.] No one knows better than the Government that political influence will render it impossible for the Government to get three shillings and six pence per thousand gallons for the water at Coolgardie, if it ever gets there. Now, supposing that private enterprise were ready to undertake this work, and I believe that private enterprise is ready to do it, although I do not know that of my own knowledge.—[MR. SIMPSON: That is stopped now.]—it would have a better chance of being paid for obtaining the water; but as sure as the sun is shining, the Government will never get a shilling per thousand gallons, much less three shillings and sixpence per thousand gallons. If the position of affairs should be that the Government should place this scheme before the country as a reproductive work, I say that it is not a reproductive work, and cannot be made so, as the labor alone will cost twice as much

as the estimates of the Engineer-in-Chief; and not only so, but the work will require twice as long as he names in being carried out. If the Government should succeed in getting the water to Coolgardie, they will never get the money for it, and consequently it is not a reproductive work. When it becomes a question of political influence, the Government of the colony is just as much amenable to political influence as any other Government. For these reasons I say that the proposal of the Government in regard to the water question takes this position: That the cost of the scheme has been under-estimated, that the income has been over-estimated, and that it is a foolish and absurd scheme. Among the works which the Speech foreshadowed is the deep drainage system for Fremantle and Perth, and this leads me to suppose that the water of the Darling Ranges which the Government proposes to conserve was not intended for Coolgardie. I know something about deep drainage schemes, and I know that they require a great deal of water, and therefore I believe that the water of the Darling Ranges is intended for the deep drainage system of Perth. [THE PREMIER: There is plenty of it.] Well, if it should be so, why should they call it a goldfields scheme? But supposing that the proposal is put forward with integrity, it is not a goldfields scheme. Now I come to the proposals which are made in regard to the construction of goldfields railways and other public works. In clause 5 of the Speech it is stated that "Ministers are convinced that it is absolutely necessary to take advantage of the present prospects and financial position of the colony, and that it would be unwise to delay carrying out at the earliest possible date these urgent wants of the colony." Now the whole effect of that clause is that the present condition of the money market is owing to the condition of Western Australian prosperity. Nothing could be more presumptuous. The conditions of the money market are ruled by the Bank of England, which has a reserve of fourteen millions sterling. When that reserve falls, the price of money will rise. Whether money is cheap or dear depends on the amount of money that is seeking investment. Now it is proposed to make certain extensions of the railway to

Menzie's and Kanowna, but it should be remembered that the Kanowna railway will not be made so cheaply as the line to Coolgardie, the price of which was modified by the value of the traffic receipts which would go to the contractor for a certain time before the line was handed over. Nor will the Kanowna railway pay nearly so well as the line to Coolgardie, although I do not mean to say that it will not pay working expenses and interest on the cost of its construction. The further we get into the interior and the further from the trunk line the less profitable railway making will be. I think that the goldfields line should be constructed out of revenue. Coming to the question of rolling-stock, I shall not be far wrong if I say that the Government had, during the recess, and without the authority of Parliament, committed the country to an expenditure of £500,000 for the equipment of a railway service. [MR. GEORGE: Quite right, too.] Whether it be right or wrong is not the question I am discussing. What I say is that the orders for the stock have been given without the sanction of Parliament in accordance with constitutional law. If we have a surplus, and I prophesy that we will have a still larger surplus next year than we have now, I consider that the necessary works should be paid for out of the revenue of the country. [THE PREMIER: What are those works?] Construction and maintenance of railways is one. We have the money to pay for the rolling-stock, and we should pay for it instead of going to the London market to borrow money for it. In regard to rolling-stock, I admit that there has not been an adequate supply of it, but there are men who know that the best use has not been made of the rolling-stock that we have. In Victoria the rolling-stock has been wastefully ordered, and while I am in favor of sufficient rolling-stock being obtained, I object to so much of it being obtained that it will be allowed to rot on the lines. I contend that for this important charge there is no necessity to borrow money. Now I come more closely to the railway question; to the question of land and railways. Three years ago I urged in this House that the Government should resume the land lying alongside of the railway in Roe-street as far as Market-

street, but it was not done. Since then £10,000 worth of buildings has been erected upon that land, and now the Government have at last resumed it. They are wise in resuming it even now, but they might have saved the country a large sum by doing so at an early day. I want to give another specific instance of the want of foresight of the Government. At East Perth station, land whereon a number of cottages have just been completed has been resumed by the Government, and the houses will have to be pulled down. I protest against this lack of forethought, and this wasteful kind of policy. I want to protest, too, against a kind of unauthorised expenditure of the public moneys that in other places is absolutely unknown. During the recess the Government has not only incurred on its own motion an expenditure of £500,000 for rolling-stock, but also £300,000 in connection with Coolgardie that has not been submitted to the vote of this House, nor was Parliament consulted. In the same way, without consulting Parliament, they have undertaken to duplicate the line from Midland Junction to Fremantle. They have taken upon themselves this immense cost, and I protest against such a course of action, especially in recess. I am not now questioning whether the works are wise or necessary, but only the arbitrary action of the Government. If the Government are permitted to carry out public works according to their sole discretion, we may as well meet and pass a resolution that the Government is to be permanent and despotic. If the Premier could only be inspired with eternal life, I should be inclined to vote for that motion. We are laying the foundation of this country and a Parliament, we are making precedents for time to come, and I protest against the Government being able to say during the recess what public works shall be carried out. Adverting to the question of deep drainage for Perth, which is referred to in His Excellency's Speech, I would be in favor of it, but I think that the Liernür system is a better and a very much cheaper one. Some time, attention must be given to this question, but I want this House to consider whether drainage for Perth is a national question. I contend that it is not.

