

Reporter of the Parliamentary staff, requesting that hon. members who desired to make necessary corrections in their speeches, as printed in the official reports (unrevised) issued weekly to members, should forward the corrections to the *Hansard* Room within three days after each weekly issue.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until this day week.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 4:50 p.m. until Tuesday, 2nd November.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 26th October, 1897.

Petition: Perth Gas Company's Act Further Amendment Bill; Bill introduced, first reading; referred to Select Committee—Papers Presented—Question: Detention of Prisoner after expiration of sentence—Question: Reduction (alleged) of Electric Line-men—Question: Penal System and amendment—Question: Tolls by Railway Department on Goods carted to Steamers—Question: Subsidy for Perth Surface Drainage—Question: Coolgardie Water Supply Scheme—Question: Telegraph Station at Boorabbin—Address-in-Reply: Amendment *re* food duties, Division; fifth day of debate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PETITION—PERTH GAS COMPANY'S ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. LEAKE presented a petition in the matter of the introduction of a private Bill to further amend the Perth Gas Company's Act, 1886, and for other purposes.

Petition read, and ordered to lie on the table.

MR. LEAKE asked whether it would be necessary to move the suspension of the Standing Orders, with a view to introducing the Bill and referring it to a Select Committee?

THE SPEAKER said he had been considering the point, and the Standing Orders provided that no matter, except of a merely formal nature, should be introduced before the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech had been adopted. In addition to the Bill now before the House, it would have been noticed that the Premier had, that afternoon, given notice of his intention to introduce a Bill at the next sitting. As to the practice which should be pursued, he (the Speaker) thought the introduction of a Bill might be treated as a matter of a purely formal nature, such as might be dealt with before the adoption of the Address-in-Reply; and, if there was no opposition to it on the part of hon. members, he would rule that this course be taken.

THE PREMIER (Rt. Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that, in his opinion, leave to introduce a Bill was as formal a matter as could be, and it committed the House to nothing.

MR. LEAKE, according to the Speaker's ruling, moved for leave to introduce the Bill.

Put and passed.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

MR. LEAKE further moved that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee, to consist of Mr. Burt, Mr. Hall, Mr. Harper, and Mr. Wilson; to report on Thursday next.

THE SPEAKER said he had once, on a previous occasion, allowed a select committee to be appointed in reference to a private Bill without requiring the committee to be balloted for.

THE PREMIER said he saw no objection to their doing so on this occasion, as it was merely a formal matter.

THE SPEAKER said that was his opinion, and he would therefore put the question.

Put and passed.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER OF LANDS: Regulations *re* Land Purchase Board appointed under Agricultural Lands Purchase Act; Report of Department of Lands and

Surveys (1896); Report of Stock Department (1896); Report of Acclimatisation Board (1896-7); Report of Woods and Forests Department (1896-7).

By the PREMIER: Comparative Statement of Transactions of Post Office Savings Bank (1896-7); Report of Aborigines Protection Board (1896); Despatch from Secretary of State *re* visit of Colonial Premiers to London; Report of Perth Museum (1896-7).

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—DETENTION OF PRISONER AFTER EXPIRATION OF SENTENCE.

MR. VOSPER, in accordance with notice, asked the Attorney General:—1. Whether it was true that local prisoner 2599 was detained in Fremantle Gaol six days after the date when, by remission for good conduct, his sentence expired. 2. If so, why so? 3. What was the amount of remission granted to the said prisoner, and the date of its expiry? 4. Why the said prisoner was detained on the day of his release until 12 noon, waiting the delivery of his effects. 5. What money, if any, was given to the said prisoner. 6. Whether he signed any document as a receipt for same.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), on behalf of the Attorney General, replied:—1. There was an interval of four days between the approval in Executive Council of the remission and the discharge of the prisoner, but no detention after his sentence had expired. 2. The delay was caused by the necessary official course which the papers, in common with all others dealt with in Executive Council, had to take, and the intervening of Saturday (a half postal day) and Sunday. 3. Eighteen days. His original sentence would have expired on the 23rd October, 1897. 4. He was not detained until 12 noon, but was discharged at 10.25 a.m., and was not kept waiting for the delivery of his effects. 5. No money was given him. 6. No.

QUESTION—REDUCTION (ALLEGED) OF WAGES OF ELECTRIC LINEMEN.

MR. VOSPER, in accordance with notice, asked the Minister of Education:—1. Whether it was true that the wages of electric linemen employed by his department had been reduced to eleven-

pence per hour. 2. Why, if this were so, the reduction was made retrospective to the 30th September last. 3. What reason was assigned for such action, if it had taken place.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) replied that the wages had not been reduced.

QUESTION—PENAL SYSTEM AND AMENDMENT.

MR. VOSPER, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether it was the intention of the Government to institute an inquiry into the existing penal system with a view to its early amendment.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), on behalf of the Attorney General, replied that nothing had yet been done.

At a later stage,

MR. VOSPER, without notice, asked the Premier a further question with reference to the reply already given. He said his question had been asked in a future tense, and had been answered by the right hon. gentleman in the past tense. He now wanted to know whether anything was to be done.

THE PREMIER further replied:—I may say, speaking with the greatest frankness, that this question has engaged the attention of the Attorney General for a long time past, but nothing has yet been done. I must say at once that I think the changes which the Attorney General was considering were in the direction of making the penal system more severe than it is at the present time, and not in the way of making it more easy, because we all know that the penal system in this colony is one of the easiest in the world. A man may even be committed for murder, and then have his sentence commuted and get out of prison in a very few years—say in ten or twelve years. The whole matter is, I think, one that does require consideration; and, though I am not making any promise to do it at the present moment, I may say that the subject is engaging the attention of the Government.

QUESTION—TOLLS BY RAILWAY DEPARTMENT ON GOODS CARTED TO STEAMERS.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, for Mr. James, in accordance with notice, asked the Com-

missioner of Railways: 1. Whether it was a fact that the Railway Department was insisting upon the payment of a toll of 1s. per ton upon goods carted through the station yard at Fremantle to river steamers loading for Perth at the new South Quay. Whether this charge was not in addition to the ordinary berthage dues, and also in addition to the wharfage of 2s. per ton. 2. If so, whether there was statutory or other, and if so what, authority for the charge. 3. Whether the same charge was made on goods carted through the same yard to the Government trucks for delivery in Perth. 4. If not, what was the reason for this differential charge. 5. Whether, in view of the fact that the Railway Department was in competition (as far as Perth) with other carriers requiring access to the wharves of the new harbour at Fremantle, it was the intention of the Government to continue the control of these wharves and their approaches in the hands of the department, or to appoint an independent Harbour Board.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied: 1. (a.) Yes. (b.) The charge is in addition to the berthage dues of 1d. per ton, and also in addition to the 2s. per ton wharfage on imported goods, the charges on which are paid by the consignees and not by the river steamers. 2. Under Jetty Regulation Act. 3. No specific charge, but terminals are provided for in the through rate. 4. Qualifications as given in Answer No. 3. 5. Government intend to continue control of these wharves, under conditions now existing.

QUESTION—SUBSIDY FOR PERTH SURFACE DRAINAGE.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (for Mr. James), in accordance with notice, asked the Premier: 1. Whether the Government had yet paid to the City Council the £100,000 asked for, for surface drainage. 2. If not, whether the Government would, before doing so, await the publication of the report on the sewerage scheme by Mr. Hodgson?

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—1. No. 2. Before the Government can comply with the wishes of the City Council, a Reappropriation Act will be required, and until this Act

is obtained the Government will not advance the money.

QUESTION—COOLGARDIE WATER SUPPLY SCHEME.

MR. WOOD, without notice, asked the Premier, whether the Government had received any definite proposal from Mr. Bargigli, in reference to the Coolgardie water supply scheme, both with regard to the construction of the works and the completion of the financial arrangements that would enable the scheme to be proceeded with at the first favourable opportunity.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): In reply to the hon. member, I may say that Mr. Bargigli made a proposal to the Government some months ago, and also under date 26th of this month, to carry out the whole of the Coolgardie water supply scheme for a sum within the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief.

QUESTION—TELEGRAPH STATION AT BOORABBIN.

MR. A. FORREST, without notice, asked the Minister of Education the reason why the telegraph station at Boorabbin, or two miles from Boorabbin, had not been removed to its proper place.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) replied:—I must ask the hon. member to be good enough to give notice of his question.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

AMENDMENT *re* FOOD DUTIES—DIVISION. FIFTH DAY OF DEBATE.

[Debate resumed on the motion for adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, and on the amendment moved by Mr. Leake to add certain words expressing regret that legislation was not to be introduced this session for reducing the food duties, which amendment was treated by the Government as a motion of want of confidence.]

MR. HARPER (Beverley): Sir, in rising to review the amendment before the House on this subject, I cannot help expressing my surprise at the extreme mildness and timidity of it. If those members on the Opposition side had wished some drastic result to follow their

amendment, it surely would have been put in very different terms. They claim, or some of them have claimed, that they have the voice of the people—in respect of what? The reduction of the food duties? A reduction may mean 10 per cent. What strikes me as most remarkable is this, that not one of those who have spoken in support of this amendment has made the slightest endeavour to show, by figures, what would be the result of their amendment, if carried. They have told us, a good many of them, that this is a matter which was the one dominant question before the electors at the general election, and that the result was that those who were in favour of a reduction of these duties represented the majority in this House. A careful examination of the results of the election leads me to rather a different conclusion. If hon. members would carefully review them they would see that this is what happened, that those candidates who sought election in city, town, or suburban electorates, as a rule took up this question of the reduction of the food duties; and wherever there happened to be men at all equal in standing—taking the two sides, for and against—there seems to have been rather a preponderance in favour of those who supported the maintenance of the duties. Of course, in cases where there were two or three candidates all on the one side, it cannot be said that there was a fair testing of this question at all, for it was then purely a question of the choice of an individual. The results in one or two electorates were very remarkable, particularly in East Fremantle, where the sitting member, who had gained very considerable repute in this House as an able politician, took up the cry of the reduction of the food duties, and was opposed by a new man entirely unknown in politics, who supported the retention of the duties, and ousted the sitting member by a very substantial majority. That is good evidence, I think, that the claim of those who say that the voice of the people is entirely on one side is a very unsound one indeed. Surely if the hon. members on the opposite side of the House were ready, on this question of the reduction of the food duties, to take the spirit of the desire of the people rather than the letter, they would have taken pains to show what

would be the result of their action. They ask for a reduction of the food duties; and, as I said before, a reduction may mean 10 per cent.; but what they should have shown was what the benefit would be to those who are asking for this reduction. So far, we have not heard a word about that. All we have heard on that point is that it would not injure those who are now producing things the duty upon which some members wish to reduce. It seems to me that this amendment was drawn, not so much with the idea of benefiting the consumers as of getting as many voices as possible in support of it, by making it general and intangible—getting as many votes in this House in support of it as possible, irrespective of its results to the country. If the end in view of hon. members was a reduction of the food duties, the first thing they should have pointed out was the amount of that reduction, and what would be the result. Take the two principal items of bread and meat: I suppose that if this amendment were carried, those in favour of it would agree amongst themselves that the reduction should be by 50 per cent. That surely would be a substantial reduction. And now comes the question, what would be the result to the consumer? We all recognise that the consumer, as a rule, when he elects a candidate to represent him, leaves it to that candidate to show exactly what the result of a certain action in Parliament will be. The consumer, as a rule, is a worker and not a thinker, and he expects those who represent him to show him the result of any action in the House of Representatives. It is generally accepted that the duty on bread at the present time is about a farthing on the two-pound loaf; and we may presume that those in favour of the amendment would accept a substantial reduction of this duty by one-eighth of a penny. The question is, who will get this eighth of a penny? It would not be the consumer, because it is notorious that bakers do not deal in farthings. Therefore, this eighth of a penny would go into the pockets of the dealers or distributors. In that case the consumer would find he had been misled by those who sought his support on the ground of a reduction of the food duties. We will take the question of the duty on meat, and deal with it

in the same way. The duty on meat is generally accepted to be about one half-penny a pound. If you take a farthing off that as a reduction, it certainly would not be the consumer who would get it, as the meat trader does not deal in farthings. [A MEMBER: What about frozen meat?] That comes under another heading which I will deal with shortly. On the agricultural aspect of the question the supporters of the amendment have merely made bald statements which do not, I think, carry conviction to very many. The hon. member who moved the amendment informed the House that farmers would benefit by the reduction of the food duties. That hon. member, however, did not show us in what way the farmers would benefit; and, in dealing with a question of this kind, it is just as well to ask the people who are interested in it to speak for themselves. They wear the shoe, and know where it pinches. Those who represent mining communities would be rather shocked at a suggestion that they knew what would suit farmers better than the farmers did themselves. The hon. member for Central Murchison informs us that more people would be induced to go on the land, if these food duties were taken off. That is tantamount to saying that the less profit a man makes, the more will people be induced to go into the business which that man follows. The hon. member for the Swan informed us that the farmers produce nothing which is dutiable, thereby showing a vast amount of knowledge on the subject. The hon. member for North-East Coolgardie, by searching through the blue books for forty years back, sought to prove that the import duties lessened production. I hope I am not misinterpreting that hon. member, but that is all I could understand from his use of the blue books he quoted. There is a principle involved in this which is a very simple one. If it be true that removing the protective duties on farm produce benefits the country, much plainer instances could have been adduced than those cited by the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie. In the mother country, as is known to all of us, there is no impost on bread or meat, and the result is known to everyone. Since the ports have been free in Great Britain, there has been a gradual but vast diminution in the culti-

vation of corn there, amounting, I believe, to four or five million acres, but I am not sure of my figures.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But look at the increase in the manufactures.

MR. HARPER: That merely supports my argument. If a country chooses to sacrifice agriculture for manufactures, the way to do it is to import food free of duty, and the result of such a policy is plain in the mother country. If it is desired to make Western Australia purely a manufacturing country, that is the way to do. [MR. VOSPER: We want a mining country.] There is also another instance afforded in New South Wales, where a few months ago corn from America was selling at a lower price than the local farmers could produce it for. If we do not want any agriculture in the country, let it be so; but it is remarkable that hon. members on the other side—especially the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie—has said that the mining people are the agriculturist's best friends.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We say the mining people give a better market for the agriculturists.

MR. HARPER: If it is a question of a good market, why do the farmers not produce in England, where there is the best market in the world? There, however, the farmers do not produce because the production does not pay. It is very remarkable that it is only within a short time that we heard very much about this question of the food duties, especially with regard to bread; and there were two very good reasons for our hearing the question raised. One reason was a general election, and the other was an accident over which no human being had any control, namely, a shortage in wheat. I do not think that anyone will deny that the price in 1894 and 1895 in this colony was below the cost of production. In 1894 the price of wheat was 2s. 4d. a bushel, and flour was £6 a ton, and in 1895 wheat was 2s. 2d. a bushel, and flour £5 12s. 6d. a ton. I am not quite certain, but I believe that about last Christmas the uniform price of bread was 2½d. per 2lb. loaf; but the price gradually rose until it reached between 4d. and 5d. That increase of price was entirely due to the shortage of wheat, and as 2½d. per loaf is a minimum, it is very evident that

the duties do not account for the rise, this duty being a farthing on the two-pound loaf.

THE PREMIER: One-eighth of a penny.

MR. HARPER: I take it to be one farthing on the two-pound loaf.

MR. SIMPSON: By the time the loaf gets to the people, the duty is a farthing.

MR. HARPER: At any rate, the duty does not account for the difference between 2½d. and 5d. I happen to know something about the feeling of the country in regard to these duties as shown in the election of 1894. At that time there was a great desire, in the farming constituencies, for an increase in the duty on corn and flour. I opposed that increase, although I was seeking election in a farming community, and consequently I had a very narrow majority indeed in my favour. A good many hon. members have alluded to the lack of production of agricultural produce, but they do not at all bear in mind the cause of this. It must be recollected that the price of corn in 1894 and 1895 had an extremely deterrent effect upon production. Men said, "We cannot make it pay, and therefore we will not produce." But that was not the only thing which had a deterrent effect upon production. At that time nearly the whole of the young men of the farming districts were drawn away to the gold-fields; and not only were the young men drawn away, but teams were also taken away from the farms. Then again, what might have been utilised as agricultural labour was diverted to the making of railways. That accounts for the slackness of production and development at that time. Within the last two years a change has occurred, and last year was certainly one of the most profitable that farmers have had for many years. Every farthing that the producer has been able to acquire has been used in the development of his land; and there has been a great increase in production during the last year or two, especially during last year. There is some further evidence I wish to bring forward to show that considerable development is taking place in the production of corn. I get this evidence from the report of the Collector of Customs in relation to the agricultural machinery introduced during the last two seasons. Taking the first half

of each year, which is the active period, I find that up to the first of June, 1896, the value of agricultural machinery introduced into this colony was £5,392, and that in 1897 the value was £8,659. These figures go to prove an enormous increase in production. It is evident that if, by a removal of the food duties, the producers found they could reap no benefit from their cultivation of the land, large areas now being taken up would remain unoccupied. That must surely be detrimental to the State. From the development of the lands of the colony the State should expect a return, and general progress. Every man placed on the land adds to the taxable strength of the country, and every man taken off reduces it. A good deal has been said about the difference between the duties upon frozen and live meat. This is a problem of very great interest. There is a great deal more in it than appears on the surface. Anyone who observes the trade in frozen and chilled meat in London—which is about one of the best tests we can have—will find that chilled meat from America sells within a fraction of the best home-grown meat. Probably it goes into consumption as home-grown meat, but there is a difference of 50 per cent. between frozen and chilled meat. The result to this country, if the duties were taken off frozen meat, would be that the whole trade in a short time would go into the hands of those few who are dealing in this article. They could land meat of inferior quality to that which is sent to England, and completely command the whole trade of the colony in this respect.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is sad for the working man.