It is a question that should be relegated to a Board of Works. I am not prepared to object to the giving of every assistance by the Government to the carrying out of deep drainage, even to the extent of the Government guaranteeing a loan for the purpose, but it is a question that belongs to local politics. It is not a question that should appear in the loan policy of the Government. The Government have not told us where they intend getting the necessary water from. The present water supply of Perth is not sufficient for the domestic purposes, for last year the people were put upon a half supply. Nor do the Government own the Perth waterworks, although I pointed out to the Premier that at one time he could have acquired them for £160,000 or £180,000. He simply told me that he had no money for the purpose. A later opportunity was given to the Government to purchase the works, but so far as I know the Government have taken no action in that direction. But supposing that they do, supposing that the Perth waterworks were to become the property of the Government, the experience of Perth last year showed that no water would be available for deep drainage purposes. Where is the water to come from for a deep drainage scheme, when we have not sufficient water for domestic purposes? Yet it is proposed to commit the country to a national expenditure upon deep drainage for the particular benefit of Perth and Fremantle. Now I, as a goldfields member, protest against such a course. For one thing the revenue of the country comes very largely from the goldfields, and I am unwilling that metropolitan drainage shall be regarded as a national question. It is not a national question. Moreover, it is not even suggested that it is a reproductive scheme. Other important centres are growing up. Will they be dealt with in the same way as it is proposed to deal with Perth and Fremantle? Will the Government be prepared to ask the House to vote money for deep drainage for Coolgardie? And if not for Coolgardie and other parts of the country, where is the justice of making deep drainage a national scheme? I come now to the question of the Fremantle harbor works—a gigantic work which does credit to the engineer who designed it. It is one of those great

works which a nation may occasionally undertake at its principal port, as it is for the benefit of the whole colony, and when so much money has been expended it is necessary that these works should go on and be completed in the most efficient manner possible. I see that there is another harbor scheme to be put forward by the Government. Perhaps hon. members have never heard of a place called Bunbury. I believe it is a very large place. I know it is a very well-represented one, but I venture to assert that if it were not represented by the Premier, the House would not be asked to expend £600,000 in improving its harbor. [THE PREMIER: Where do you get your figures from?] I have sufficient basis for the statement that the Bunbury harbor when it is completed, if the Government has its way, will cost £600,000. For we know that in the case of the Fremantle harbor works original estimates were very much exceeded; nor do I believe that if the scheme were to be carried out it would be of such utility as would justify the outlay of borrowed money upon it. We should only spend loan moneys upon reproductive works, and the Bunbury harbor improvement scheme is not a reproductive work. To make it would be to take away some of the money that we want for railway rolling-stock. As to the goldfields railways, the further they are made the more costly will they be to make and less remunerative, and we shall have to be careful in their construction and keep as much money as we can available, without putting it to such unnecessary purposes as the Bunbury harbor works. At any rate, the latter one is a kind of work that can afford to wait, and I suggest that it should. It is strange that we should have the same kind of work going on in this colony as took place in New Zealand, where they constructed railways and then made expensive harbors to take away the traffic from the railways; and the same guiding head is controlling this policy in both colonies. Everybody in this House knows that sooner or later there must be a railway from Esperance to Dundas. (Hear, hear.) Well, what I want to get at is this, that a railway from Esperance to Dundas means a construction of a harbor or a very long jetty at Esperance, and

this is much more likely to be necessary than harbor works at Bunbury. The Bunbury harbor works are not pressing, and are only intended as a sop to the district. The next items of construction which, I suppose, in consequence of the strong position of the Government, are proposed to be built out of the revenue are certain lines of agricultural railways. I want this House to accept as a fact that the Victorian railways have sustained a loss during the last six years of two and a half million pounds, and which is a constant drain upon that colony; in spite of the fact that a large number of the agricultural railways are closed, they still have to be paid for. Every kind of argument that was used for the construction of these railways in the "boom" times of Victoria are the precise arguments used by deputations when interviewing Ministers with regard to agricultural railways here. If constructed, they will turn out to be a burden upon our main system, very costly to construct, and wholly unnecessary; and, even if they should be paid for out of the revenue, it is not the best use that could be made of such revenue to-day. The best use is to use it in such a manner that it will not be necessary to borrow at all. The conditions of this country are not such as to require a loan. I now come to the final conclusion, and although I have, no doubt, occupied a large amount of time on this occasion, still, I do say that I have, on the questions I desired to discuss, tried to be as brief as possible, and I may have left out much that would have been forcible argument, but, on questions of such importance, I would have been neglecting my conscious duty and my constituency if I had said one word less. Finally concluding, I will say that, after careful consideration of the questions, in what little time I have and information I can gather, and with the intelligence that I possess, first, that the coming years will yield a larger and increasing revenue, and that that revenue will be sufficient to cover all necessary public works, and all the works that it will be possible for the Government to complete. Therefore a loan is absolutely unnecessary. Secondly, that the principal work proposed by the Government, viz., the Coolgardie work, is not a wise proposal, and ought not to

be constructed at all; but even if it were wise, it could never be made reproductive, and therefore should not be constructed out of loan moneys. Thirdly, the position I take up is this, that the Coolgardie water scheme is an absolute folly, and ought not to be undertaken at all, and if it is, as we are told, that the Government want the water in the Darling Ranges for the deep drainage scheme to supply Northam or some other pet towns, unless this be so I cannot understand it. It is not a scheme for the goldfields—it is simply a delusion and a snare to call such a scheme as that one for Coolgardie. It will prove a broken reed, which will never do the work that the Government think it will do. Deep drainage is a minor question, and should be allotted to a local board. It is not a national question, it is not a reproductive work; but even if it be reproductive, it ought not to be constructed out of loan money. While granting that if it were proved that all the works are necessary and wise, which I deny, this House is not representative of the people, therefore these works should wait until after the redistribution and increased representation. The voice of the country should be heard on so momentous a matter as the raising of the national debt to something like £80 per head. The revenue receipts of this country will have to bear the burden, and it would be a sin and a crime to waste the splendid revenue coming into the coffers of this country from the goldfields in wild, reckless, and useless schemes of public works; and if they were the wisest schemes ever propounded by the wisest men, to enter into these works and borrow this money before the country is properly represented in this House is an outrage against the rights of the people. If I were the leader of the Opposition, which I am not; if there were a consolidated party on this side of the House, I would take the extreme course of moving, as an Address-in-Reply, "That in the opinion of this House the loan policy is premature and ought not to be sanctioned, until the large centres of population are more equitably represented in this House." I shall not move that, because I assume that probably I stand almost alone in such a motion, and as there are no constituted parties in this House to take upon themselves the

responsibility of that motion, I stand and speak alone. I represent no Opposition party in this particular matter. The leader of the Opposition being away, the party on this side of the House have not appointed a leader. I make these remarks in conclusion, in order not to mislead anyone as to my convictions, which have not been delivered as an attack on the Government, but from the importance of these deep-seated questions. I trust the Premier will respond when I speak with the full consciousness and full earnestness in asking the Government not to borrow money or undertake these works until this House is properly representative.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir John Forrest): I do not think that anyone who has listened to the hon. member will take any exception to the way he has placed his case before the House. The only objection that I, myself, am inclined to make is that he took rather a long time to say what he had to say. He has beaten the record. I don't think that since we have had a Parliament or even a Legislature anyone has addressed the House for three and a half hours on one subject. Still, for all that the hon. member is perfectly justified in taking his own course in placing the matters he desires before this House. In speaking for myself and also on behalf of the Government, we thank the hon. member for the way he has placed his views before the House. Although, as I said before, I differ from him in very many ways, still I shall not take any exception to the way he has placed his views before us. I don't think he was altogether correct in the utterances he has made; still I only put that down to want of information on his part, and not to any desire to mislead the House. I regret that the hon. member addressed the House at such a length on so many points, not only referred to in the Speech, but also matters connected with the administration of the Government of this colony. I am quite aware that it is quite competent for hon. members to refer to any subjects on the Address-in-Reply. At the same time, I think that the hon. member for Nanine must have known before he delivered himself of his views on various important matters contained in His

Excellency the Governor's Speech that in a few days full information would be given to this House on all points in that Speech, and knowing this he did not seem to deal with the questions so moderately and reasonably as we had a right to expect. Many references were based on conjecture, not in accordance with the information which the Government intend to place before hon. members. The principal reason I have for rising at this early stage is that I may ask hon. members, before coming to a conclusion on the many points referred to in the Speech, to wait until they have full information. It may be said in reply to this that the information ought to be available now, but still the Government, like everyone else, are liable to delay, and our desire is to place it on the table of the House at the earliest possible time. We promise in a few days to place all the information on the most important points in His Excellency's Speech before hon. members. I could not help thinking to myself, while the hon. member was making his lengthy speech about the actions of the Ministry, that, if the hon. member was sitting on this side of the House or upon this Bench, we would not have heard the speech he made to-night, for it would have been impossible for anyone having the responsibility of the Government of this country upon him to have made that speech. It would have been altogether impossible for a Minister of the Crown to have used the arguments he used to-night in regard to the way public business was to be conducted in this country. Could any Minister of the Crown have told the people of this country, in effect, that the Government were ruining the colony? Such a statement, by a responsible Minister, if made, would not be listened to by this House or throughout the country at the present time. Before I deal with some of the questions so labored by the hon. member, I would like to make some few observations on some of the hon. member's conclusions, which will not give rise to heat on my part, but which can be dealt with calmly. First of all, I will deal with the subject of Federation. The hon. member went out of his way to say that myself and the Government have changed our minds on this question. I absolutely deny to this House, the country, and