MR. HARPER: The result would be that a foreign board could dictate to the working man the price he would have to pay for his meat. It would be no use passing resolutions in regard to this, as we should have no control over a foreign board, and the result would be that the importers of this meat would have no competition whatever in the colony, because they would completely command the trade and charge whatever they liked. I dare say some hon. members think it is not an easy thing to bring about a combination of those engaged in foreign

meat. I have been informed by one of those interested in the trade that at the present moment there exists a connection between the whole of the frozen meat companies in Australasia, and they have decided to fix their price and to sell at a price decided by a board. This is no imaginary thing: it is an accomplished fact. If hon. members think that by admitting frozen meat into this colony free it would be a benefit, it appears to me that in a very short time we should be the greatest sufferers.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There is a butchers' ring now.

MR. HARPER: I do not know whether there is a butchers' ring, and if there be, I do not know that they are singular in that respect in fixing their price. Every man who can, fixes his price; land agents do, and bricklayers, and anyone else who has the power to fix his price does so. That is a principle established throughout the world. The only way to compete with undue combination is to have as much local competition as you can get. If hon. members, who desire to cheapen the food products in this country, had taken a different course, I would have been only too glad to support them. Anyone who knows anything of the matter at all must see that one of the great causes of the high price of meat has been the difficulties in transport and slaughter and distribution. I have moved myself in this House on more than one occasion in that line, and still little or nothing has been done. There is another point I would like to touch upon in regard to prices of agricultural produce, and it is that it has largely become known that the carriage of goods across the ocean is so well managed that the goods can be brought here at a minimum of cost. Without going exactly into the figures, I think it is possible to land grain at Fremantle harbour—now we have the large ships coming there—cheaper than we can land it from Katanning. The distance by water is nothing to the carriage by land. There is another important point I may touch upon. When a country can produce a large quantity of any particular article, the Government of that country offers a bonus for the export of that article. The beet sugar industry in Europe has almost annihilated the sugar industry of the West Indies, and a

movement is on foot in America to give an export bounty on wheat of 3d. per bushel, and, if that is done, any country that has its ports open will be completely inundated. It is right that a country should watch closely, and see that it is fairly protected against outside countries. There is one operation which the hon. member for Central Murchison must know is carried on by traders: where they have a heavy supply on hand of a certain article, the holder does not realise but exports to another country, and he does not care whether he loses on the transaction or not. He does it simply to keep up the price in the country in which he lives. That has happened here. Corn and flour have been sold below the price which the consignor bought it at, and it has paid him to lose on his consignment to keep the price up in his district. It is not the consumer that gains in this case, but the trader. The hon. member for Albany made one assertion in his speech which rather startled me. He said that protection was unnecessary in an unsettled country. If protection is advantageous at all, it is in an unsettled country. There is another argument which the hon. member for Albany made use of. He said that miners have no protection in this country at all, but that the farmers are the only ones protected. That may be tested by comparison. Take the miners on the other great gold-field of the world—the Rand. European miners are not protected there against Africans and Asiatics, and the result is that nearly all the mining is done by Africans. In this country the miner is protected against Africans and Asiatics, and it is not true to say the miner is not protected against what he fears—cheap labour. I am quite prepared to say, representing an agricultural district, that the agriculturists of this country will never consent to see the miners here have to compete against the labour of the African and the Asiatic. I do not think I need say it is my intention to vote against the amendment.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle): I am sorry I have to express my dissatisfaction at the manner in which the right hon. the Premier the other day attacked this side of the House, more particularly myself, for the course we are taking on this question. I would like to call to

the mind of the right hon. gentleman that I have often excited the displeasure of this side of the House in consequence of the support which I have given the Government, when I have found that the questions which they brought forward were worthy of it. But I do not think, whatever the right hon. gentleman may say, that any member of this House has to consult the right hon. gentleman as to how he should vote. I came to this House elected by the whole of the electors of my district, and I claim that I am giving their opinion when I stand here and say what I have to say. I wish to bring forward a little matter that occurred in the Chamber of Commerce at Fremantle, the other day. A gentleman not long in the colony, during the recess between the last session and this, brought forward the following resolution at a meeting of that Chamber: "That in view of the undue agitation regarding the duties on food and other articles, this Chamber respectfully urges upon the Government extreme caution in dealing with tariff reductions, unless some other means for making up the deficit other than taxing pastoralists, agriculturists, and others who are developing the country, are devised." The resolution was brought forward in an assembly of about forty men, comprising the commercial, shipping, and other interests of the town of Fremantle. The Chamber came to the conclusion that it was necessary that the reduction of duties should take place.

A MEMBER: It was not put to the vote.

MR. SOLOMON: If the hon. member can dispute it, all well and good. He can do so in his place in the House. On that occasion there were several items which I mentioned, on which duties amounting to £78,035 6s. 8d. were levied during the year, from July 1st, 1896, to June 30th, 1897. These figures I obtained from the Custom-house authorities. [THE PREMIER: On what were they levied?] I am going to give you the details. I know both you and the other hon. gentlemen opposite are anxious to hear them. The items are as follow:—Horned cattle for slaughter, £13,719; sheep for slaughter, £8,673 16s.; bacon, £27,579 9s. 2d., cheese, £11,504 1s. 10d.; hams, £5,025 6s. 8d.; fresh meat, £7,157 6s. 2d.;

currants, £4,576 6s. 10d. Total, £78,035 6s. 8d. On that occasion I pointed out that, according to the statement made by the right hon. gentleman opposite, there was a surplus of £315,000. [A MEMBER: On paper.] It does not say much for the right hon. the Premier's statement about a surplus, that one of his own side says it was only on paper. I therefore argued that, even supposing the whole of those duties were taken off, which I do not advocate, the colony would have a very good surplus to deal with. That was one of the arguments I used on that occasion, and I think I may very well use it now. The right hon. the Premier claims that the colony was never in a more prosperous condition than it is now. Possibly it may be so; so far as the output of gold is concerned it undoubtedly is so; and I think we may take it for granted that the colony as a whole is in a prosperous condition. My argument then is that, being in such a prosperous condition, now is the time we should make a reduction in the food duties, which bear so heavily on the masses. If we do not make this reduction now, but wait for a future occasion when the colony cannot afford it or may not be in such a prosperous position as it is at present, then it will be too late. But if we do it now, we can make up—if necessary, I do not think it would be—with taxes in other directions for any loss that may be sustained. I hold that all industries should work together in a fiscal policy which affects the whole of the colony. Agricultural, mining, and all other industries should work together as a whole. It is for the benefit of the whole that we should work. I would like to allude to the great expense of the Harbour Works at Fremantle. Before they are finished they will cost, I suppose, a million of money. The interest and sinking fund on that will be something like £60,000 a year. I say that we should encourage the shipping as much as possible to pay the interest.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Sacrifice agriculture?

MR. SOLOMON: It was said by the hon. member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) that the duty would make no difference. I really cannot understand such an argument. The hon. member must remember that it is not the duty alone

that has to be considered, but the expense and also the deterioration of the goods that are imported, as well as various other matters, in dealing with a question of this kind. I may state that in one establishment at Fremantle the duty alone on four items, namely cheese, bacon, eggs, and butter, comes to £105 a week : that is in one establishment alone. But besides paying the duty, these establishments run a great deal of risk in handling the goods which are of a perishable nature. This shows, at any rate, that there is something besides duty which has to be considered. I would like to refer to the annual report of the Bureau of Agriculture. Among other things it states: "At present, owing to the high price of other farm produce, I do not think that it is time to press farmers into butter making, as other farm products will give a better return with much less labour. Regarding cheese making, strenuous efforts should be made to induce farmers to go in for this industry, as it would be most remunerative and give a greater return than any other farm product I know of. As far as my inquiries have gone, I have failed to hear of a manufacturer of cheese in the colony." In view of this fact, what is the good of putting a duty of 3d. a pound on cheese, for the people to pay without any reason? The subject of debate has been so thoroughly ventilated that I shall not detain the House any further. I am sure that the great mass of the consuming population are with those who are endeavouring to reduce the food duties, and I am glad that the Government have so far given way that they intend to consider the question next session, but, in my opinion, the present time is most opportune.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) : Certain remarks which fell from the Premier, when replying to the leader of the Opposition, were owing, I am sure, to a feeling of sorrow that the hon. member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon), whom we always look upon as an old friend, should have left him on this occasion.

MR. JAMES : He must be independent sometimes.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION : The hon. member has said these duties press most heavily on the masses, and he

also told us that all industries should work together in the fiscal policy. I claim that this has been the policy of the Government from the time when the right hon. gentleman came into office in 1890, namely, that all the different industries of the colony should work together in a fiscal policy. That seems to have been the policy sticking out throughout all the arrangements of the Government since its initiation. In His Excellency's Speech it is said that Ministers do not propose this session to introduce any legislation with a view to amending the tariff. That was a very plain statement. It was considered inopportune to introduce any measure of this kind at the present time, but there was nothing said there as to what might be in the mind of the Government in the future. I do not think that it is ever judicious or necessary for the Government of the day to state, in a Speech from the Governor, what they intend to do or hope to do in years to come. The member for Albany further has tabled a motion regretting that the Government do not propose to introduce any legislation with a view to amending the tariff. He does not say he regrets that the Government do not propose this session to amend the tariff, but he expresses regret that the Government do not propose to introduce any amendment of the tariff at all. Now, from the statements of the right hon. the Premier, I think all members of this House must feel that the Government have had in view the idea of doing something with regard to the tariff; but, as is well-known to everybody, this is not a question that can be settled in an hour or in a week or in a month. It is a matter that has to be carefully considered, and the time at present is not opportune for that being done. The Government have been twitted with pitting class against class. I do not like the *tu quoque* style of argument, but still I must say that the Opposition appear to me to be more desirous than the Government of pitting one class against another. It seems to have been sticking out of all the arguments they have brought forward. They have told us that the farmers are so lazy that they cannot produce enough for themselves to eat, and that actually the reduction of the duties will help them because it will take off the duties on

what they will eat themselves. It just shows a very great want of knowledge on the part of hon. members opposite, and it proves to me very plainly that they have not visited the farm-houses of the colony.

A MEMBER: We do our marketing in Perth.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Hon. members opposite seem to consider that there are no industries in this colony but those which produce what goes down their throats. It appears to me that clothing is just as necessary to a man in these days as food, and I have a few figures here which will show hon. members that, at any rate, other industries are protected in this colony besides the farming industry, and that these industries are not protected in any less degree. The biscuit maker is protected, the boot maker is protected, the tailor, the carpenter, the wheel-wright, the harness maker and saddler are protected, the tanner is protected, so is the soap maker, the candle maker, the confectioner, the brewer, the tobacco manufacturer, the boat maker and the fisherman, also the brick maker, and even the tent maker—all these industries are protected; and I would like the people of this country, the workers, the men who work at other industries besides farming, to take these facts into consideration. In the year 1896 we brought into this colony biscuits to the value of £9,000, the duty being 36 per cent.

MR. SIMPSON: We will help you to reduce that.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: In 1896 also there were boots introduced to the value of over £86,000, and I notice the member for East Perth (Mr. James) does not raise the question with regard to these duties upon town industries.

MR. JAMES: In all these cases you tax the raw material. You tax the flour and you tax the leather.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: I notice the hon. member does not take these things into consideration, but I hope his constituents, who I am sure are fair-minded people, will take them into consideration. There were bricks to the value of over £36,000 brought into the colony in 1896, with a duty of 20 per cent. on them, and I wonder whether the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) would advocate the reduction of the

duty on bricks. Probably he would not. The total duty paid on bricks was £773. The harness maker and the saddler introduced stuff required in their trade to the value of £21,000, and that trade is protected with a duty of 15 per cent. and 20 per cent. respectively. Carts, carriages, and wagons were introduced to the value of £34,000, with a duty of 20 per cent. on them. Furniture was introduced to the value of £42,000, with a duty of 20 per cent. Doors were introduced to the value of £9,000, with a duty of 20 per cent. Sole and harness leather was introduced to the value of £12,000, with a duty of 15 per cent. Even soap was introduced to the value of £9,000, with a duty of 20 per cent.; and surely hon. members on the other side of the House, and those representing the goldfields, will admit that soap is as great a necessity as water. Timber was introduced to the value of £48,000, the duty being 20 per cent. Candles were introduced to the amount of £18,000, with a duty of 40 per cent. The value of these articles I have enumerated comes to nearly £300,000; and, as these articles are manufactured in the colony, the protection is put on to induce production—that is what it is done for—as well as to raise revenue. I would like to point out, and I am coming to the pith of my argument, that sheep to the value of £27,000 were introduced during the same year, with a duty of 20 per cent. *ad valorem*, adding to the revenue £5,533. The duty on meat amounts to no more than the duty on boots, or on many of those articles I have enumerated.

MR. VOSPER: We do not live on boots.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: The men who work in these industries want employment; they want good wages, and they cannot get the same wages if the industry is not protected as they can get when it is protected.

MR. SIMPSON: Do you say wages are higher in protected countries?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Flour was introduced to the value of £152,000 in the same year, and the duty on it was 15 per cent. *ad valorem*. Wheat, of which so much is said, was introduced to the value of £4,000, the duty being 12 per cent. *ad valorem*. There are members on the Opposition

side of the House who seem to grudge a little protection to these industries, but I say the object of the Government is to build up the different industries of the colony, and to care for the interests of the people who are engaged in them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You cannot build up an industry without food.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: The object of the Government is to do for one industry the same as is done for every industry. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) picked out only one item in the tariff, and that was cheese, and I am quite sure the Government would give him that. One hon. member—I think it was the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper)—told us that until the food production approximated to the consumption more closely, it was not right of the Government to tax wheat. Why then are these other industries taxed, when certainly the production does not approximate to the consumption? I think the argument holds good that one is just as much entitled to protection as the other. If we were going into freetrade pure and simple, I could understand the contention of some members on the Opposition side; but hon. members do not distinctly advocate freetrade. They appear to me simply to pit one section of producers in the colony against other sections, and they are quite prepared to protect the producers in the towns, but will not protect producers in the country districts. "Great as the pastoral industries are," said the hon. member for East Perth, "he hoped the Government would remember those industries in towns where the want of protection is retarding the progress of those industries." The hon. member interrupted me now when I was speaking of these town industries, but these words I have quoted from his speech show he had these industries in his mind at the time. And what have the Government done? They have protected these industries; therefore I would appeal to hon. members who represent the workers in the town industries to consider whether it is fair and equitable to take the duty off the productions of the country districts, and let the duties remain on articles that are produced in the towns.

MR. VOSPER: You are going to do it, in any case.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: We have not yet told hon. members what we are going to do. (Several interjections.)

THE SPEAKER: Order, order!

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: The Premier has stated that this matter will be taken into consideration, and when the right hon. gentleman tells members opposite that such will be done, they can rest assured that it will be so.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We'll see to that.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: This amendment moved by the member for Albany is really the outcome of what one has to expect in party politics, and I for one do not blame the hon. member in bringing it forward, because it is right, in the interests of the country, that this question should be debated in Parliament. It was made a test question, to a certain extent, at the general election; and if we are to fight out this battle, the best place is on the floor of this House. Hon. members are here to represent the different constituencies of the colony, and I hope the constituents who sent them have not sent them here merely as delegates, but as representatives, and have not told them, cut and dried, what they are to do. I hope they are not so bound round, body and soul, as to do that. What sort of representative can constituents have, if their member is willing to be told that he must do this or he must do that? I think it is not the duty of a member to represent a constituency in that way; for any member who allows himself to be trammelled in such a way is not worthy to represent a constituency at all. There may be certain vital questions connected with the interests of the country, in regard to which the electors of a district may have strong feelings. I have no doubt that is so, but those feelings have been engendered, and have been embittered, I may say, by the fact that this question of the food duties was made a party question at the elections in some constituencies, and issues were brought forward by candidates, some of whom presented to the electors only one phase of the question and not the other phases of it. If this question were properly laid before the people in

the constituencies, as it has been laid before this House in the present debate, I think the people would agree with the policy of the Government; and I hope those members in this House who represent town constituencies and goldfields constituencies will feel that the Government desire to promote the interests and welfare of the people at large, and not only the farming industry. The Government in the past have never shown, by any one action, that they favoured any particular industry in this country; but the object of the Government is to build up the industries of this country and make it a desirable place to live in. We wish to settle the people on the soil, and try to make the colony self-supporting. Some persons may laugh at the idea of making this country self-supporting, and they may call it what they like, but I think it is a noble ambition on the part of the Government. I would appeal to the patriotism of hon. members who are West. Australians, to consider the position we are in at the present moment. What are we trying to do? We have been trying to raise up this old colony from an unknown position to one that is known, helped by its great natural resources, and particularly the gold; and we claim that, owing to this great advantage, which has drawn population to our colony in such large numbers, and is enabling us to increase the productions of the soil, we at the same time should endeavour so to legislate that, when the gold goes—though it will take some long time to go—when it does go, there will be something for West Australia to depend upon. I hope that when the division bell rings, and we divide on this motion, hon. members will cast off all ideas of imaginary pledges which they may have made on the hustings—[A MEMBER: They are real]—and that they will consider what their constituents would prefer them to do, whether to vote on this occasion for the Government who are doing their best for the different industries of the colony, or to vote for an amendment which means the overthrow of the Government, of which contingency the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) speaks so lightly. Certain hon. gentlemen have come into this House with the distinct and avowed object of opposing the Government through thick and thin.