Australia, the statement that I have in any way changed my mind. I have always been an advocate of Federation, even before I took an active part in politics, and long before constitutional Government was introduced here, and I can prove to hon. members (by written pamphlets on the question) that my views on Federation have not changed during the last ten years. The Government have not changed their views with regard to this question, and in no way have they shewn themselves adverse to Federation. We have not, speaking for the Government and for myself, ever said a single word against the Federation of Australia; in fact, I remember saying at one meeting of the Federal Council in Tasmania, some years ago, that this colony was more in accord with the federal movement than any other. I had the opportunity of telling Sir Samuel Griffith that we, in this colony, were more in favor of Federation than Queensland. Amongst other things I may mention that we have joined the other colonies in every federal movement, the subsidy to the Eastern Telegraph Company, Defence, New Guinea, &c., and there is not a single federal movement in Australia that we have not taken part in. I shall also be glad to have the colony represented at any of the Federal Conventions. It seems to me very unwise for us not to be represented. Whatever views the people of this colony entertain now, the time must come when this Australian continent will be an Australian dominion. That is the view I take, and I recommend the House to pass the Bill, so that it may be represented at the Federal Convention, so that we may have a hand in framing the proposed constitution under which we will some day live. The hon. member for Nannine has told us with regard to representation in this House, and which is promised in His Excellency's Speech, that it should be immediate. I can say, so far as the Government are concerned, we are quite willing that it shall take place at the earliest possible moment. The Government have no fear of the country, and are willing to go before it to-morrow, and abide by the verdict; but I would point out that it is impossible for the election to take place immediately. If this Bill is passed here it will have to go

to London, and receive Her Majesty's assent. That will take some time, perhaps three months. Then after we receive the Royal assent it will take some time to make up the electoral rolls for the different constituencies. Therefore, although we may make provision in the Bill to expedite the work as much as possible, some time must elapse before the rolls are made up in proper order ready for the election. The Government are anxious to have the matter settled as soon as possible, but it would be impossible to have the elections immediately, as the hon. member suggests. The hon. member enlarged in regard to the terrible indebtedness which will fall upon the colony should the Government proposals be carried out. That is a very old story here; we have heard that time after time since 1891. We have heard that the Government is going to bring ruin on the country. Anyone who desires to do so can look up the speeches in 1891, 1893, and 1894, and I think every year the burden of the song was that the Government were going to bring ruin on the colony—that those who had anything to risk had better leave it—although year after year the cry became less pronounced. What has been the result of this borrowing? Has any disaster fallen upon the country? Instead of this, from only £414,000 of revenue the colony has now nearly two millions, and we have at the present time several hundred thousand to our credit. The indebtedness was first £28 per head, afterwards it reached £41, and it is now £35 per head. Is it right that any hon. member should say in this House that the indebtedness of the colony would be £81 per head if the Government proposals were carried, when we have not yet borrowed a single shilling of the money, and when no results are calculated as the results of the borrowing. I say it is absurd, ridiculous, and not fair, to say what the hon. member says. This money will not be all borrowed at once; it will be spread over a great many years, and spent as required, and considering that population and improvements will also increase with the expenditure, can anyone say that the public indebtedness of the colony will increase at all? My opinion is that if the present policy of the Government is carried out, the public

indebtedness will increase by only a very small amount, if at all; in fact, I am rather inclined to say that it will decrease. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Borrow some more.] The hon. member for Nannine raised the question as to whether the great works mentioned in His Excellency's Speech had been fully considered. The Government have been considering, and fully considering, the question of whether it is right to enter upon these great works without first consulting the country. We have been, however, surrounded by peculiar circumstances. If we appeal now to the country we would appeal to a very small electorate. We would not have the advantage of that larger representation which we wish to give at the earliest possible moment, and it would not be satisfactory to those who are now unrepresented or to the large population of the goldfields. On the other hand, if we defer these works until we have the elections over—probably nearly a year; if we defer these large public works which are contemplated the colony would suffer. Another course was open, and we have taken it, and that is to accept the responsibility of carrying on these great works which are identified with the progress of the colony, believing that we shall have the support of the colony in our efforts. I would like to know what the people of Fremantle would think if their harbor works were stopped for a year, while we were patching up the Constitution preparing for a general election, or what the people of Menzies, Nannine, Kanowna, and other such places would say if we were to defer their railways for a similar reason. What would the people in the agricultural districts say if they were refused means of transit, and what would be the effect upon the mining industry at Coolgardie? Would the people of Perth and Fremantle be content to put off the schemes for deep drainage and water supply? If the Government are charged with fostering foolish schemes, and the question is asked, "What manner of men are these who are entrusted with the government of the country?" we may in turn ask "Are they men who in their private lives are reckless, and who mismanage their own affairs so as to bring ruin on them-

selves and their families?" We have lived here all our days, and surely it cannot be said that we are either reckless or desire to bring discredit upon the colony. The hon. member for Nannine charges us with too lavish expenditure, and yet in the same breath he complains that there is no mention of a railway to Pilbarra or to Lawlers, and complains that there is no mention of a railway to Norseman, and while he wants railways everywhere he at the same time wants them all constructed out of current revenue. I would like to know what the poor people of those districts would do if everything had to be stopped for a new election. He wants all these works, but practically says "Defer them for another year." In regard to the hon. member's remarks on the Coolgardie water supply scheme, I will say only a few words, because I hope next Tuesday to be able to lay on the table the whole of the information, accompanied by reports from the Engineer-in-Chief and other engineers on the scheme, and I hope to place before hon. members good and full information on the subject. I may say that the matter has engaged the earnest attention of the Government. It is matter for regret that very large and arid regions exist in the colony, and that the wealth we receive from our goldfields is discounted a good deal by the water difficulty. It seems to me that all Australia, other than that included in the coastal districts, suffers from a great scarcity of water and from droughts. These droughts sometimes occur in coastal districts, but they are not so serious when compared with the droughts which occur in the interior of Australia. I have travelled through the interior of Australia and my experience has been that any person who bases his hopes on a certain rainfall will make a mistake. You may depend upon it that, although a fairly good season may occasionally be experienced, the rainfall of Coolgardie is not to be relied upon. When I went through that territory in 1869, game was plentiful. Kangaroos abounded. Plenty of marsupials were to be seen; but last year I travelled hundreds of miles through that country, and I did not see a single marsupial. I asked the natives where the marsupials had gone to. I said "I see the bush fences where you used to catch the game, but there is no game now." They

said that the marsupials were all dead, that they could not live without the rain. There is not a single marsupial in all that country. I ask hon. members whether they are going to depend on the rainfall for a supply of water for the immense population in the mining towns; for the thousands and tens of thousands who are going there to develop that part of the colony. I say that the whole thing is absurd. I know it from my own experience, and from the exceptional indications I have referred to. No one can satisfy me that the Coolgardie district has periodical rains sufficient to meet the requirements of the people. What have the people to depend on at the present time? What have they been depending on for the last three or four years? They have been depending on condensed water, for which they have had to pay threepence, fourpence, and up to sixpence a gallon, and that is what a man has to pay out of his daily wage for water alone, because someone has to pay for it, whether master or man. Thus, people have to pay £12 for a thousand gallons of water, and we propose to deliver it there for 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons. Our argument is that this is the best scheme; that it is a certain and never-failing scheme; and that it will supply the people of Coolgardie with that which they have not got now, and never can have, except by some scheme of this sort. If you can catch the waters from the heavens—well, do it; but I fail to see where the catchments are which are to supply these goldfields. If you build catchments, how are you going to fill them? You cannot depend on the rainfall. Another thing which influences the Government is that not only do we desire to give plenty of water, but also to enable the people to have more comfortable conditions of living than they have now on the goldfields. What they have now is that a man cannot afford to wash himself often; for, though he works for a master, and is allowed two gallons a day, yet, if he has a wife and family on the fields, he must provide water for them also out of his two gallons, because to purchase more water would take the whole of his wages at threepence, fourpence, or sixpence a gallon. I do not want them to live there in dirt and without any comfort, for ever. The Government are not

prepared to do that. We intend to put the people in as good a position as the people of Perth are in, so far as water supply is concerned, because if this scheme is carried out water will be as plentiful in Coolgardie as in Perth. No one will then feel the expense of paying for water, as it will be so cheap, and no separate charge will then, as now, be made for supplying travellers and others on the fields, because the water will be so cheap that it will be included in the bill, and not be charged as an extra item. If you get a dinner, the charge for water will be included in the charge for the dinner. A 3 feet 6 inch pipe full of water will supply Southern Cross and all the railway stations, and all the engines, and every person who lives along the route, so that a man will not only be able to have plenty of water for himself and his family, if he has one, but also water will be available for small irrigation areas. All this inhospitable, waterless, unoccupied country between here and Coolgardie will be so changed, as a consequence of this water supply, that it will be occupied and cultivated, that stock will be grazing upon it, that farmers will settle there and grow produce for the goldfields, and all that these settlers will require will be a tap and a trough alongside the railway to give their stock water.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The water will be all exhausted before it gets to Southern Cross.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am glad the honorable member has reminded me of that argument. He says it will be all required on the way, that it will be used up before it reaches the goldfields. If it will be so, we will put down another pipe and take another five million gallons a day there, because if the water is used the scheme will pay from the start. Another point I wish to put is that this scheme will pay, and will be absolutely reproductive. Therefore, I say, if you will show me that a work will pay from the start, from the day that it is constructed, I will be an advocate of it; but if you show me that it won't pay, I shall have my doubts about it. On Tuesday next, if all goes well, I will prove to the House that the scheme will pay, and therefore I now ask hon.

members, both on this side and on the other side of the House—for I do not think this is a question for parties at all; it is a great national scheme, designed to improve the public estate—I ask every hon. member to withhold his judgment for the present. We have heard tonight that the estimates are all wrong, and that the work cannot be done for the money; but I would like to know how the hon. member for Nannine can justify his reflections on the Engineer-in-Chief, and say Mr. O'Connor's estimates are all wrong. Has it ever been proved that his estimates were wrong in this country before? [MR. SIMPSON: The Mullewa railway, for instance.] Well, I am surprised at the hon. member, for that railway was passed in this House long before the Engineer-in-Chief came into this colony, or was thought of in this colony. He has always been right in his estimates, and if he has been able to do the work for the amount that he has estimated hitherto, we may reasonably expect that he will be able to do it in this case. As to the scheme not being possible, we have heard enough of that. It was said, I believe, at the beginning of the railway era, that the trains would not run along the rails. I believe Stephenson was told that they would not go; but he said: "We will make them go"; and he did. The hon. member for Nannine prides himself on being a fair-minded man, but it is not fair—I could use a stronger word than that—it is not fair to say that the engineer's estimates are too much or too little, until the hon. member has evidence to prove his statements. I will stake—[MR. ILLINGWORTH: No, don't; you will lose.]—I will stake the reputation of the Government that such a careful man would not place before this House all the details of a scheme, unless he was careful to satisfy himself that it could be carried out for the money. I believe he would rather err on the other side, because he has been so anxious and careful to be within the mark. I will endeavor to show you, on Tuesday next—and I think it is an important consideration—that this colony can afford to do this work; and not only that, but that the work will pay when it is done. Money is cheap; never was so cheap before. Our credit is as good as, if not better than, that of any other