They have stated so on the hustings, and I have no doubt they will prove it by their actions in this House. I do not think any worse of those hon. gentlemen for their having taken up a position of that kind; but, at the same time, there are other hon. gentlemen in this House who have not got those strong feelings against the present Government, and I would ask these members to stick to the Government on this occasion. I would ask those mining members who wish to have that stream of water flowing through their districts, to remember what the action of the Government has been in the past. I believe hon. gentlemen in this House will consider the question in a free and independent light, and that they will vote, not in accordance with what some may imagine their constituents might expect them to do, but that they will vote against the amendment of the hon. member for Albany, knowing full well their constituents will support them in their action.

MR. LYALL HALL (Perth): I rise at this stage of the debate to state, as clearly and concisely as I am able to do, my intentions in regard to the vote about to be cast on the amendment of the hon. member for Albany. I hope, as one of those who have expressed themselves as favourable to tariff reform, this House will give me credit for a full consideration of the subject, when I say that the amendment is simply a snare and a delusion, and an attempt on the part of the member for Albany to obtain office by means of a chance majority.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We never dreamed of it.

MR. LYALL HALL: There is no doubt in my mind as to how hon. members who are located on this (the Ministerial) side of the House, and who, like myself, are desirous of obtaining a revision of the tariff, will vote; for the question is simply this: Are we to turn out the Forrest Government, and have in its place a weak Leake Administration which would not last twenty-four hours?

A MEMBER: It would last longer than that, you know.

MR. LYALL HALL: The matter of the food duties is, I think, a small question compared with the desire of some hon. members opposite to obtain possession of the Treasury benches. Al-

though many of us are desirous of getting a review of the tariff, the question we have to ask ourselves is, can the country afford, at the present time, to discard a tried and trusted Ministry in favour of the members who sit on the Opposition benches? I think, before hon. members are led away—I was going to say led astray—by the volatile clap-trap, for I can call it nothing else, of the member for Albany, they are in duty bound to consider the question as a whole; and, if they do this, they will at once come to the conclusion that it would be the extreme of political idiocy to discard the Government which has carried this colony along so faithfully and well during the last six years, and to prefer the idle promises of the present Opposition. I think that the very worst thing that could happen to the country at the present time would be to find itself plunged into the darkness of a political crisis; and I, for one, will not, by my vote, aid and abet such a calamity. I admit that, with regard to the question of the food duties, I believe that the remission of some, and the abolition of others, would be a good thing for the country; but I would sooner see the reform initiated by a Government which stands well with the country, than by a Government which would be continually fighting for existence, and would be turned out of office before they could even commence many of the reforms which they have no doubt contemplated. We have the promise of the Premier that this matter will be considered early next session; and, under these circumstances, I hope those members who have like views to my own in this matter will vote solidly on this occasion with the Government. With regard to my promise made upon the hustings—

MR. SIMPSON: You need not bother about that.

MR. LYALL HALL: The member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) went out of his way to read a little homily to myself and the member for West Perth (Mr. Wood). I am myself quite satisfied on that score, and any pledges I made on the hustings I am prepared to faithfully carry out.

MR. EWING: It was in regard to the reservation.

MR. LYALL HALL: With regard to the reservation, the proof that my senti-

ments received the approbation of the electors in Perth was borne out by the fact that I was returned to support the Forrest Ministry against the strongest man that the Opposition could bring forward (Mr. S. H. Parker). The hon. member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) talked very glibly about the Government representing a minority. Why, that is the very position of the hon. member himself; because he knows very well that, had it not been for two Ministerial supporters—[A MEMBER: Three]—going to the poll instead of one, he would not now even be representing the minority he does represent. An ounce of practice is always worth a pound of theory; and, if it be the theory of the hon. member that the majority only should be represented, then he should at once retire from the position he now occupies—from the seat which he, under these circumstances, has no longer any right to hold. I shall support the Government in this matter, in the hope that the question of the duties will be considered during the next session, and that they will be considered in a comprehensive manner. I cannot support the amendment at the present time. It has been brought forward in a most irregular way. I hope that the whole question will be considered next session in a comprehensive manner, and to the entire satisfaction of the colony.

MR. WALLACE: I am compelled to rise to address this House, after hearing the remarks of the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) and the member for Perth (Mr. Hall). It appears to me that the debate on the amendment has not been adhered to by members on the Government side of the House. Their desire has been, all through, to dictate to the younger members on this side of the House, the "handful," as the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government was pleased to term them. But the one point that I wish to speak on now is the principle of the protective policy of the Government. As a young member, and an inexperienced one, I am at a loss to clearly understand the policy of the Government. The Premier tells us his desire is to protect all industries; but all I have heard in the House this session goes to show that the agricultural and pastoral industries are protected at the expense of the mining

industry. We have various instances of that. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) has touched on some matters of importance, not only to the working classes and the members of the mining community, but to the whole of the people of the colony, especially in regard to the meat duties. In questioning the principle of the policy of the Government, I would like to learn why it is that, if it is protection to the agriculturists and graziers, who seem to be the pets of the Government, if it is protection to them to impose a heavy duty on dead meat, why is not the same protection given by a higher duty on live stock? I will give you an instance. For years we have been trying in this colony to eradicate all sorts of diseases. This has been, to a very great extent, the cause of bringing down the agriculturists and graziers to the state they are in now. But here, under a protectionist Government, we are allowed to import live stock bringing with them all kinds of diseases. An instance was brought to light the other day of sheep imported into the colony recently, which were discovered to have introduced the tick into this country. If the policy of the Government is to protect every industry, and more especially the farmers and graziers, why is it that they levy such an extortionate duty on dead meat, while the few people in the colony who import the live stock are allowed to bring them in at an almost nominal rate? The Premier has gone very largely into the protection given to the miners, and has dealt with the subject very clearly, to a great extent. There is one matter, however, that I would like to bring under the notice of the right hon. gentleman, and that is that if he feels so kindly towards the miner as he professes to do, and gives him the protection that he is continually telling us he is giving, why does he not protect the miner against the Asiatic class of workers?

THE PREMIER: We have promised to do that. You cannot have read the Governor's Speech.

A MEMBER: You have promised that for years.

MR. WALLACE: As I told the right honourable gentleman during the last short session, I set no value on promises.

THE PREMIER: You must have had a bad sort of people to deal with.

MR. WALLACE: Here we have a Government, a truly paternal Government, who are professing to protect the white portion of the population against all sorts of coloured races, and yet we have instances before us now of their placing the Asiatic on the same level as the white miner by issuing miners' rights to them, and not only that, but going further.

THE PREMIER: Some of your registrars up on the goldfields did that, but they are all dismissed.

A MEMBER: The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) was returned by Chinese voters.

MR. WALLACE: The Government also, to show their kindly protection to this class of people, are at the present moment employers of Asiatic labour.

THE PREMIER: Where is that?

MR. WALLACE: On the Murchison.

THE PREMIER: I do not think the Government employ any Chinese labourers. Oh! he means persons employed by contractors.

MR. WALLACE: I am quite sure of what I am speaking about. The Government at the present time are employing Afghans in the construction of public works, when there are scores of white men looking for work.

THE PREMIER: That is an exaggeration, you know.

MR. WALLACE: I can satisfy the hon. gentleman that what I am speaking about is the truth, and I will endeavour to do that, if possible. In the construction of the telegraph line from Yalgoo to Gullewa, the Government are employing Afghans, and in the construction of the telegraph line from Pindathura to Murgoo, Afghan labour is being employed. That is, I think, sufficient to convince the hon. gentleman that I am speaking the truth. It has been proved long before to-day that white men can conduct camels quite as well as Afghans, and in most cases better. Some hon. gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House—I say some, because the majority of them are agriculturists or graziers—are pitting one class against the other, which is not a desirable state of things. The class we are supporting is a class that is suffering at the hands of the present protectionist Government, and if we sit here and allow them to be treated in the way they are being treated, we are

not worthy to represent them. To further satisfy the Premier as to the protection given to Asiatics, I will refer him to the free list, and he will see that the food stuffs on which the Asiatics can solely live are on the free list. There is another matter which the Premier brought before the House: he asked the question whether the colony should be made the dumping ground for the whole of the other colonies? If we find it is to our advantage, in the development of this colony, to allow this place to be a dumping ground, I say we should allow it to be made a dumping ground. We have here a lot of people who are supporting their families in other colonies, and I do not know whether the Premier referred to these families when he spoke about this colony being a dumping ground for the other colonies.

THE PREMIER: Not at all. I say plainly, why allow other countries to send things in here free, when we cannot send anything back again?

MR. WALLACE: I think if the people of the other colonies have had the same experience as I have had of Western Australian flour, they are very wise in putting a £5 protective duty on it. The feeling of the Government towards the majority of the consumers is clear enough to everybody. As long as the Government can protect the agriculturist, no matter at what cost to the mining population, they will do it. The member for North Murchison (Mr. Kenny), speaking on food duties and on the meat question, reminded the Premier that if the meat ring was responsible for the duties on meat, it would be wise for the Government to compensate that ring so as to have those duties removed. The Government are fostering a monopoly by keeping the duties on meat.

THE PREMIER: The duty is the same in Victoria, strange to say.

MR. WALLACE: If it were not for the importation of dead meat, I think we should fare very badly. It has been said by some hon. members that the meat which is being sold is not of the best quality. I have noticed that the meat coming from the North-West is not of the best quality either. I will not take up the time of the House longer, and I hope before the debate closes to hear something clear as to the policy that the Government intend to adopt—not the half-and-

half policy that is now in existence. Hon. members on the other side of the House will, no doubt, excuse the supporters of the Government in voting in opposition to their pledges.

At 6.25 p.m. the **SPEAKER** left the chair.

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

MR. MORGANS (Coolgardie): Mr. Speaker, In regard to this important question now before the House, I feel, after listening to the able speeches made, that the principal point has been overlooked. From what I can understand, this question is one involving two very important issues. One of these represents the financial side of the question, and the other the economic. So far as I have been able to glean from the debate, most of the hon. members who have addressed the House have directed their attention principally to the financial side. Before proceeding to make any definite remarks on this point, I beg to refer to one or two matters that have cropped up in the course of the debate in reference to the position of certain members of this House who have given definite pledges with regard to their votes on this issue. I like to be frank in all these questions at all times, and I say to this House at once, I was pledged to the hilt to vote in favour of a reduction of the food duties. Had it not been for the changed attitude of the Government—or rather, I will put it in another way and say that, had it not been for the fact that the Premier has to some extent given to the goldfields members a concession upon this point, I should have felt myself compelled, even perhaps against my inclinations, to have recorded my vote against the Government on this occasion. I have also, on more than one occasion, been asked what my politics are. I am sitting on the cross benches, and as I came into this House as the representative of Coolgardie, without pledging my support to either the Government or the Opposition, I look upon myself as an independent member. Some people, and rightly so, feel it is their duty to take a strong position on one side or the other. But I feel that an independent member also occupies a strong position on the cross

benches. At times it is as necessary to put the brake on the Government as it is on the Opposition, and *vice versa*; and I think my friends and myself who sit on the cross benches are in a very good position for applying the brake when necessary. Many members, like myself, are new to this House. I am willing to admit that so far as my knowledge of parliamentary usages is concerned—I will even go further and say that so far as my knowledge of general politics is concerned—I look upon myself as a babe and suckling. There are others who are equally babes and sucklings with myself. I have been told that it is a milk-and-water policy to sit on the cross benches of Parliament. [A MEMBER: Especially water.] Well, I think that if we are babes and sucklings, a judicious mixture of water with our milk is a good thing for all of us. At any rate, I observe that all my honourable friends in this House who are in the habit of paying their tribute to Bacchus, make a judicious mixture of water with their whisky. So far as some of my friends on this side of the House are concerned, I am perfectly certain that very few of them take whisky or water alone. I may say that on one occasion I saw the leader of the Opposition take a little water alone, but it was not more than a tablespoonful. I would now refer to the member for North-East Coolgardie. In his speech he, with withering scorn, turned upon the goldfields members and reminded them of their pledges to their constituents on the hustings. He was, perhaps, perfectly right in doing that, because every honourable member feels himself bound to carry out the pledges he gives. So far as I am concerned, I feel that my obligation and my pledges will have been fulfilled after I have recorded my vote to-night, in consequence of the concession that has been made by the Government. That is equivalent to saying I intend to record my vote in favour of the Government. I did not promise my constituents on the hustings to follow my honourable and esteemed friend, the member for North-East Coolgardie, in all his ways. I came into this House with the intention of following him when I considered he was in the right path, and when I find him there I shall be the first to follow him. I hope he will have the same sentiments in regard to myself, and that I shall find

him following me to-night in this division. When my constituents know all the facts connected with this debate, and have had the opportunity of realising and understanding its purport, they will entirely indorse the position I intend to take this evening. I said in the commencement of my address that this great question, as I understand it, is one having two important sides—the financial and the economic side. If the Government were disposed to relieve the country of the whole of the food duties, they would only have to sacrifice the sum of £176,000. That is a very small sum, especially for a Government who, according to their own showing, are in a state of great financial prosperity. There are, however, other matters in connection with this question which, before the removal of this sum of money from the Estimates, require profound consideration. If the financial side were the only aspect of the question, the duties could easily be removed; because it is not a difficult matter for a Government which has a revenue of upwards of three millions of money to strike off a sum of £176,000, and find some other means of taxing the people in order to make up that amount, providing taxation were necessary. I may say that, if the right hon. gentleman does not see any way of placing a tax upon the products or upon the people of this colony, I believe I can point out one or two very good directions in which he might successfully do this. However, it is not my intention to-night to point out these things, but on some future occasion I hope to have the pleasure of doing so. Now, with regard to the economic side of this question, that involves more points than all other considerations put together. It involves not only the well-being of consumers, but of producers, and therefore the question as it affects these two interests must be considered together and at the same time, and we must arrive at conclusions that are fair to both sides. It could hardly be a fair thing, in view of the fact that the Government of this country have already prepared a budget, to ask them now to re-adjust the proposed system of taxation. This is hardly a time to expect the Government, when they have just made up their accounts, and are about to place them before the

House and before the country, to make such alterations as would be necessitated by a complete change in their fiscal policy. The time I conceive for doing this will be when, at the end of the session the Government, in view of the coming session, will be thinking of re-arranging their budget. Now that we have a definite promise from the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government in reference to the readjustment of those important duties, that will be the time when this alteration should be made. When the time for the fulfilment of that promise arrives I shall be glad, with my hon. friends on this side of the House, to take part in trying to make the best terms with the right hon. gentleman that we possibly can. I think this debate must result in much good, because many important points in connection with the food duties have cropped up that might otherwise have escaped the attention of hon. members on both sides of the House. I think the Government will be able to learn a very valuable lesson from this important debate; and, if there were no other reason than that, I think our thanks would be due to the hon. member, the leader of the Opposition, for having accepted the challenge which the right hon. gentleman so boldly threw down at his feet. The Premier stated distinctly—and I must congratulate the right hon. gentleman in having done so—that he threw the challenge down. Some hon. gentlemen have considered that the hon. the leader of the Opposition threw down the challenge, but that is not so. It was thrown down by the Government, and it has been picked up by the hon. gentleman, the leader of the Opposition, and I am bound to say it has resulted in a very fertile battle. Now there is one other matter in connection with this question, and that is the present financial position of the country. I have studied some returns recently made, and I understand from them that the revenue of this country in three months has decreased to the amount of £25,000. If this be so, that is another reason why the Government should be cautious in dealing with this question of finance; because, if there has been this reduction of £25,000 in the revenue, I am bound to say that the Government are in a serious position. I do not mean to say, when using the word

“serious,” that the position is a dangerous one, but I think the position is temporarily serious for the Government, and therefore they will have to husband all their resources in order to remove themselves from the difficulties in which they must find themselves with regard to finances. The right hon. gentleman has told us that this is not an opportune moment for floating loans. I am quite able to indorse that statement, because I know something of the financial market in London, and the right hon. gentleman is quite right when he tells this House that it is an inopportune moment for floating loans. That might arise from two causes. It might arise from an excess in the amount of loans placed on the market on the part of this Government, or it might arise from another consideration, namely, that the market is not favourable.

MR. LEAKE: It is favourable to South Australia and Queensland.

MR. MORGANS: That may be so, but I think the reason why it is not convenient for us to place a loan on the market at the present time arises from both the facts to which I have just referred.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Canada can place a loan at 2 per cent.