colony in Australia; and now is our time, now is our chance, to improve our public estate. And what can we do? Having the opportunity of obtaining cheap money, I think that if ever we are justified in incurring a debt for a public work, we should make use of our opportunity on an occasion of this sort; for not only will we be able to give comfort and plenty to the people on the Coolgardie goldfields, but we will be able to convert the whole of the country along the railway where the water goes from the condition of a waterless wilderness into a profitable food-producing area. [MR. JAMES: What about the salt?] I ask hon. members, whatever may be their predilections, whether this is a time to scoff and sneer at the efforts of the Government to serve the interests of the Coolgardie goldfields? I say most of the prosperity of the colony has come to us from the goldfields, and especially from the Coolgardie goldfields. These are the lever which has lifted us into prosperity and into affluence, and I say the expenditure on this water scheme will be our tribute to the people on these fields. We will give them the one thing that is likely to make that country habitable, and to make life more comfortable than it is at present. We will give them the one thing that every man requires, from the poorest child to the wealthiest man on the fields—the one thing they have not got at the present time, unless a person has a pocket full of money to pay for it—we will give them water, and by doing so we will give hope and confidence to the people of the mother country and elsewhere, who have invested, they tell me, sixty millions of money in these goldfields. It will give them hope and confidence to wait until this water which is so much needed in their mines can be placed there. It will give them confidence in trying to get water for themselves in the meantime, knowing that, whether their efforts be successful or not, the Government are coming on as quickly as they can with a certain supply. It will also show that we believe in these goldfields, and are willing to pledge the assets of this country in developing what those investors also are trying to develop. There is no doubt, and I do not say it complainingly at all, because no man is more sensible of the support which I and

the Government have received in this House and the country, during a long course of years, but there is no doubt that I and those associated with me during these five or six years have had a good deal to contend with; that we have been opposed, and have had to carry our measures almost by force of arms. We have had the greatest difficulty in carrying anything that we thought would be a benefit to the country; and all those things we have had to fight so hard for—have they not been successful? If they have, that fact should give some confidence that we are not likely to lead the people and this House into disaster. It is our desire to benefit these goldfields; but I am aware that some other persons have water schemes of their own, that some speculators want to make a lot of money out of the people by supplying water, and they do not care so long as they can make their speculations pay. I do not blame them. I suppose we are all trying to amass wealth in one way or another. But I am not going to be thwarted from a plain duty, because there are speculators who want to supply water on their own account, and make the people pay for it. We will do our duty as a Government to the mass of the people who are crying to us for water. What can a poor man do on the Coolgardie goldfields, if he has a wife and children? He cannot take them there at present, for they would use more water than the whole of his wages could pay for, in washing and cooking and other requirements. The hon. member for Nannine said the scheme was inadequate. I say that is the best argument for our proposal, for if it is inadequate, it will pay from the start, because the water will all be used. Then the hon. member goes on to say that the scheme is not necessary, but I do not know how he can justify that remark. I think he told us there are 40,000 people at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, and how are they going to get water? Are they going to wait the chance of boring for water? The Government are boring now. Yesterday the diamond drill was started about two miles from Coolgardie, and I hope that in a short time another drill will start close to Kalgoorlie. We will bore into the bowels of the earth, in many places, but are we going to sit still while we are

trying these experiments? Are we going to wait many weeks for the bore to go down in this place or that, when we know that this scheme will actually pay, and be no burden to the colony? What cause is there for hanging back? The hon. member complained also of the dearness of living, and the Customs duties bearing on the people. Well, in the settled districts, in Perth and other places, where we produce nothing, and have to buy everything we use, the Customs duties press heavily. The total amount, at present, is about £5 per head.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: £6 5s. a head.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think it is less, but put it at £6. The hon. member represents a goldfields constituency, and a goldfield where water is plentiful. I will ask him what the whole of the Customs duties amount to on that field, as compared with the taxation on the people of Coolgardie alone for water. There is not a man on the Coolgardie fields but has to live by himself, living without his family, living like a blackfellow; but the hon. member says you must trust to boring into the bowels of the earth—trust to anything or everything except the straightforward and certain supply which the Government propose to give.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I never said one of those things.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir John Forrest): At any rate, the hon. member said something about the Customs duties, and how much they pressed on the mining population; but I say that charge is nothing compared to the tax for water which the people on the eastern fields have to endure. He says we ought to reduce the Customs duties. I quite agree with him, and we are prepared to do it, and will do it. At the same time, we have to consider which is best for the colony—to reduce the Customs duties and thereby reduce our power of doing good, reduce our power to make railways and waterworks, and open up the country, or whether it is better to keep the Customs duties something near what they are now, and give the people all those conveniences and necessities which are so desirable. My opinion is that it is better for the people of the country to bear this taxation through the

Customs, than to reduce the duties in such a way as would deprive the people of those things which they so much need, and deprive those who are seeking their fortunes in the interior from having those advantages. I shall have an opportunity of speaking fully on this scheme on Tuesday next, and all I ask now is for the House to thoroughly consider this question. It is very much against the grain of this Cabinet that we should have to bring forward this large scheme, and have to be burdened with this great debt, when it might so easily have been otherwise, if there had been a plentiful supply of water a short distance in the earth. But it has come to pass that we are convinced there is no water there in large quantity, or we have not been able to find it. If anyone can offer a better or a cheaper scheme, we shall be glad to throw over our scheme and embrace his. Let someone else propose a better scheme, and you will find no better supporters than myself and those in the Government. I know the geographical features of the country, and after considering over the matter for more than a year, I can see no other plan that will give a sufficient supply of water. That being my firm conviction, am I now to hesitate because through proposing this scheme I may have to give up place and power? No; I will go out of office and sacrifice power to-morrow rather than give up this scheme, which I believe will do so much good. I do not believe for a moment in trusting to chance. It is just possible, of course, that in putting down a deep bore in the earth you might get an artesian supply, although the experts say it will not be so; but if you do find water at a great depth, and if it does not rise by pressure, I do not know how you can get it up several thousand feet in the quantities required. I am not going to wait for that, but would prefer to go on with this scheme, which I believe is practicable and certain. The hon. member, in his eagerness to prove his case, referred us to the Coliban system in Victoria. I believe that work, of which I have seen the drawings and plans, is a great and noble work, which will remain as a monument to those who carried it out. The hon. member says it does not pay, but I am sure it is a good work, for it has given plenty

of water, not only for the people of the large cities it serves, but also along its route. I would like to ask him what would become of the scheme which he seems to suggest for the conservation of water on the surface of these gold-fields, and what would be the position of the people of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, if those fields were visited by a drought such as he refers to as having occurred on the Coliban catchment. The honorable member thinks that the private speculator and the monopolist should be left to do works of this kind. Yes; he would do them, and he would probably leave the hon. member and the people in the lurch before they were done, and we should have to buy those works from the monopolist. If that is the sort of thing the hon. member wants, he will have to wait until he is on these benches before he can have it, for he will never get it while I am here. As to his statement that the agricultural railways which we contemplate will not pay, I do not intend to take those railways where they will not pay. The hon. member for Nannine scans the Speech, and thinks that he will make a little personal attack upon me in regard to the town of Bunbury. I think that it is rather ungenerous of him, if I may say so, and that he is not acting with the consideration that we should expect from a man who aspires to take a leading position. I have never indulged in personalities nor twitted him about Nannine, but we propose to make a railway to it, although the Government have received very little political assistance from him. In fact, when he goes to that part of the country, he does his best to place our actions in as bad a light as possible. The hon. member says some unwarrantable things about Bunbury. I do not know whether he has ever been there, or whether he is acquainted with its resources, but I shall not stand here and allow him to say without contradiction that harbor improvement works are unnecessary and unwarrantable. I believe that they are necessary and warranted, as Bunbury is the outlet of a large extent of country, the Vasse being the only other outlet in that part of the country. Bunbury requires these works, and I shall endeavor to give the people of Bunbury that which they are justified in having.

I ask hon. members, although I represent that town and district, if I have ever allowed that to unduly influence me in giving works to that part of the country, or whether the works when they have been completed have ever become a burden to the country. I say that the South-Western and other southern lines have been justified, and that they will pay not only working expenses, but also the interest and sinking fund. I am positively assured of that. For, leaving out the question of coal for the moment, there are valuable timber forests as well as agricultural land along the routes which will make the railways pay. I am sure that the hon. gentleman will regret in cooler moments having made use of the innuendo that I try to benefit my constituency at the expense of the colony. I have great pleasure in advocating the wants of my own district, when I can do so with justice to the other parts of the colony, but I may say that I look very carefully into such matters, for as a general rule, one finds it easier to assist a stranger than a friend. The hon. member not once, but many times in the course of his speech, said—and I do not think it is quite in order; in fact, it was most offensive to hon. members—that this House was not representative of the country. The same argument can be used after every election. This Parliament is only two years old. Many of us were returned unanimously and others by large majorities, and yet the hon. member for Nannine says that we are not representative of the country. I do not think that is a reasonable or fair argument. It seems to me that we represent the country until Parliament expires or is dissolved. I thoroughly believe that I represent the feeling of my constituents, and I am quite sure that the same can be said of nearly every hon. member in the House. Well, then, I do not think that this was a fair observation for the hon. member to make, and I take this opportunity of saying so because the same argument can be used by any hon. member who at any time finds himself in a minority. He has only to turn round on his brother members, and tell them that they do not represent the country. I say that we do represent the country. We are the only persons who do repre-