MR. MORGANS: There is an easy answer to the point raised by the hon. member for Central Murchison. The financial strength of Canada is very different from the financial strength of Western Australia. Owing to the greater security that Canada can offer, she may easily be able to borrow money at 2 per cent., but I should think if this colony could borrow money at 3½ per cent. we would be doing very well indeed. If the Government had been able to place a loan, their financial position would have been much stronger, and I should have more heart in asking them to reduce these duties; but they have not been able to do so. It is true that the right hon. the Premier tells us that he has made arrangements for the disposal of Treasury bills, and that is the natural way for a Government to finance, and it is not discreditable to the Government that they are doing so. If the Government are to deal with the question of taxation, it is perfectly clear it will require a considerable amount of their time and attention; and I could not advise the

Government, even if I were sitting on that side of the House and took any part in advising them, to undertake this question of the alteration of the tariff, or of the imposition of further taxation, without a deal of further consideration. It requires time, and between this debate and the date that the next budget will be prepared, I think the Government will have time to give this very important matter the consideration which it deserves, and I hope it may result in much good, and to the entire satisfaction of this side of the House. I am afraid we are exacting on this side of the House—I am myself, and my friends are too—but we are patriotic on this side of the House as well as on the other, and our object is the well-being of the country. I am bound to say that I consider the position taken up by the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government with reference to these food duties is a little inconsistent.

MR. LEAKE : Hear, hear.

MR. MORGANS : The leader of the Opposition says "hear, hear," to my attack on the leader of the Government.

MR. LEAKE : It is not an attack, but an absolute fact.

MR. MORGANS : I am sure the right hon. the Premier will be very glad to hear my reason for saying he is inconsistent. When he made that celebrated speech at Bunbury, which I read with the greatest interest, he said that it was not the object of the Government, in imposing food duties, to get a revenue from them, but to protect the agricultural industry of this colony. Now, I am entirely in accord with that object, and I think and hope a little later on to show that it is quite a right policy to pursue; but now the right hon. gentleman tells us that he wants these duties for revenue.

THE PREMIER : I said, for only this year, at present.

MR. MORGANS : I will accept the explanation of the right hon. gentleman, but until I received that explanation I felt I was right in saying that he was rather inconsistent in the views he expressed on this question. Now, with regard to this point, I would say this : I believe the Government should keep to that protective tariff, for a time, for both these purposes. I believe these duties are required both for revenue and for protection, and I would like to see the

Government—if they intend to take a stand on this question—to take a stand on both these grounds; because I think it more logical to stand on both than to stand only on one. There is another matter in connection with this. I observe that when the Minister for Mines made a speech in the Upper House recently, he took the opposite position entirely, and said he considered it would be a disgrace to this country if we kept these duties on for protective purposes, that we wanted them for revenue only. Now, I still repeat that I consider these duties should be kept on for both purposes—that is, both for revenue and for protection. Now I come to one other point, and that is, the Government, no doubt, will take into consideration their financial position. I am sure they have done so. From what I have seen so far of their way of doing business, I think they have looked carefully into the question of the finances of this country. I believe they have incurred expenditure at rather a rapid rate; but, at the same time, I think we must be prepared to admit that much, if not all, of the expenditure that has been incurred on public works in this colony has been an absolute necessity. A great deal of money has been spent on public works and railways, and for many other purposes. An expenditure has been incurred also, among other things, on the Bunbury harbour. I do not agree with many of my friends on this side of the House who have expressed views adverse to that work. I think it has been undertaken with a good object, and that good results have been attained, and that the same may be said with regard to many other public works. But I would call the attention of the Government to their financial position. I am sure the reduction in the revenue will not continue for long, but the Government should exercise every care and economy in dealing with the finances of this colony for the coming twelve months. There are many aspects to the question of doing away with public works, in a colony of this kind. It is not an easy matter for the Government to suspend all public works, because it means throwing a large number of men out of employment; and in view of the very large number now seeking employment on the goldfields, and I am told also on the coast, it certainly

would be a terrible state of things to find several thousand more thrown on the market. I think we have to take that side of the question also into consideration in dealing with this matter of public works. Public works afford an outlet for a large amount of labour, and the workers of this colony have a very great interest in this question as well as ourselves. My principal electioneering statement was that I desired to see a free breakfast and a free dinner table. I do desire that, and I can only hope that we shall practically arrive at that, at no very distant date, so soon as the agriculturists of this country produce enough at least to sustain the population of the colony.

MR. LEAKE: Would you knock off the duties then?

MR. MORGANS: Not necessarily, but I think some could be taken off at that time. I would not advocate it now. With regard to the economic side of this question, I obtained some returns showing the exact position of the food duties in relation to the export of money from this colony, and I find as near as possible that the total amount of money expended upon foreign food stuffs imported into this colony in 1896 amounted to one and a half millions sterling. Now all this material that is brought into this colony from South Australia, from Victoria, from other colonies, and from other parts of the world, means that a corresponding sum has to go out of the colony to pay for it; and, therefore, looking at this enormous export of money for food which I maintain can be produced in this colony, I say that it is an appalling fact, and one that should almost make the members of this House tremble, especially when we remember that it amounts to nearly half the total revenue of this colony. Now, it is perfectly clear to the mind of every hon. member in this House that every pound that goes out of this colony to another colony, or to any other country, for the purpose of paying for anything that comes here, is one pound lost to this colony and one pound gained by the other.

A MEMBER: What about jarrah timber?

MR. MORGANS: It is the same thing. The money is lost. It may be a question of exchange, a question of barter, but this is an economic fact which

you cannot get away from, that every pound which is sent out of this country to pay for something in another country is a loss of one pound to this country.

A MEMBER: It depends on the circumstances.

MR. MORGANS: No, I do not think it does. The point is this: can this enormous export of money from this country be stopped. I think it can. Surely a colony with so many thousands and tens of thousands of square miles can produce food enough for a population of 160,000 people. If it cannot, then I should say it would be very much better to give up all idea of agriculture and pastoral pursuits in this country, if all these thousands of acres that we have at our disposal cannot produce enough food for our population. If it be so, I am very much mistaken in my estimate of its economic value. We know that at the present time a large amount of stuff is produced in the country, and as far as I can understand it is only a question of increasing the number of acres put under cultivation for supplying the demands of the population. We have only 160,000 people, and why should not this colony feed one million, if necessary? The land is good enough to produce food, for I have seen in various places corn and vegetables growing plentifully, and it is only a question of cultivating the soil in order to do what we desire to see done. Apart from this, you have the pastoral industry, and I have been making inquiries into this important industry, and find the number of cattle is increasing very largely. I was told a few days ago that several stations in the northern part of the colony will, within ten or twelve years from the present time, have each a quarter of a million head of cattle upon them. If this be so, and I see no reason why it should not be, there is every ground for hoping and believing that this colony will and must produce all that is necessary for its population. I do not profess to know much about the agricultural industry, but I have been making inquiries into it, and the remarks I have made will convey what my impressions are. I do not insist upon them as being absolutely correct, but they are impressions carefully formed, and I believe this colony can produce all we require. I will go to another

point that I know something more about, and that is the production of gold in this colony. At the present moment the production of gold here is larger, I am glad to say, than in any other Australasian colony. I think this a very flattering position for the new colony of Western Australia, as a gold producer, to be placed in. After an exploitation of only four years, for that is practically what it means, it now takes the lead of all the colonies on this continent. I, as an adopted son of Western Australia, feel proud of that record, and I think the country may well feel proud also. But what about this gold we are taking out of the country? If we look at the economic side of the question, we find that 85 per cent. of the total production of gold is leaving the colony for good. Looking at it from an economic point of view, I say it is an appalling fact, and the duty of legislators in this colony should be to find some means of remedying what I consider to be the greatest possible evil. We are really removing 85 per cent. of the gold from Western Australia, for the benefit of other colonies and other countries. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] There must be some means found for preventing this enormous loss to the colony. There must be some means found of arresting this enormous export of the treasures of this country. These are the important questions that hon. members of this House must direct their attention to. What is the position of Victoria with regard to the production of gold at the present time? I have not been able to obtain any absolutely reliable statistics with regard to this, but from the statistics I have in my possession, as far as I can understand, the loss of gold to the colony of Victoria is only from 18 to 25 per cent.; that is to say, Victoria is practically keeping within its confines from 70 to 80 per cent. of the gold produced within that colony. Compare the position of Western Australia with that of Victoria in this respect, and what is it? It is a very unfavourable comparison for Western Australia, and a very favourable one for Victoria. It will be for hon. members to decide what is the best means of preventing this terrible outflow of the riches of this colony into the coffers of other countries.

MR. OATS: Keep out British capital.

MR. MORGANS: I do not understand the principle upon which the member for Yilgarn makes that statement.

MR. OATS: Work the mines yourselves, and get the gold, and keep the profit.

MR. MORGANS: British capital has been the means of producing this gold to a very large extent, and I should be sorry to see it kept out of the colony.

MR. OATS: You cannot keep the money in, else.

MR. MORGANS: Of course, it must be clear to the mind of every one looking at the value of the gold that is being exported, that someone is getting the benefit of it. We must find some means of preventing that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You have sold your mines.

MR. MORGANS: That is perfectly true. I would like to explain to the hon. member that one of the great causes of the enormous drain in production of gold in this country is the export of money out of the wages paid for producing the gold, and that is a drain, an export, which I contend we can to a very large extent prevent. I am certain that is so. At any rate, if we are losing 85 per cent. of the gold obtained in this colony, we are not getting more than 15 per cent. of the advantage to the colony. Passing now to another part of this question, that of the total amount of imports into the country, my friend the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) the other night stated, in reference to balances, that the exports and imports showed these balances. Well, to some extent the hon. member is right in that conclusion, although to make his statement complete it would be necessary to take into account the effect of trade balances in order to strike a true balance. But it is a matter of very small importance. The question we have before us is one relating to the duties, and an important point is to see what is the total amount of imports and what is the total amount that is collected upon them. So far as I can understand, the returns of the Government in the year 1896, the total value of imports was £6,500,000, that is without the addition of the duties, and that shows an expenditure of £40 12s. per head of the population. Upon looking through the list of these imports, I came to the conclusion that a very large amount could be saved by producing

within the country, and I should say that if all the resources of this country were properly developed, and taking last year as a standard, at least £4,000,000 value of that importation should be produced in this country. The total amount, as I said, was £6,500,000, and I think that at least £4,000,000 could be produced in this colony with proper attention. If it had been so—which none of us can deny—the colony would have been in a far sounder and better position than it is to-day. How is the wealth of a colony or of a nation calculated? The total wealth of a country depends upon the wealth of the individuals inhabiting that country. The total wealth of the individuals of a country is the total wealth of that country; and if you could take a census to-day of the individual wealth of Western Australia, I am certain that it would bear a very favourable comparison with the wealth of any of the other colonies. That, of course, is easily understood, because it is a new colony; but, at the same time, our object must be to increase the wealth of the colony, and to increase the wealth of each individual member; and I believe it would be the desire of every member of this House to carry that out, if he had an opportunity. I have made some further calculations in reference to this question, and I find that the total value of food-stuffs imported into this country during 1896 was £1,400,000. Now this, worked out, amounts to £8 15s. *per capita*, and if you add to that a duty of £1 2s. *per capita*, it makes a total of £9 17s. *per head* of the population, and, of course, there is about 11 per cent. of that total representing duty. Now, I ask, is this, under the circumstances, an excessive amount for us to pay—that is, including corn and everything else, *minus* alcoholic drinks and narcotics? It does not appear to me, in view of the youth of this colony, that this is a very large sum to pay *per capita*. But then, on the other hand, what has the colony lost by importing all that stuff? If it has not lost entirely: it has at least got rid of £1,400,000 to pay for the stuff. The point that interests us on this side of the House more than any other is whether or not the reduction or removal of these food duties will cheapen the cost of living in this colony. That is coming down to the

essence of the question, and I should like to make a few remarks with regard to it. I myself do not think that it would have that effect to any remarkable degree, but I am perfectly willing to discuss the point, and I find, on going into calculations in reference to it, that the total duty upon food, taking the population at 160,000, is £1 2s. *per head per annum*. Now, after this is brought down to the rate of daily consumption, it amounts to an impost of three farthings *per head per day*. I cannot conceive, nor do I believe my hon. friend on this side (Mr. Illingworth) would attempt to prove, that the removal of this small amount of impost would for one moment induce anybody to come to this colony to live. Of course, it is to our advantage if they do come, and I have said that I should like to see a free breakfast and free dinner table; but now I am discussing another view of the question. I say I do not believe that the taking off these duties would induce men to come to the colony. If a man were to go to one of the other colonies, and enter into conversation with a miner who desired to come here, and tell him that food duties amounting to three farthings *per head per day* had been removed, I do not think this fact would be any inducement for him to come here. There must be some other reason; and I am strongly impressed with the belief that it is not the question of the food duties which makes living difficult and expensive here. We must look further for the reason of this. What are the principal reasons for the expense of living here? Nearly every member has an explanation for it, but for my own part I do not believe that you can give any one cause as a clear explanation of the circumstances. It arises from many causes, and one of the causes, so far as the goldfields are concerned, is the great difficulty of obtaining water. I know my friend the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) will tell me I have water on the brain. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: No, I won't.] But, however that may be, I can assure hon. members that one of the greatest drawbacks to the settlement of population on the goldfields is the want of water. There is one other point which is being discussed in this House, the question of high rents; and there is no doubt rents are very excessive in this country. I may say that

in Bayley Street, Coolgardie, the main street, land is being let at the present time for ten shillings per foot per week. That amount is almost equal to the value of land in the centre of the city of London, and when you take into account the enormous expenses in rates and rent for the use of land for a business, also the cost of house rent, the extra cost of assistance and so on, the retailers on the fields are justified to a very large extent in charging some of the prices they do, because their expenses are enormous. But I would now like to ask some of my friends in this House to explain to me how it is there is such an enormous difference between the wholesale value of foods on the coast, and the retail value even in Perth, but particularly on the goldfields? I believe my friend, the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), could throw some light on this question, if we could only draw him; but we will try to see whether it is possible to trace any connection between combinations and the price of articles on the goldfields.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Now you have got it.

MR. MORGANS: If we look at this question—and I desire to do so from an absolutely independent and fair point of view—we are bound to see, before proceeding with the inquiry, that the shortness of supply has something to do with the cost of goods. It is a perfectly clear proposition that, if a man has a hundred pairs of boots for sale, and he has only fifty buyers, he will sell his boots at a low price; but if he has a hundred pairs of boots and two hundred buyers, the chances are he will get very good prices indeed; and that principle applies to the question of supplies upon the goldfields, to a very large extent. I do not wish to constitute myself a champion of my good friends upon the coast, because they have some worthy champions here, and I will confine myself more or less to the question of the goldfields. Now my hon. friend, the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest)—and, by the way, I would like to say I have had the pleasure in the last few days of taking a trip to the goldfields with him—I must state to this House that my hon. friend has an absolute dread of frozen meat. He walked through the streets of Coolgardie for the purpose

of seeing if he could spot the frozen carcase of a sheep in that town: but I am glad to tell you he was unable to do so. And I am also glad to tell you he came back to Perth without having his nerves too severely shocked. But I have conversed with my hon. friend upon this important question, and he told us in the House the other night that the wholesale price of the meat was 4½d. per lb. If this be so, how is it possible that the retailers charge for this meat, in Coolgardie, at the rate of 10d. to 1s. 1d. a lb.? This is a conundrum I wish to see solved; and I do sincerely hope my friend, the Member for West Kimberley, will enlighten us upon this important subject.

A MEMBER: That is one of the secrets of the trade.

MR. MORGANS: I desire my hon. friend to understand that I am open to conviction upon this question.

MR. A. FORREST: I thought I had convinced you long ago.

MR. MORGANS: Now there is something anomalous in this fact, that here you can get meat at wholesale prices for 4½d. a pound, and we have to pay 10d. or 1s. for it on the goldfields. [A MEMBER: Sixpence at Menzies.] Yes, it is 6d. at Menzies; but then that meat does not come from Fremantle, but comes from the Murchison. Seeing that mutton is being sold at Menzies for 6d. a pound, it is strange to me that we have to pay 10d. or 1s. for it in Coolgardie, which is a hundred miles nearer. This brings me to the question of frozen meat.

A MEMBER: What about the price of whisky on the goldfields?

MR. MORGANS: I am coming to the whisky directly. I tackled this question first because my hon. friend, Mr. A. Forrest, is present. We know pretty well what the price of mutton is, and beef is still dearer; and this leads us to the question of frozen meat. I am willing to admit that I have no regard for frozen meat—at least, I should prefer a piece of fresh meat, if I had to eat it myself. But there are many people who do not agree with me in this view, and there are many on the goldfields who would be only too glad if they had an opportunity of buying frozen meat at anything like a fair price. The Government, rightly or wrongly—I am not sufficiently well informed to give a definite opinion upon

this—have certainly made a considerable difference in this colony between the position of frozen meat and that of live meat. There is a considerable difference in the tax on the two articles, and also a difference in the railway freights. Perhaps, when one of the members of the Government replies, he will be able to throw some light on this important subject, and I am most desirous of obtaining information upon it, because I do not think it is right for us to do anything to prejudice the live-meat trade in this colony, and certainly the live-meat trade is the means of leaving more money in the colony than the traffic in frozen meat. It had other advantages in many ways. The only thing I desire to see done is to give the frozen meat a chance—that it should be more or less on the same basis as fresh meat. I do not desire that it should have any advantage in any way, but it should rest more or less on the same basis. I am aware that there are certain expenses in connection with the importation of live stock into this country which are not incurred in respect of dead meat; but all I desire is, that a fair incidence of taxation or duty shall be placed upon those two products, and that one shall not be given any advantage over the other. If we can come to that happy point, I think everybody will be satisfied.

MR. HOLMES: What about the "fifth quarter," in the case of those people who send frozen meat here?

MR. MORGANS: I really do not know anything about the trade. I am simply giving you the facts as I understand them. However, it matters little what view I may take of this important question, but we must all agree that it is the duty of this House to render the cost of living on those fields as cheap as it is possible to make it. That is our clear and bounden duty. At the same time we must not, in doing that, tread on the toes of the agriculturists and pastoralists too heavily: we must do a fair thing between both of those interests, and then I am satisfied that everybody on the goldfields will be content. With regard to the production of this country, there are certain things that cannot be produced with advantage unless the price is very heavy. The hon. member for North-East Coolgardie gave us some statistics the other night in regard to wheat production in

this country. The price must have been very high, or the wheat would not have been produced. In 1895 a friend of mine, who has a large farm, cropped 3,000 acres of wheat and fed it all to his cattle, because at that time wheat was selling at 3s. per quarter in London, and it paid him better to feed it to his cattle. These are questions of market values and market rates, and this colony cannot control them. No one can be blamed because flour is £19 10s. per ton at the present time. [A MEMBER: £13.] Well, whatever it is, no one can be blamed for it; it is a question of market rates. Flour is as dear in Adelaide as it is here, *minus* the duty and the freight. It is a question of prices only. I do not anticipate that this will ever be a grain-growing country for export. [A MEMBER: Why not?] Because I do not think the farmers will ever be able to compete with the farmers of California and the United States: the advantages of farming are much more favourable there. If they do produce sufficient, I shall be only too glad; it is a thing I should like to see; but if they do produce sufficient grain for export, I look on it as a very unprofitable business to follow. Referring to my hon. friend again, the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie, I am bound to say I regretted to hear him, I cannot say attack, but speak unkindly of, the old residents in this colony in his speech. I do not agree with him in any way. The old residents in this colony deserve a great deal of credit for doing what they have done; at least, personally, I thank them for having opened the arms of hospitality to myself. They have received us all very nicely and kindly in this colony, and I am perfectly certain not one of them ever asked us to come here. We have come of our own accord, and we can leave whenever it suits us. I do not believe the West Australians will object, or say a word one way or the other. They have said to us, "Come, if you like, occupy our lands, take charge of our mines, and be one of us." What can the inhabitants of Western Australia say more than that? [Mr. VOSPER: On their own terms.] Their terms are very satisfactory, as far as I am concerned. I think we have been well received in this country. It has been more than once a matter of regret to me that there has been

a desire to speak thoughtlessly, and sometimes unkindly, of the old inhabitants of this colony. I regret this, and I do not think it is good policy. As we have come here and have been received kindly, we must throw in our lot with them, and do all we can to help them, providing we can do so. [A MEMBER: Shoulders to shoulder.] I do not think we have any greater share of intelligence than the Western Australians—at least, I do not arrogate to myself any more intelligence, and as long as we are in this colony we should treat the West Australians with every respect and consideration. I am now coming to a point upon which some of my friends say I am mad, and that is the Coolgardie water supply. I will not detain the House many minutes more. I have only taken one hour and five minutes. In regard to the water scheme, I may say, when reading the Governor's Speech I felt disappointed, because I thought my right hon. friend the Premier had cooled off on the question. I am glad, on further conversation with him, to know that nothing of the kind has taken place; but that he intends to go on with this scheme as quickly as possible, and to carry it out as soon as he can. It was a great relief to me, and a great relief to my constituents when I told them this. If the scheme is not carried out, disaster must come to some extent on the goldfields. The position of the water question on the goldfields is one that merits the earnest attention of this House, because it is an important one to the inhabitants.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Is Coolgardie the only goldfield?

MR. MORGANS: I am as much interested in the Murchison as in Coolgardie, and anything that I may say which will contribute to the happiness of the people of the Murchison, or anything that I can assist my friend in carrying out for the benefit of the Murchison, I will do. But I am speaking now of the population reached by the water scheme. If the hon. member for Central Murchison desires to give any of his constituents water, I shall be happy to support him, and if he places any scheme before this House it should receive the best consideration and loyal support of hon. members. The position of the people on

the goldfields of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie and all the districts reached by this great water scheme is this. The tax per head per annum for water varies from £25 to £37. This may seem an astonishing fact, but I have carefully calculated the statistics as to the consumption of water and the cost on the fields, and this is as near the truth as I can get. This is twenty times the amount of the food duties; and I feel it is a far more vital question for the Government to deal with than the reduction of the food duties. Personally, if all the economic questions that could come before Parliament for their consideration or support on my behalf rested entirely on my own views, I would sacrifice every other question in order to support this water scheme, because I consider it of much greater importance. The other colonies have far greater advantages over us in regard to mining. They have plenty of water, and they can live more cheaply. If the Government can carry out its promise and give the goldfields the water as soon as possible, I am sure the population of the goldfields will quadruple within a reasonable time. The gold production can be very largely increased by the introduction of water, and I can assure the House that at Coolgardie alone—which is ruled over by the respected warden, Mr. Finnerty—if they had a good supply of water, the fields would be capable, in a short time, of putting out 100,000ozs. of gold per month. If this is so—and I am positive in my figures and statements—that alone, if no other field had to be served, would justify the Government in carrying water to the field. Then we have the great mining centre of Kalgoorlie, where to-day the mines in actual operation are short of water. The Lake View is carting water, and the Associated Mines have stopped their battery for want of water. The consensus of opinion on the goldfields is that the water supply of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie will give out within a short time. I believe that, and for that reason I would urge the Government not to lose one moment in initiating this important scheme and in carrying it to a final issue and to success. I am sure that the advance of these great goldfields, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Broad Arrow, Menzies, Bardoc, and further

distances, depend to a large extent on the carrying out of this important water scheme. There has been some opposition to this scheme, and it has been a mystery to me since the Premier has brought under my notice certain facts in regard to that opposition. I have not been able to find any satisfactory explanation for the opposition. I can understand gentlemen on the coast objecting to the water scheme, but I cannot understand anyone on the goldfields objecting to it. When a Government such as we have proposes to give us 1,000 gallons of water for 3s. 6d. for which we are now paying £5 to £7, it is more than a mystery to me to understand how an inhabitant of the goldfields can oppose the scheme. I say distinctly that it is discreditable to the inhabitants of the goldfields to oppose the water scheme under any consideration whatever. It is discreditable because the Government desire to do a great good for us, and to liberate us from our difficult position; and in doing that they are doing the greatest good they can to the goldfields. I have been, still am, and I hope always shall be, a strong supporter of this great water scheme. If it be not carried out within reasonable time, the production of gold on the fields will not go on increasing as it has done in the past. If the water scheme is gone on with, the production will increase more rapidly than it has done in the past four years. The hon. member for Yilgarn is opposed to the water scheme. I cannot see any reason for his opposition, but I am perfectly certain his opposition is legitimate, and that he is opposed to it on conviction. One of the strongest arguments the hon. member brought to bear, in opposing this water scheme, was that he was able to live for six weeks at Southern Cross without washing himself. I do not think that is any legitimate reason why the water scheme should not be carried out. I contend that it would be more convenient for him to wash himself three or four times a day, than to go six months without washing. A bath on the goldfields at the present time costs a good deal. The hon. member for West Kimberley, who visited Coolgardie a few days ago, tells us that he was obliged to pay 5s. for two shower baths. No doubt it is possible to get a bath at a cheaper rate than that, but at

the same time a bath is an expensive item on the goldfields. If the Government carry out their obligations to the goldfields, they will commence at once with the water scheme; and I should like to hear some statement from the Premier as to when the Government intend to commence this important work. I can assure the House that there is a lively interest taken in this important question on the goldfields, and the championship of the scheme by the Premier has done more to gain him political friends in that part of the country than anything else he has ever done. The Premier has now a strong hold on the goldfields. Perhaps my friends on the Opposition side of the House will be sorry to hear that, but I must say that the position of the Government has been materially strengthened on the goldfields in consequence of the proposed water scheme. Every day this water question is growing in importance, and every day the inhabitants of the fields are, probably, taking a greater interest in it. I will not take up the time of the House any longer. So far as I am concerned—and I believe I express the sentiments of the people of the important constituency of Coolgardie—I believe all the interests of this colony are mutual. We desire to work hand-in-hand with the agricultural interest, the pastoral interest, and every other interest in this country. We desire to work for the general good of the public and of the colony, and I am only too glad to convey this message of peace to this House, on behalf of my constituency.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What does your support cost?

MR. MORGANS: The food duties mean £1 2s. per head, perhaps.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The cost of your support is two and a half millions.

MR. MORGANS: The cost of my support is nothing—absolutely nothing. The water scheme will pay for itself, and will involve the Government in no financial difficulties or expense whatever; therefore my support of the Government costs nothing. However, our sentiment is that we should work in unison, and do all the good we can for each other—work for the general and best interests of the colony, and all endeavour to make Western Australia one of the brightest jewels in the imperial diadem.

MR. DOHERTY (North Fremantle) : I have a grievance against an hon. member of this House, but I shall not follow the tactics of the Premier, who first subjected his enemy to the lash, and afterwards disclosed his name. I prefer to disclose the name at once. The hon. member to whom I refer occupies a seat on the Ministerial side of the House—in short, he is no other than the right hon. the Premier himself. My grievance against the Premier is that, although I have taken a great interest in the subject now before the House, and have studied up my points, I find that, in fact after fact and figure after figure, the Premier has forestalled me and left me stranded. I had made up my mind not to speak on this subject, but the electors of North Fremantle said it was my duty to express my opinion. They told me I was their representative, and I can fairly say I represent their bone and sinew, and I may also say that I represent the intelligence of that constituency. On the hustings, I promised the working men I would support the policy of the Government—the policy of protection. I am a protectionist, and always shall be, and that is what the people of North Fremantle wish me to be. And for what reason? They know perfectly well I will protect the industries which provide them work. They prefer to hear the hammers of prosperity ringing in the shipyards, and the hum of the spinning wheel and of the shuttle in the factory producing broad cloth from our natural product, wool. They know that those sounds mean the bringing up in this colony of a class of wealth-producing artisans. I know a good deal has been done by the Government for a certain class of workers in Western Australia, by the removal of the duties on mining machinery. I absolutely disagree with that policy. I think we should, in order to encourage local industry, have a duty on mining machinery. I object to large orders for this class of machinery going to a neighbouring colony—a state of things which means that our working people are losing over £4,000 a week. It is criminal that we should allow every article we want to be sent here from another colony. One hon. member (Mr. George), who is a good authority on mining and mining machinery, tells me that it is very difficult

for people in his line of business to get on, and that he is very much worried indeed. I think I am not betraying his confidence when I say that the other day he told me he employed a man and a boy, and that he intended to take the man into partnership, and he would arrange to look after the boy. I must say my sympathies are with that boy. I hope we shall see the time when that hon. member will have 100 departments, and 100 men in each department. I would like to read to hon. members the following extract from a *Morning Herald* interview with Mr. R. Teece, general manager of the Australian Mutual Provident Society, who recently visited this colony :—

Perth has grown enormously, but the houses are not to be regarded as desirable structures, in many cases. There is no drainage, and the sanitary arrangements are wretched; in fact, the sanitation at Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie is far ahead of that of Perth, probably owing to the more brainy, progressive men whom the goldfields have attracted. Hotel accommodation at the goldfields is equal to that provided in any of our provincial towns; not, of course, equal to the best in Sydney or Melbourne, but first rate, nevertheless. And water, which was unobtainable a couple of years ago, may now be had—a bath costing 2s., double the price of a drink. Rents are high, as may be supposed. A house rented at 15s. a week in Sydney would cost about £2 in Perth; in fact, rents are so high that the capital cost is paid in four or five years.

One of the causes of the high cost of living, we all admit, is the rent, but there is another cause which prevents an increase of population, and the result of which is the sending away of £80,000 per month. The fact is that men are afraid to bring their families here because we have not a decent system of sewerage. The Government should take this matter in hand at once. If we had a proper system of sewerage it would bring population here, and keep healthy the people who are here already, and would also give employment to surplus labour. Now is the time the sewerage work should be carried out; and if the Government will not take that in hand, why not give the Municipal Councils of Perth and Fremantle power to borrow money in the home market for the purpose? If population were brought, prosperity must follow. Figures cannot possibly tell us whether a population is contented or happy. The whole *cruz* of the question as to whether the Government is good or bad is the con-

dition of the people. If you have a contented, happy people settled in a rational way, you have good government; but if the people are discontented and uneducated, we naturally say "There is bad government." I ask any member of the Opposition whether he can say we have a discontented people in Western Australia. Anyone who takes the trouble to go down the streets of the city will see about the best-dressed, happiest-looking labouring people and artisans in the world. A good deal has been said about the "meat ring." I think there is a good deal of "Mrs. Harris" about this particular cry. There is an old saying that wherever there is smoke there is fire. The member for West Perth (Mr. Wood) has told us he knows every house in Perth, and I would gladly join with him in an endeavour to discover the oppressors of the people to whom reference has been made. It would be a good thing if we could only discover those oppressors. We would be like Diogenes, only we would want two lanterns instead of one. No doubt every hon. member has received a letter or circular from one Clu Lee, in reference to the meat trade. That gentleman cannot possibly have understood there was an Alien Bill in the wind, or he would not have given so much publicity to his name. When I read his note, I thought of those lines by Bret Harte—

For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinese is peculiar.

No doubt Clu Lee makes out a very good case. He says the monetary advantage in favour of live stock would amount to £60,000. May I tell hon. members that, taking his figures as 100,000 head of sheep at 6s., and 10,000 head of cattle at £4, the freight would amount to £70,000, but some men would go round and charter a vessel which would carry the stock for £10,000 less. That makes a difference of £60,000, which profit goes to the shipper in another colony. How many hands does he employ to distribute this amount? One or two—two to distribute the whole lot. Now, what is the case in the firm to which I belong? We have to pay £40,000 a year in wages as against £300 which he would pay. Is it not better that we should have some advantage, than that the trade should go

to the other colonies? Are we going to protect South Africa or New South Wales? No, it is our bounden duty to protect the people who are living here. The district of Kimberley to-day sends down from eight to ten thousand head of cattle. To whose energy was that due? To that of Western Australia. Does not our own country require protection? Certainly. I do not intend to take up the time of the House, but I must reply to the member for North Perth (Mr. Oldham). The pathetic appeal which that hon. member made to the House at the end of his address almost brought tears to my eyes. The hon. member drew a striking picture of the prophet Elijah turning his face to the East three times a day, and compared the position of the prophet with that of the people in this colony, whose faces are invariably, according to him, turned towards the East. I am not a biblical student myself, but I have consulted a gentleman who is an authority on that subject, and he says that it was Daniel who had his face turned towards the East, and not Elijah. Then one member brought in the patriarchs, on the question of frozen meat, but what the patriarchs had to do with frozen meat I am still unable to understand. They had in their time, no doubt, a great deal of difficulty to live, and, when they had not sufficient of their own, they made a desperate rush on their neighbours, and secured all they could get. There is only one patriarch whom I know of who has anything to do with Western Australia, and he was put on to the water department. He went to the goldfields, and telegraphed to headquarters that "they made a way in the wilderness, and a river in the desert." One patriarch is enough in this country. I am sorry that the hon. member for East Perth is such a bird of passage. I heard his speech, but I am still in doubt what it really meant. A diagnosis of his case would show something like this: "I am, I am not. I would, I would not. I will vote, I will not. I will pair." I remember, with delight, some time ago hearing the hon. member address a large audience of working men. All the little shoemakers in town attended that meeting, at which he discoursed on protection. I wish he was plucky enough to come over to our side, where he might do some good. If he

took a serious view of the question. I think he would make a good member on this side of the House. I did not intend to say anything about the hon. member for South Fremantle, but he really asked me to. There is a unanimity about the members for Fremantle which I like: they all try to get as much money as possible out of the Government. The hon. member for South Fremantle said, "If you want anything from the Government, ask three times for it." If the hon. member got his way, there would be no surplus at all. It would all go to Fremantle. He went to the Government with a request containing 22 different items, one being for a road 42 miles long. Altogether, the money that he asked the Government to expend on behalf of Fremantle would have totalled up more than the two and a half millions required for the Coolgardie water scheme. I should not think that the Government would have much of a surplus, if they gave the Fremantle members all they asked. The hon. leader of the Opposition, in his own peculiar style, told us that the farmer would eat anything. I was told by someone in York that lawyers could swallow anything. There was a case there in which they swallowed a whole estate. The hon. leader of the Opposition also told us that the farmers did absolutely nothing: they were a bad lot.

MR. LEAKE: I do not think I said that.

MR. DOHERTY: You said they would not produce.

MR. LEAKE: I said they do not produce enough to feed us.