sent the country, and we shall continue to do so until Parliament expires, by effluxion of time, or by a dissolution; and I say more, that we are quite competent to manage the affairs of this country, and we shall be able to do so until the electors are again appealed to. I think I may truly say that during the time we have sat in this House we have been equal to the occasion in trying to promote the colony's interests. I am sure that, on reflection, the hon. member will see that he has not put the matter of the expenditure on the waterworks scheme in a reasonable light, for he has made it appear that the indebtedness upon the two and a half millions of money will commence immediately, whereas it would not be until the money has been all borrowed and spent that the debt would be increased to the amount he speaks of, by which time it would be probable that there would be a large increase of population in the colony. If the people continue to arrive at the rate at which they have been doing for the last two or three years, we shall have 200,000 people here very soon. If the total national debt amounted to ten millions at the end of two or three years that would be an indebtedness of only £50 per head on 200,000 people, or less than the indebtedness per head of the population of any of the other colonies with the exception of Victoria, where the debt is only £41 per head, while in Queensland the indebtedness is something like £67 per head. I do not know that I need say any more on this question. I would ask hon. members, whether they sit on one side of the House or the other, to withhold judgment on the Coolgardie waterworks question until they have the details of the scheme before them. I do not look upon this as a party question. It is a great national work, which we shall do our best to carry out. Within our experience a great many people have not accepted some of our schemes at first, but have afterwards done so. I may say that no one here has so fully considered the matter as we have done, but we have had the same difficulties at the outset upon other matters which did not seem at first sight practicable, but which were adopted, and which have proved of great benefit to the country. I feel quite sure that if there is any fault

at all to be found with the present Government and the policy which they favor, it is that they are too progressive. We have greater faith in the future than some hon. members—the hon. member for Nannine, for instance. He seems to have no faith in the future of the country. He wants us to jog along on our own resources, to spend our annual revenue only. I would like to know what position we should have been in if he had been in charge of the affairs of the country for the last six years. We would have had no mining railways and probably about three-quarters of a million of revenue instead of nearly two millions. I do not believe that the opinion of the country is that we shall jog along and throw our chances away. I believe in having faith in ourselves and in our splendid estate when our revenue is rising, and when the goldfields are prosperous, languishing only for want of water. When everything is at its best, are we going to sit down and say we won't try to keep the country going? This seems to be the opinion of the hon. member for Nannine, not caring whether the people of Coolgardie get water or not. We are progressive, and that will continue to be our policy. People who only want to spend the revenue of the country and not take advantage of our position and opportunities will not get me to join them. They will not find me in favor of standing still. "Let us not borrow any more money," they say; "we shall be ruined;" and some of the people who say this are those whose property has been improved ten times in value, and who are growing rich out of the progress which is being stimulated by the past and present policy of the Government. I say that these people are those who ought to support the Government in its desire to open up and develop this country. The people of Perth and Fremantle, whose property has increased ten times in value, are those who should support the goldfields and send water to the far east, which has been the foundation of their fortunes. Why should they say we will stand by and wait and see what turns up? The last words I will say to hon. members are upon that portion of the speech of the hon. member for Nannine in which he spoke of the changes that have taken place in the

personnel of the Government. It was somewhat amusing. He said that there had been many changes, and that the Premier was still at the helm. I am glad to say that the Premier is still at the helm, and intends to stay there as long as the House desires it, and not a day longer; for when I find that I have not the confidence of the members of this House, you will not find the Premier anxious to stand at the helm. (Cheers.)

Mr. SIMPSON moved the adjournment of the debate until next day.

Agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.15 p.m., until next day.

Legislative Council.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH JULY, 1896.

Address-in-Reply; presentation of—Fares on Eastern Railway—Southern Cross-Coolgardie Railway; taking over of same by Government—Kalgoorlie Railway; why no tenders called—Companies Act Amendment Bill; first reading—Supply Bill; first reading; second reading; third reading—Adjournment.

The President (Hon. Sir Geo. Shenton) took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Geo. Shenton) announced that he had, in company with hon. members, proceeded to Government House and had presented the Address-in-Reply, and that His Excellency had been pleased to receive the same and reply. (*Vide* Legislative Council Votes and Proceedings, July 15th, 1896.

FARES ON EASTERN RAILWAY.

THE HON. E. RICHARDSON asked the Minister for Mines: Does the Railway Department intend to reduce the

passenger-fares on the Perth-Fremantle line, and, if so, when?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Not at present.

SOUTHERN CROSS-COOLGARDIE RAILWAY.

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER asked the Minister for Mines: 1. Was the first section of the Southern Cross-Coolgardie railway (taken over by the Government last week) fully ballasted, and in every way finished according to specifications? 2. If not, why was it taken over and the contractors relieved from all further responsibility?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied: 1. The answer to this question is No; the section was not fully ballasted or finished according to specifications, the terms on which it was taken over from the contractors being as set forth in a memorandum produced, dated 9th May, 1896. 2. The contractors were not relieved of any responsibility. This will be evident from the memorandum already referred to. In addition to the stipulations in the memorandum above quoted, the contractor was also caused to give security, in addition to his contract, by lodgment of £4,000 per month for 10 months, commencing in April last, *vide* agreement dated 29th April, 1896; total, £40,000.

COOLGARDIE CONTRACT.

The due date for handing over works (as extended by adding lengths to Kalgoorlie)—

First Section, 11th June, 1896.

Second Section, 11th December, 1896.

Consideration of contractor's claim for extension of time by reason of Rolling-stock not being delivered to him when asked for.

1. Date for handing over First Section to be 30th June, 1896, and three months after that be allowed for completion of all the works appertaining to that Section, after which the penalties provided for in the contract will be enforced. The contractor to maintain the railway at his own cost during the said three months allowed for completion of works, and the term of six months' maintenance provided for in contract to commence when the