MR. DOHERTY: When I was in York I was shown the Leake estate, and I was told that the owner of that property did nothing with it, and that it was closed up.

MR. LEAKE: It does not belong to me. I have not got any interest in it.

MR. DOHERTY: The estate bears your name, anyhow. I have only one more gentleman to deal with, the hon. member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing). I regard him as a particular friend of mine. Outside this House he is one of my friends, but when he gets into his seat here I hardly know him: he is a lion in the House and a lamb outside of it. It is probable that, before the Federal Convention meets again, there will be a vacancy among the delegates, and I re-

commend the member for the Swan to fill it. There is said to be a lion in the path. Could we not send our lion to Melbourne, where he might be able to do some good? I notice that the member for North-East Coolgardie complained of the manner in which the duties were levied. I do not know if he is a pupil of the hon. member for South Fremantle, but there is no one knocks more frequently at the Treasury door than that hon. member (Mr. Vosper). Day after day you see in the papers that "Our intelligent member, Mr. Vosper, has got £500 for a school, and £800 for a road, and £500 for an institute."

MR. VOSPER: That shows I attend to my business.

MR. DOHERTY: You take the money from the farmer, and spend it on the miner. The other day the hon. member went to the Government with a telegram from Kanowna, saying that the population was increasing at the rate of 200 a day owing to the new find of gold, that the tucker was running out, and that there was not a drop of whisky in the place, and they wanted £500 to cope with the difficulty. (General laughter.) Their difficulty was the whisky. I will now bring my few remarks to a close. It is my wish that the Government will not fulfil their promise next session of reducing any of the duties. If they do, I shall vote against them. I think these duties are a necessity, and I think the country would, one and all, vote that we should help our local industries, and give every advantage we can to Western Australia, and to the people who live here.

MR. WILSON (the Canning): I have listened with considerable amusement to the remarks and the contribution of the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty), and the connection his remarks have with the subject before this House, the policy of the food duties, I cannot perceive. There is one thing however that appears to me very patent, and that is his advocacy of his own profit for his own industry. I do not consider this most important subject from the standpoint of Messrs. Connor & Doherty, or that of Messrs. Forrest, Emanuel & Co. I want, if possible, to consider the question from the point of view of the people of this colony. The question has been approached

from many different sides. Hon. members have taken it up as a matter of freetrade *versus* protection, but I do not think it is a question, at this juncture, of freetrade *versus* protection. It seems to me that is a matter which we will, without doubt, have to fight out later on, unless federation should step in and settle the question for us. To my mind, this most important question of the abolition of the food duties is a matter of policy as to whether we can, by abolishing these duties, benefit the people of the colony; whether we can attract a larger population to our shores, and by that means increase our revenue and increase the prosperity of the colony. I wish to take this matter into very careful consideration, without dragging in any side issues as to cheap water *versus* cheap food, as to public crushing batteries or cheap food. The two matters are not analogous, and I do not think it is necessary for us to discuss the Coolgardie water scheme or the public batteries proposed by the Premier, in connection with this question of the food duties. We would all assist in obtaining cheap water, and I venture to say the members sitting on this (the Opposition) side of the House are equally as willing to assist the people on the gold-fields to get cheap water as are members on the other side of the House. But I may say this much, that it is not our idea to go about it in the same way as the Forrest Ministry are going about it. I propose to view this question from two standpoints. First of all, we are all agreed that all taxation, all Customs duties, can be justified only for two purposes, namely, to raise revenue or to protect local industries; but further, if we admit, for the sake of argument, that these duties are justifiable for the purpose of raising revenue or for protecting our local industries, I would like also to view the question from the standpoint as to whether they are equitable and such as can be fairly charged, in comparison with other duties in our customs tariff. So far as I am concerned—and I have thought this matter carefully over—we are not justified in taxing the food which is not being produced in the colony at the present time, we are not justified in taxing the food of the masses for the purpose of raising revenue, because we happen to have, as the Premier

has told us, an enormous surplus of over £300,000. Why the Premier should wish to grasp all he can in the shape of revenue, I fail to see. He says we must have every sixpence of revenue we can possibly get, and I think he is also backed up by my friend the Director of Public Works, who stated the other day that we required every sixpence of revenue for carrying on the public works of the colony. I am totally opposed to that policy. I say we are not justified in raising revenue on food duties for the purpose of having permanent public works in this country, and I think that is confirmed by the publicly expressed opinion of the Minister of Mines. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) made a quotation from the public statement of the Minister of Mines, but I regret to say he misquoted that Minister's remarks. [MR. MORGANS: I am sorry for that.] The words of the Minister of Mines were as follow:—"Referring to the food duties, if these duties were for revenue purposes only, I admit that they would be indefensible." Therefore the Minister of Mines is directly opposed to his colleagues in this House on that matter. They wish to continue the food duties for the purpose of raising revenue, whereas the Minister of Mines, representing the Government in the other House, says such a course would be indefensible. I think that is strong testimony in support of my argument that we do not require these duties for the purpose of raising revenue. The Premier says he wants every sixpence of revenue he can possibly raise in order to carry out public works. When the member for Albany mentioned the huge surplus in the revenue this year, over £300,000, I think the Premier interjected that the surplus would be absorbed, or almost was absorbed, in the Estimates of the current year's expenditure. I can quite understand the Premier's capacity for spending. His capacity for spending is enormous and unbounded, and if he had a surplus of a million I quite believe he would be equal to the occasion, and would provide for it in his expenditure for the following year; but that is not the purposes to which we ought to put our surplus revenue. We ought to consider the position of the people, as to whether it is possible to remove any of their burdens;

and I say the Government can put a surplus to no better purpose than that of reducing at the present time the duties on the food which everybody consumes, and which is not being produced in the colony. As far as I am concerned, I would far rather see a small deficit than this enormous surplus which we have from year to year. If the Forrest Government had a small deficit, it would make them more cautious, and would probably stop some of the extravagant and wasteful works which are carried on here. It would be a safeguard to the people, and a safeguard to all the commerce of the colony. The next question we have to consider is whether these duties are required for the purpose of protection. Do the duties foster production? No matter what may be said or what argument advanced to show that we can produce these articles of daily consumption, the fact remains, and it is standing out plainly, that we are not producing them. Therefore, how can it be argued that the duties are fostering the trade which they are intended to protect? Take, for instance, wheat. This is an article which has been discussed very freely, and I think I can speak with some good authority on the subject, for I have, during the last two years, been connected with, I think, the only flour-mill which has worked continuously in the colony; and, so far as I have been able to learn, all the farmers in the country did not produce sufficient wheat to keep our little mill running even six months out of the twelve. The argument which has been so strongly advanced by many hon. members, that the consumers, the people of the colony, will not feel the benefit of these duties even though they be abolished, is wrong—absolutely wrong; for as it is a well known fact, acknowledged the world throughout, that the consumer always pays the duties; then, whatever taxes are imposed must be borne essentially by the consumer. If that is so, it is a logical consequence that, if you abolish this tax, the consumer must ultimately get the benefit. [A MEMBER: The middleman gets it.] No; the middleman may derive a benefit for a short time until he gets rid of his stock, but ultimately the consumer must get the full benefit of the duty you remit. If 1½d. per lb. on fresh meat, which is imposed in this colony, were taken off to-

morrow, the consumer would get the benefit of it, with the profit that has been put on it also. We must all join together to prevent the wages earned in this country from leaving our shores. We must all combine for the purpose of attracting population, and so increasing our revenue. I say the best protection we can give to our farmers is to extend and increase their local market, and not to tax articles they are not producing, and which they themselves are consuming. Without wearying the House with a large quantity of figures, my friend, the Minister of Education, referred to duties, and his argument was that all industries ought to be, and so far as I can gather are, on an equal footing with regard to our fiscal policy. I join issue with him, and am prepared to prove that is not so, for the articles which we consume daily on our breakfast and dinner tables are taxed far and away beyond any other articles which are produced in this colony.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: The articles I mentioned.

MR. WILSON: Well, I will take the articles the Minister mentioned. First of all he mentioned clothing and drapery, also furniture, and I think he mentioned boots and shoes. He also referred to biscuits, which certainly are a food product. As to the duty on clothing and drapery—and I have spent some time in considering this matter, and believe my figures are confirmed by those of the Minister of Education—the duty on clothing is from 12 to 15 per cent.; the duty on furniture, I think, is 20 per cent. *ad valorem*; on boots and shoes I make it to be 19 per cent., the same as the hon. gentleman did. Taking it all round, the duties on these articles, also on luxuries, and pretty well on every other article except food, amount to from 10 to 20 per cent., which anyone can verify by consulting the tariff. Let us compare these duties with those which are imposed on the food imported into the colony. On live cattle we paid, during 1896, a duty equal to 30 per cent.; on pigs, 14 per cent.; on sheep, 20 per cent.; an average duty on live stock imported for slaughter of 27½ per cent. We also paid on fresh and frozen meat 71¾ per cent.; on salt beef and pork, 42 per cent.; on tinned and preserved meats,

15 per cent.; on butter, which ought to be produced at Bunbury but is not, 18 per cent.; on bacon, 45 per cent.; on cheese, $37\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; on raisins and currants, 117 per cent.; on potatoes, another product which ought to be produced at Bunbury, we paid 25 per cent.; on onions, 14 per cent.; on flour, 15 per cent.; on honey, 49 per cent.; on eggs, 18 per cent.; and I am indebted to the Minister of Education for the figures as to biscuits, the duty on which he says is 36 per cent. How can anyone say for one moment that all our industries are protected on an equal footing? Why, the thing is absurd! The articles which we are consuming, which we are using daily, and which, mind you, are not produced in this country to-day, are being taxed at two and three times the rate at which other industries are protected. It is good neither for the farmers nor for the consumers that this state of affairs should continue to exist.

THE PREMIER: It is only temporary—10d. per week.

MR. WILSON: It does not matter whether it is 10d. or not. The figures here cannot be disproved.

A MEMBER: You have not proved them.

MR. WILSON: I got them from the returns which are provided for members of this House. I challenge you to find that my figures are wrong. The next argument is that the farmers want these duties.

MR. VOSPER: These percentages do not raise prices, of course!

MR. WILSON: Of course not— $71\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. on does not raise the price! I represent, sir, a constituency—and I am proud to represent it—which is, as I may call it, semi-agricultural and semi-metropolitan. I have a number of farmers in my constituency; and I venture to say, for the information of hon. members on the opposite side of the House, that the farmers are not averse to these food duties being removed. The right hon. the Premier admits that public opinion is in favour of the reduction of these duties. Then why should not we have the duties removed forthwith? Do it at once. We have no time to lose in this important matter. It is an undoubted fact that our population, which has been flowing to these shores by thousands per month, is now dropping off. During the last month, I think, or the month of August,

there was an increase of only some 900 souls instead of 3,000, according to the right hon. the Premier's calculations; therefore we must tackle this important question forthwith, and I say it will not bear putting off until next session. If it is advisable to remove these duties early in the next session, as the Premier has promised to do, is it not even more so to do it now? I cannot for a moment understand the plea of want of time. It appears to me that it is want of heart, not want of time. If they have decided that we are right in our contention that the people of the colony demand this reduction in these duties or their abolition, why not give it to them at once, instead of putting it off for another six or nine months? Before leaving the matter of the tariff entirely, I should like, sir, to compare, for a few moments, the fresh meat duties with those on live stock. I cannot conceive a more unfair, a more unjust, and a more iniquitous tax than this on fresh meat, equal to $71\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. Look at it from every aspect—take it from any point of view that you will—there is no satisfactory answer as to why this enormous difference should be. If this enormous difference is required for revenue purposes, then, according to the Minister for Mines, it is indefensible. It cannot protect the pastoralists, because the 2s. 6d. duty on live sheep and the 30s. duty on bullocks limit the protection that the pastoralists can get, so that it appears to me that we can only conclude that the duty on frozen or fresh meat is there for the purpose of prohibition, to prevent dead meat being admitted into this country at all, and is for the benefit of the wholesale butchers. Take it in another aspect. When frozen mutton is imported into this colony *minus* the small goods and *minus* the skins, which I understand have an average value of at least 2s. 6d. all the year round, the importer of a live sheep gets this amount of increased value over frozen mutton, which is equal to the whole duty on the live sheep. When you take this into consideration, you can only come to the conclusion that, if the frozen mutton were admitted absolutely free, and the duty retained on the small goods and skins, the two industries would then be nearly on an equal footing. I think that goes without any further comment. It is wrong to the people. I am not advocating

any individual firm. I do not care about the Frozen Meat Company or Mr. Clu Lee, whom Mr. Doberty has referred to. I am now looking at it, as far as I am able, from the standpoint of the consumers—the people in this country; and I say it is not justifiable, and that these duties should be removed forthwith. Before I sit down, sir, I should like to refer to the very heated remarks of the right hon. the Premier when addressing this House, in reference to the leader of the Opposition and to his followers. It appeared to me, right through the right hon. gentleman's address, that he was advocating a very bad case indeed; because it is a well-known fact that, when a man has a bad case, he descends to abusing his opponents. Over and over again the right hon. the Premier has attempted to discredit members on this side of the House by referring to them, with scorn, as "the leader of the Opposition and his two or three supporters," and by stating that, if the Opposition were in power, they would destroy all confidence and the good credit of the country. I say that he has no warranty for such expressions, and that they are most uncalled for. I claim for hon. members on this side of the House that we have the welfare of this country at heart quite as much as the right hon. the Premier. We are all, more or less, creatures of circumstances; but I say this—and I say it after due consideration—that the right hon. the Premier is a creature of most fortunate circumstances. He referred to the Southern Cross Railway. Why, anyone knows it was a matter of "plunging." He plunged, and he came out on top. He was fortunate; but he may go on plunging once too often. He may plunge until he gets out of his depth, and that will be the end.

AN HON. MEMBER: Then he will swim ashore.

MR. WILSON: Take the utterances of the hon. gentleman in London. Take his speech that has been handed round to us. These are the words that he spoke to an audience of London financiers and capitalists. He said:—

I am happy to say that, in Western Australia, everything good that has happened to the country since the time I took office is altogether due to the wise measures of the Government.

I call that the quintessence of egotism. I cannot find its equal. Have the hon. gentlemen I see around me done nothing to help forward the welfare of this country?

THE PREMIER: I do not think you quoted me quite rightly there. You have taken a few words, but have not shown the sense in which I intended the remarks.

MR. WILSON: I can only read the words I have here. I see gentlemen around me on this side of the House, and also gentlemen on the Government side of the House, who I think may lay claim to having done something, in their short time here, for the benefit and welfare of this country—gentlemen who have brought capital into this country and developed its industries, and who are large employers of labour, and others who have had no capital to bring here, but have brought their brains and their energies into the country. And what about the thousands who have gone right out on the goldfields, and have discovered the gold and produced it in large quantities—gold which the Premier himself admits is the main factor in our prosperity? These men are entitled to some credit also. It is not fair to sit on the Government side of this House and sling abuse at us on this side, who are endeavouring to do our duty here, and to assist in carrying on the affairs of this country to the best of our ability; and who, although we oppose the Premier, do it on honest grounds, because we differ in opinion with him. I say we are entitled to fair courtesy, and if we are going to fight, let us fight fair. I do not wish to descend to personalities, and I hope that the Premier will at once admit that I am not intending to be personal in this matter. I do not wish to give him offence; but I am prepared to say that, if he is going to meet us with abuse, we will fight him with his own weapons, and he will find that he has got a difficult job to tackle in the gentlemen who sit on this side of the House.

THE PREMIER: I have no intention of doing so.

MR. WILSON: I hope the people of this colony and the members of this House will consider the position well. The Premier and his colleagues have repeatedly said, in public, that they would

not reduce these food duties. The Government organ, during the last general elections, declared emphatically that the food duties could not be touched. What is the position to-day? We have a specific promise from the leader of the Government that the food duties shall be attended to next session—that some will be reduced and others abolished. What has the hon. member for Albany asked for in his amendment? I studied very carefully the speech which the Premier made at Bunbury, and I cannot remember in it any reference to reducing or abolishing these duties, except the threat which he held out to the farmers that, if they did not produce the food that the country required within four or five years, the Government would take the matter into their own hands and carry on farming operations themselves. What is the amendment which the member for Albany has brought before this House? It is to reconsider the decision which the Government have arrived at in deciding not to reduce the duties. What have the Government done in consequence? They have already reconsidered the matter, and have given a definite promise that they will attend to it next session. Does not the result justify the action of the hon. member and his few supporters on this side of the House? I think the people of the country will know how to appreciate the action which we have taken, and how to thank us for this action. I would ask hon. members to consider the inconsistency of the action of the Ministry on this matter. They make a great fuss and stir about an amendment of this sort; they take it as a motion of no confidence; and then, the next day, they promise to give what is asked for in the motion in six months' time! If it is right and just that we should have a reduction of duties in six months, is it not right and just that we should have brought this amendment forward, carried it to the vote, and tried to get a reduction of the duties? I appeal to hon. members to consider the matter fairly and squarely; to consider the pledges they have made to their constituents. It is not a personal matter. It is a matter of measures, and not a matter of men. Why should the Premier refer to the hon. member for South Fremantle, and remind him that

they had put him there? That is not fair play or fair fighting. The hon. member for South Fremantle had just as much to do with putting the Forrest Ministry in the seats they occupy as the Government had with putting the hon. member in his position. I suppose the Premier will claim that he put me here in the same way, because the day before the election he went out to the Canning and opened an agricultural hall there. But this is no personal matter, and I ask hon. members not to be hoodwinked by these feelings of friendship. If it were a matter of friendship, no doubt all of us would vote for the Premier. We have a duty to the country to perform, regardless of personal feelings of friendship.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piessé): At this late stage of the debate, it is not my intention to deal with the question generally, so much having been said by previous speakers in discussing this very debatable question of the food duties. My opinions are well-known to hon. members and the public generally, and, as one who has so frequently advocated the retention of the duties, it is not necessary for me to go over the ground again. I would like to say, however, at the risk of protracting the debate, that there are some points which I think it necessary to place before hon. members before the debate closes. With regard to the pledges so frequently alluded to, many hon. members, I know, have pledged themselves in regard to these duties. I am sorry these pledges have been made. Many have been made by friends on this side of the House. I quite recognise that every man should abide by his own feelings, and what he thinks is best in the interests of the country. But I think many of the candidates, when before the electors, were influenced by the voice of a few agitators, and not by the wishes of the mass of the people. I know full well that many of the candidates, when questioned during the election, were possibly asked, "Are you in favour of the retention of the food duties or a reduction of them?" and they very often answered in the affirmative, because this would generally please the great majority of the people listening. A great deal has been done by the press and people throughout this country to influence a certain

section, who had advocated these duties, to go in for their total abolition. I heard it stated a few days ago by the hon. member, Mr. Morgans, when at York, that 90 per cent. of the goldfields people were quite indifferent as to the removal of the food duties.

A MEMBER: He had no warrant for saying it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I believe he had a warrant. I have travelled about among the people, and they have stated that they are in favour of the retention of the duties. They are broad-minded enough for that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They would not say anything else to you.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Hon. members know my opinion about the food duties. If I had my own way, no duties would come off.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then you would have to go out.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: In politics there is such a thing as compromise, and I am willing to accept a compromise, and fall in with the views of many hon. members and the views of the other members of the Cabinet—that is, I am willing to see a revision of the tariff next session. In doing this, I am going as far as I ought to go; still, I am of opinion that the retention of the duties will do more to encourage production than by interfering with them. I am not going to touch upon the many subjects which have been brought forward—the free breakfast table, and all that “balderdash,” I might call it: it is all nonsense, and a good deal of what has been stated cannot be borne out by figures. We have heard it frequently stated that the people want a free breakfast table—they have it pretty well already, a large number of articles placed on the breakfast table are free now. There is also an impression abroad that the duties here are heavier than they are in any of the other colonies of the group. It is not generally known that the figures which have been quoted were taken from the importations of the past year. During the last twelve months many large firms were importing great quantities of goods into the colony, and they paid the duties on what they intended to stock their warehouses with. A large quantity of

these goods have not gone into consumption, although the duty has been paid on them. The consumer has not paid this duty yet. That is an apparent hardship, but when we come to take the figures for this year and average them, the tax will not appear so large as it was last year. With regard to the wages question, I certainly do not intend to go into the subject: I wish to deal with the question as to whether we can produce or not. I can assure hon. members that I have no doubt on that point.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No one doubts that.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Why insist on saying we cannot produce?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We say the farmers do not produce.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Albany said we do not and cannot produce: I say we can. In regard to the meat supply, it is frequently stated that we cannot produce even that. I intend to give some figures—it is said that figures can be made to prove anything, but the figures I intend to lay before hon. members are not generally known, because hon. members have not gone so closely into the question as I have. The consumption of sheep for 1896 amounted to 350,000, and the consumption of cattle, 28,000. We imported 45,000 sheep and 7,900 head of cattle. We produced 87 per cent. of the mutton supply and 72 per cent. of the beef supply. This shows that we are on a fair way to produce our meat supply. The production is steadily increasing, and with the facilities provided along the coast, and the advantages we possess, there can be no doubt that, in a very short time, we shall overtake our meat supply; and, as I have so frequently pointed out, immediately we do this, the internal competition in the country must cause a reduction in price. The figures I have quoted are those before the days of the frozen meat trade, frozen meat having only commenced to be imported in large quantities during the last four or five months, and prior to that very little was imported. With regard to wheat and flour, in 1897 we imported 15,129 tons of flour alone, and at 27 bushels to the ton of flour this means 559,000 bushels, and allowing ten bushels to the acre, which is

a moderate estimate, it would take 55,900 acres to produce this quantity. We also imported 189,000 bushels of wheat, which at the same rate of ten bushels per acre would mean a further acreage of 18,900 acres, or a total of 74,000 acres. These figures are in regard to 1896, and we all know that a large area has been taken up recently, which goes to prove that in a very short time we shall produce a large quantity of the cereals required for the consumption of the people of the colony. There is one thing about the wheat production I would like to mention. It is said that the people cannot live on chaff, and probably they cannot live on wheat alone. The production of cereals means the production of other articles of diet, such as butter, bacon, and cheese. All this follows in the train of cereal production, because the farmers would have the offal from the mills for the raising of poultry and pigs. With regard to the chaff supplies, we imported during the year ending June, 1896, 13,000 tons, and we imported for the year ending June, 1897, a similar period, 6,000 tons; so that it will be seen there was a falling off of 7,000 tons in that one item alone. That shows that we are gaining ground, but the argument may be used that we are not consuming as much; yet the member for the Canning will agree with me that a large quantity of chaff is being consumed by the mill owners. One firm alone has taken 2,000 tons of chaff, whereas previously the firm took only a small quantity. The demand is increasing, and with this increasing demand we have stopped the importation of the article. This year, with the bountiful season that is expected, we shall overtake the demand for chaff, and then the people will turn their attention to the cultivation of wheat. It is hoped that this year 250,000 bushels of wheat will be produced. This is more than a quarter of the quantity required for the flour supplies next year. With the area going into cultivation, in a short time no doubt we shall be able to supply all we require in this respect. If we continue to import forever from abroad, it means that we shall have to pay all the attendant charges in connection with the freight and the middlemen's profits. If we can produce sufficient for our own supplies, we shall keep the money in the

country and cheapen the cost of the article, and we certainly cheapen the production.

A MEMBER: You will never cheapen the production.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: We shall increase the production, and thus cheapen the food supplies.

A MEMBER: Do you propose to knock off the duties as soon as the local supply is equal to the demand?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: No, I do not. I am a protectionist, and I should propose to stick to them. We must continue to maintain the duties, and thus cheapen the food of the people. You will never cheapen it if you knock the duties off. It has been frequently said that living is much cheaper in Victoria than in many other places. Yet we find that Victoria retains her Customs duties. What brought about the cheapness in Victoria is evident. It was the very protection we are asking for to-day. If you take off the duties, you will not give the farmer that encouragement which is necessary to profitable production. Without that encouragement, land will go out of cultivation, and we shall have to import in perpetuity. If the colony imported food supplies in perpetuity, we should continue to pay charges for shipping freight, insurance, landing charges, merchants' profits at both ends, and the hundred and one charges incidental to importations, not taking into account the deteriorations in value by handling. All these have to be paid for by the consumer. The only way in which we get a cheap supply is by assisting the producer, and the only way to assist him is by retaining the duties. The hon. member for the Canning, addressing the voters before the election, and speaking with the knowledge that his constituents produced large quantities of chaff, said: "I know you are a chaff-producing people, and I do not mind keeping the duty on chaff." The hon. member also said, when before the electors: "We do not produce one-thousandth part of what we consume; therefore sweep away the duties;" but he went on to say, "Chaff is a very important item, and I believe you are producing chaff. If the farmers will produce chaff, protect them; if not, sweep away the duties. Gentlemen, I am ventilating only my own opinion

here. We buy 700 or 800 tons per annum, representing £1,200 out of pocket, so that when I advocate its protection, I am advocating it in an honest spirit, because it affects my pocket to a large extent." No doubt the hon. member was very magnanimous in regard to the duty on chaff, knowing as he did that his constituents were producing this article, and that it would be policy to say he would retain the duty. But what will the farmers do in the future? They will produce other things. In a very short time chaff will be an unsaleable commodity, and farmers will have to turn their attention to some other product; but the hon. member for the Canning would protect one item, while not protecting the others. Where is his consistency? The hon. member is quite inconsistent.

MR. WILSON: Read the speech right through.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The speech is quite in keeping with the remarks made by the hon. member, who gave certain pledges to his constituents.

MR. WILSON: Chaff is not food. If you will read the speech right through you will get to the bottom of it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: If the hon. member will only read the Premier's speech through, he may be able to give us a different interpretation.

MR. WILSON: You will never get to the bottom of it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: We will get to the bottom of the food importation question, though. Hon. members have already touched upon the excessive cost of wheat, and the way in which that cost is increased. I will therefore not dwell on it much, but I should like to show, as I have frequently done, that much of the increase is in the cost of the article itself. That cost has risen quite 150 per cent. during the last two-and-a-half years, and the articles we produce from wheat have risen correspondingly in price. Farmers have been called lazy, apathetic, and non-progressive. But where do we find people working longer hours than farmers do? Those engaged in producing from the soil work 12 or 15 hours a day, and there is no more worthy industry than theirs. It

has been said that members of this House have attempted to set one class against another, and that the agricultural section of the community is not giving the miners that consideration which is due to the great industry in which the miners are engaged. We all recognise that the success of this colony is due to the discovery of gold. What we want now is that the goldfields people shall assist agricultural interests. We ask the goldfields people to forbear for a time, and, notwithstanding any promise made to revise the tariff next session, I hope that when we come to that revision—as no doubt we shall—the goldfields people will meet us in a just way by keeping on, as far as possible, the present duties. It has been said by a section of the press that, if the farmers were wise, they would not ask for protection for the reason that protection would mean over-production. On that point I think the farmers are well able to take care of themselves. And in any case, what would be the result of this prophesied over-production? It would be a reduction of prices, which is what the Opposition desire to bring about, yet people are said to be crying out for a reduction of the duties in order to bring down prices. I have very little more to say on this subject. So much has been said before, that I shall only touch on one or two points. What I wish to show is that we can produce, and that we only require a certain area of land brought under cultivation, say within a year or two, to effect that production. Speaking yesterday on the goldfields, I said that what I asked for was that the people there should help us to retain the duties. I am sure that if the duties are retained we shall, in a few years, have plenty of food supplies of every kind, excepting, perhaps, one or two. Amongst the exceptions may be cheese, a product which has been frequently alluded to in the course of this debate. But cheese, although it forms a great portion of the diet of the people, is not so necessary to their subsistence as many other articles which are now free of duty or which are not so heavily taxed. I would like to deal with the question of settlement. Settlement will encourage manufacture. Every farmer who goes on the land requires implements to till the soil. He also requires a thousand and one things which we know are necessary

for the improvement and development of his farm. The labourers of this colony, therefore, will be benefited by the manufactures which will be required to assist the farmer in his production. It will give them employment, and will lead to the establishment of different workshops throughout the colony. Production, therefore, will mean a good deal of work for the labourers. Now the labourers of this colony have very little to complain of. Wages are higher here than elsewhere, as a rule; and if the duties may appear to be high, still, on comparison, they are very much lower than in any other part of Australia, excepting New South Wales. Western Australia is the most freetrade colony of the whole group, excepting New South Wales. Most people, I think, will agree with me that there is really no necessity for touching the tariff now. Although the Government have decided to revise it next session, I hope that it will not be interfered with to such an extent as to retard the progress of settlement, but that it will be dealt with in a spirit of fair-play and forbearance.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): It is a matter of regret that this question has been made a party one. The Opposition have been blamed, wrongly I think, for the course they have taken. I do not know what action the leader of the Opposition could have taken but to table the amendment he did. It was tabled for the express purpose of getting some consideration from the Government. A promise has been extracted from the right hon. the Premier, and I trust that, at the earliest possible date next session, we will have a chance of dealing with these duties. When I went before the electors, I certainly pledged myself very strongly on behalf of the reduction of the food duties. I further pledged myself at the time to endeavour to obtain a reform of the mining laws, the restriction of Asiatics, and to have the question of public batteries dealt with, in addition to several minor matters. A great deal of delay has occurred in dealing with some of these questions, and I think it is advisable that we should have an opportunity of dealing with them at once. During this debate, a good deal of information has been supplied to the House, more especially by the hon. member for West Kimberley. He has

shown us that meat is supplied here at an average price of 4½d. and that it is retailed at about 8d. He has not shown us how to account for that immense difference.

[MR. A. FORREST: He is not a butcher.] I think the member for West Kimberley might have gone a little further, and given us some idea of where this excessive cost has occurred. Is it because the railway or shipping facilities are not sufficient, or because there were no abattoirs? or was it on account of combination? If we want more railways or better shipping facilities, I say let us have them. If the construction of public abattoirs would help us, and I believe it would, let us have them. If, however, prices are high on account of some combination, the only way of dealing with that is to allow frozen meat to come in at the same price as live cattle. I know there is a combination, and I think some effort should be made to deal with it. I think we should try to have meat supplied at a lower rate than it is. There are other anomalies in the tariff. I for one am not desirous of seeing the whole of the duties abolished. I would strongly object to seeing a large remission of the duties; but some should be taken off altogether, and in some a remission should be made. The tax of 3d. a pound on tinned meats is too high. [A MEMBER: It is ½d., not 3d.] I consider that the farmer needs protection. The worker is a tax-payer also, and he wants some protection. I believe we should assist the farmer, and I would assist him by the initiation of a bonus system similar to that which exists in Victoria. I would send experts round the country, who would show the farmers the best way of dealing with their produce, and the best way of making cheese, etc. We have abundance of good land in this country, but we also have a large number of big estates. To make up the deficiency that would be caused by taking off the food duties, I would put a tax on unimproved land, not on improved land. Any person owning an area of 500 acres, unless it was improved, should be taxed. The Premier objects to the importation of apples. I would ask, which is the greater parasite: the man who holds thirty or forty thousand acres of land and won't improve them, or the apple raiser? I think we will all agree that the man who holds the

land without improving it is the parasite. We must try and break up these great estates in agricultural areas, owned by people who won't improve them. I think we should assist the farmer, but I do not believe in taking off all the duties. If we take the duties off meat and cheese, off bacon and butter and eggs, I think the goldfields will be satisfied. [A MEMBER: I should think so!] The Premier states that we are incurring financial obligations which make it inopportune at the present moment to alter the existing schedule. I dare say the right hon. gentleman has adopted the wisest course in not altering it at the present moment. A good deal has been said about the pledges made on the hustings. I think the Commissioner of Railways went too far when he said that these pledges were a lot of balderdash thrown about to please the people. I do not think that was the way in which candidates generally looked upon them. I know that I, for one, did not, and I think the remarks of the Commissioner were most uncalled for. I also object to the way in which the member for North-East Coolgardie referred to the members of the goldfields. It is not for him to criticise us. I think this is a great question for the goldfields. We do not want all the duties remitted, but we certainly want some. I was very pleased to hear the promise made by the right hon. the Premier. Had the Premier not made a pledge to abolish some duties and remit others, I would have felt it my duty to go into opposition. We want mining reform, a drastic reform that will serve the interests of the capitalists and the workmen. We want to see the mining industry conserved in a different manner from what it has been in the past. Several speakers have compared the mining industry with the agricultural industry. One hon. member says that the farmers are always asking for protection, but that the miners never do. I would ask members to place themselves in the position of a leaseholder of a gold mine. If the money for his lease is not paid at the right moment, he is fined 110 to 120 per cent. per annum. How are the pastoralists treated? I do not think they are treated like that. Other matters claim attention, such as that of the public battery question. I am very glad to think that the

Premier has promised to place £50,000 on the Estimates for the erection of public batteries. I wish he had promised to make it £150,000. He has also promised to introduce an Act dealing with undesirable immigrants. That is a matter that admits of no delay. I think we should deal with these questions as soon as possible. I am adverse to a change of Government, as it would simply delay matters. I have seen the rapid rise and progress of the fields; and the efforts made by the Ministry to try and cope with the wants of this new country have been admirable. Railways have been constructed. Hundreds of miles of roads have been cleared. Telegraphic communication with the most remote places has been established. Water has been conserved, and almost any legislation that has been required has been immediately attended to. For that reason I came to the Ministerial side, in order to give the Government a fair support. I may state that the goldfields have no desire to turn the Government out. We have a majority of the goldfields members on this side of the House. I am prepared to accept the Premier's pledge, but he must not expect the goldfields members to be blind followers. There is a lot of important legislation we desire to see brought forward. If that legislation is of a broad and progressive character, it would please the House, and please the country generally.

MR. CONOLLY (Dundas) : This question of food duties, which has taken up so much of the time of the House, should be regarded from a broad and national standpoint. We have discussed the food-duties aspect of the question more particularly, but I think the question has two sides. First in importance is the fact that it bears directly on the point of no-confidence in the Ministry. I think it well for us, however much we may desire to see the food duties reduced, to think for a moment of the standpoint from which other people, the whole political world, both in England and in other countries, regard this question. It seems to me that, though this question of food duties is one of great importance to us, and it is felt no doubt in a great measure throughout the goldfields, still the people who are at the present moment investing money here, and on whom in a

great measure the progress of this colony depends, regard this more as a no-confidence motion; and taking into consideration the general depression which this colony has undergone so lately, and the turn which things have taken for the better, I think it would be most undesirable for any great political crisis to take place which should retard or discourage the efforts that are being made by capitalists to develop the mining industry of the colony. This is the reason why I, and the majority of the members from the goldfields, have taken up the stand we have on this question. I think, if the Opposition had selected a more opportune time for introducing this question of food duties, they would have had a more willing support; but by combining the question of food duties with one of no-confidence, the former has not had the attention which it would otherwise have received.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Government did that.

MR. CONOLLY: Possibly the Government had something to do with it. No doubt the Government threw down a challenge which I think the Opposition were very reasonable in taking up; and, although I am not supporting this question at the present moment so strongly as I would like to do, I consider that a great deal is due to the Opposition for the stand which they have taken. But I want to impress upon hon. members that the question as viewed by the world at large is not so much that of food duties as one of a want of confidence in the Government. The member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson) has been good enough to mention the Esperance railway. I dare say I shall have the pleasure of telling him something about that, before I have finished. But there is another matter which undoubtedly has influenced the members representing various goldfields constituencies. We have all made pledges, and I do not think there is one of the goldfields members in this House who would, any more than other members, commit in any way a breach of a promise which he had given to his constituents or to other people. We have all pledged ourselves to the reduction of these food duties; and putting entirely on one side the very inauspicious moment which has been chosen for bringing these food duties up, still, had the

Government not come to a speedy compromise, there is no doubt whatever as to which side the members for the goldfields would have given their support and their votes. The concession which the Government have made has more to do with the attitude taken by many of the goldfields members than anything else. The Government have certainly conceded a great deal. In all probability, had the reduction of the duties come on during this session, the goldfields population would have been satisfied with a very moderate concession, which would have simply covered a few articles of staple food that are largely consumed by them and by people in other places, and which, I would not say cannot be produced, but which are not produced at the present moment in Western Australia, and which are, moreover, articles to which our farmers have not so far turned their attention. It is these matters which the goldfields members desire to see attended to. Amongst the articles the duties on which they would like to see reduced, meat undoubtedly takes priority. The duty on meat is one which, I think, weighs as heavily on the people in Fremantle and Perth as it does on those living on the goldfields, and more especially is this due to the very inconsistent manner in which frozen meat is taxed as compared to imported live stock. It is all very well for certain gentlemen to say that frozen meat is unfit for human consumption, and that the people on goldfields would not eat it; but I consider that the people in England are just as good critics of food as any people in the colonies, and if frozen meat can be eaten in London, and if it is sufficiently good to compete in a measure with the fresh meat which is imported into London, I consider there is no reason why frozen meat should not be used here—no reason why it should be repudiated as unfit for consumption. I consider that frozen meat would be much better for the people than a great deal of this tinned meat which they have been subsisting on for so many years. Again, we have cheese, butter, and bacon. We may also add flour. These are, I think, the principal things; and had the Government met us in respect of them during this session, it would have given immediate relief, not only to the goldfields, but to all the people of Western Aus-

tralia; and we should have been much better satisfied under those conditions than we are now, with the promise that the Government have given us, which involves waiting till next session. The food duties have also been regarded as supplying money for public works. It has been said that if the food duties are reduced, then how shall we continue to carry out those important public works which we have already embarked on and which we intend to continue? Well, I have the honour to represent a constituency which has paid a very large amount in food duties. In the last three years the district of Dundas has paid no less than £60,000 in food duties; and at the present moment the people on the Dundas goldfield are compelled to carry their goods, a large portion of them, for over 1,100 miles, because the Government will not give them fair and reasonable means of carrying them by the natural route, which is 100 miles. That is the return which the Dundas people have for their food duties. I do not say the Government have done nothing for that district. They have, in some measure, done a few things, such things as they have done for other people. They have given them post offices, and so forth. But how can people who are treated in such a manner regard this question of the retention of the food duties for the purpose of raising money to carry out public works? These people are not in the happy position of the inhabitants of Fremantle, Perth, and similar places, who are now objecting to food duties. The people on the Dundas goldfield have not only got high rents and these duties to embarrass them at the present moment, but they have the crushing cost of transit to contend with; and I feel confident that if the Government would do with the money as they say they intend to do, and give to that goldfield some facilities of transit, and in some degree reduce the difficulties, I say the people there would be far more disposed to meet the farmers liberally and do what the Commissioner of Railways is hoping for—that is, when duties come on the farmers, they would consider the case of the farmers in a generous spirit. I will conclude by saying that while I, in common with the majority of goldfields members, am fully determined to regard

the promises I made to the electors, and while I consider that these tariff duties should undoubtedly be reduced, still I take it that a member coming to this House has a duty not only to those whom he represents, his constituents, but also a duty to the country. Therefore, looking on this motion from a national standpoint, from which other people also undoubtedly regard it, I consider it is well within the right and reason of every member to support the Government on this occasion.

MR. KENNY (North Murchison): I take it that the question before the House is not one of want of confidence in the Ministry, that it is not a question of freetrade or protection, that it is not a question of goldfields members *versus* agricultural members, but that is a question whether the food duties which weigh so heavily on the working classes of this colony shall be removed or not. When the Premier made his election speech at Bunbury, he noticed the fact that the food duties would be made the battle cry of the general election, and he remarked also that a battle cry was necessary. Did that admission on his part come from the old campaigner "sniffing the battle from afar," or was it due to the fact that he had at last awoken up, and was being forcibly reminded that the people of Western Australia in 1897 were a very different population from those he had to deal with when he became Premier in 1890? Knowing full well that the people he had to deal with now could not be treated in the same way, on some questions, he doubtless felt that the time had come when he could no longer close his ears to the voice of the people as echoed from their representatives elected to this Chamber. In regard to the article cheese, the right hon. gentleman said, "I do not think much of cheese; I never eat it." I do not think the greatest admirer of the right hon. gentleman or his greatest enemy would ever accuse him of eating cheese; but few members on the Government side of the House do plead guilty to the charge of eating large quantities of cheese. If the right hon. gentleman does not eat cheese, he should remember that there are large numbers of people on the goldfields, and in the city of Perth, who have to fall back on

the homely fare of bread and cheese. The right hon. gentleman claimed a great deal of credit for the fact that tea and sugar were free, and that this very fact places us at a great advantage over the other colonies, as in no other colony are tea and sugar free. I quite agree with the hon. gentleman, but the people of the colony would not complain of a reasonable tariff on tea, or to a reasonable duty on sugar. One of the greatest complaints that I, as a West Australian, have to make is that my native country does not resemble the other colonies. It behoves us to do all we can to bring this colony into line with the other colonies, to show the people from the other colonies who come here to assist us in the development of our country's resources, that they have not come here to be governed by a different set of laws and regulations from those they have known on the other side. We must show them that their laws shall be our laws, and their people our people. In regard to making these food duties a party question, it is not the first time that such an amendment has been made a party question in this House. The Premier showed a wonderful amount of tact in accepting the amendment which the leader of the Opposition moved as a motion of want of confidence. The fact of the matter was this, that the Premier could see as clearly as any of us here that a large number of members were returned to the House pledged to a reduction of the food duties; and if this amendment had been brought before the House as an ordinary question, these hon. members would have supported the reduction of the food duties; then if hon. members on this side of the House could not claim a majority, they would have run the Government closer than Ministers have been run before—too close for the hon. member at the head of the Government. The Premier converted the amendment into a want-of-confidence motion, so that those returned to support the Government could say that, of the two evils, they chose the lesser by supporting the Government. I say and believe that a great deal of good must of necessity spring from this debate. Some amount of good was the outcome of a similar amendment brought forward in the House in 1895. The hon. member for Central Murchison (Mr.

Illingworth) on that occasion introduced a motion for the redistribution of seats. It was treated as a motion of no-confidence; and one of the most prominent members of the Government of the day stated that this was bringing all sorts of evil on the country. He said it would have the result of creating a pick-and-shovel representation, and he hoped the day would be far distant before he saw the House filled with representatives of picks and shovels: that is more than two years ago. [THE PREMIER: Who was the member?] The Attorney General. Although at the time my friend the member for Central Murchison failed, he must feel that he has secured a victory to-night, when he looks round him and sees so many pick-and-shovel representatives sitting here.

THE PREMIER: Not one uses them, though.

MR. KENNY: For my part, I am proud of occupying a seat in the Parliament of my native country, but prouder that I have been sent here by the picks and shovels of the Northern Murchison—a large section of the bone and sinew from the Eastern colonies, now developing my native country. As long as I sit here, I shall feel that my first duty is to the men who sent me here, and as I am pledged to do all I can to further their interests, and to lighten the burden they are bearing, and which is a pretty heavy burden of taxation, I shall ever be ready to further their interest and fulfil the position they placed me in. A great deal has been said of the protection to the various industries, especially to the farmer. I have no objection to protect the farmer, and I have no sympathy with those who have endeavoured to set party against party. I can assure you that no one has a greater feeling of regard for the agriculturists than the miners throughout Western Australia. It is better for them to see that the agricultural pursuits progress, so that they can purchase their food stuffs at their own door, rather than the imported article; but while I am doing the best I can to protect the farmer, I must look back at the working man. I was just casually going through the tariff the other day, and I found that there are forty-one articles, each of which is essential to the equipment of any prospecting party going into the country. Of

those 41 articles there are four bearing a duty of 20 per cent., 31 bearing a duty of 15 per cent., and 6 bearing a duty of 10 per cent. Then again there are dried fruit, bacon, and baking powder, bearing a duty of 3d. per lb. No one can deny that the prospector and the working miner are doing as much for the development of the resources of Western Australia as any other section of the community. A great deal has been said and can be said on the side of the agriculturist. It has been said that where a man makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, he is a benefactor to the State. That is a point of view I entirely agree with. But I also say that where a man produces 20zs. of gold where no gold has been found before, he is a still greater benefactor to the State. If the champion of agriculture will face me on this question, I will take the side of the gold. A great deal has been made of the fact that machinery is let in free. It is well machinery is let in free, or anything else that will tend to develop the resources of the country. On the other hand, it is hardly fair to give a rich company an advantage over a hard-working prospector or miner. Sufficient machinery to work an average mine would cost, say, £2,000; and if a company importing such machinery paid the same rate of duty as does a working digger on his appliances, they would pay about £350. As it is, such a company pays no duty. I do not object to machinery coming in free of duty, but the incidence of the taxation ought to be fair. I am tired of hearing the cry that the diggers have everything. [MR. A. FORREST: It is a fact, though.] The Premier has said: "I am told you are paying 7d per lb. for your beef: you must attribute at most a half penny a pound as put on by the duty." The Premier may have suffered from a slip of his memory; at any rate, he has missed an opportunity of explaining a very simple fact. While he talked of the duty being only a halfpenny per pound, there was, I may remind him, a vessel in the harbour of Fremantle, laden with frozen meat, and those interested found it cheaper to pay demurrage than to pay the duty.

THE PREMIER: They did not pay any demurrage.

MR. KENNY: That is a question which I thought would have been cleared up. We have heard a great deal about the meat duty, but not one single member has attempted to explain why it is frozen meat is made to pay 1½d. per pound, while live sheep or cattle pay about a halfpenny. [MR. A. FORREST: Not a halfpenny.] I had hoped that, before the debate closed, some hon. member would have offered an explanation on the point. I have been struck with the interest some hon. members seem to have in the health of the people, even to the point of preventing the importation of frozen meat. But who would lose by the importation of frozen meat? Why, the importers of live carcasses. As a matter of fact, if the meat company wish to land 100 carcasses of meat in a morning, they have first of all to fill in a cheque for £500, taking the bullock at 800lbs. as costing £5. [A MEMBER: Quite right, too.] To land 1,000 sheep, the company would have to fill in a cheque for £375, or in all £875, before they see a farthing of their money back. If that is not a prohibitive duty, I would very much like to know what is. The duty will seem still heavier when hon. members come to consider what live cattle can be purchased for at Kimberley. I have it on very good authority that the last shipment of live cattle at Kimberley cost £4 15s. a head, and 8s. a head to put on board, making a total cost for the cattle on board of £5 3s. Does it not seem, I might almost say, monstrous that an importer of frozen meat has to pay more duty, or practically as much duty, at Fremantle as a bullock can be purchased for in Kimberley? The Premier at Bunbury informed us that the halfpenny per pound duty was necessary to protect the graziers, who had a stake in the country. No doubt the graziers have a stake in the country; but whether we come in contact with that "steak" in form of a grill on the breakfast table or as a matter of discussion in the House, it is a very tough subject to handle. I was rather struck with the remarks made by the hon. member for North Fremantle. I, like himself, was the recipient of a printed circular that was, I think, sent to pretty well every member of the House a week or two ago. Along with many other such communications I quietly passed it by, and I do not suppose I

should have looked at it again but for the hon. member's allusion.

MR. DOHERTY: Then I have done some good.

MR. KENNY: You have done some good, if only by exhibiting your talents as corner-man of the Ministerial benches. It has been shown that on 100,000 sheep and 10,000 cattle the duty would be £27,500, whereas the duty on a similar quantity of frozen meat would be £87,500; or, in other words, the monetary advantage of the live stock as against the frozen article would be £62,166. One of the chief causes of complaint is that this prohibitive duty prevents fair competition in the meat market. If the Government wish to meet the views of the people, they will put frozen meat and live meat on a fair basis at the Customs-house. This could be done by taking a penny a pound off the duty on frozen meat. The hon. member for the Gascoyne has told us that the "fifth quarter" of the live animal pretty well pays the whole of the duty demanded from the importer of live stock. Therefore, practically speaking, live stock is admitted free of duty. That being so, I do not think it is unreasonable to ask the Government to reduce the duty on meat to a halfpenny per pound. One point the Government have made is that they must retain the duties at present in order to carry through the financial engagements of the year. I am sure none of us will complain now, considering that the members on this (the Opposition) side have attained their object by this amendment, the Premier having promised that the food duties shall be dealt with in the next session. Of course taxation is essential, and the Government must have a revenue; therefore, the next question is, where are we to get the difference in revenue from if we reduce the food duties? Having lately spent a month in travelling through the South-Western District, I can say that if the Government will place a land tax on the thousands of acres of splendid land that is there lying unused and entirely unimproved, and is held by absentees or by men of position in the colony, such a tax will relieve them considerably from the loss of the food duties. I am not one of those who think it is possible to tax yourself rich or borrow yourself rich; but I would prefer that the Government should meet us in a fair spirit,

and, as we must have revenue, rather than take from the pockets of the workers, I say let us go into the London market and borrow the equivalent that we should lose by the reduction of the food duties.

MR. DOHERTY: You would not do for Treasurer.

MR. KENNY: There is another little matter that might be gathered in the way of taxation, and I expect it will receive as warm a reception as my last suggestion, for I never dreamt that a land tax would meet with the approval of gentlemen on the Government side; and my other suggestion is to put a tax on beer.

MR. DOHERTY: We don't want to tax the working man.

MR. KENNY: But the day is not far distant when the people living in the country will decide as to the taxation, and it will not be left altogether to gentlemen on the Government side to decide what shall be taxed and what shall be let in free. I have little to add, beyond that as a new member I feel grateful to many here for little kindnesses and services I have received at their hands; but, on the other hand, I have been more than surprised at the way in which many of the remarks and speeches from this (the Opposition) side of the House have been received by members on the Government side. I was under the impression that, when we came into the House, each one would be listened to fairly; that there would be a great deal of straight hitting, but that we would take care not to hit below the belt. That, however, has not been altogether adhered to, and I confess I felt both grieved and hurt at many of the personal remarks and reflections cast upon members on this side of the House. We may not be able to boast of a large banking account, or of holding eight miles of country along the railway, but we can at least claim honesty of purpose, and I feel quite satisfied, from the very rough handling the Opposition have received from some of the gentlemen on the other side of the House, that they have attained their purpose. They have done good service to the country, and the people will see us in our true light, and will look upon us more favourably than upon some of the gentlemen on the other side. In conclusion, I would remind you that

Honor and shame from no condition rise.
Act well your part: there all the honour lies.

MR. SIMPSON: The House is, perhaps, growing a little weary of this debate. We have now had seven hours, and we had two nights before, and I do not think much further light can be thrown on the fiscal aspect of the question. We have had statistics which may be, and perhaps are, trustworthy. We have a positive 10d. a week estimated by the Government, and we have a probable 5d. a week from some supporters of the Government, while from other parts of the House we have had other statistics suggested as the basis of this great national question. Perhaps we can get a little away from that aspect of the question, although I much regret, from his great position, that in introducing the question to the House the right hon. the Premier did not remember a little more of the amenities of debate, instead of opening the vials of his wrath and pouring them on the devoted head of the elderly gentleman who represents South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon). Surely after the great honours that have recently been conferred on the Premier, he can add more fitting contributions to the debates of the Legislature of this country than the abuse he so liberally bestows on the gentlemen who, upon matters of principle, have the audacity or daring to differ from him. Might I suggest to him that a difference of opinion, even in Western Australia where he rules—that the holding of an independent opinion—has not yet become a crime. He also used that high monotone chest-note of his, in referring to the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), and the member for East Perth (Mr. James), the latter sitting in that singularly elevated position on the back cross-bench—and men of this class, gentlemen standing before the country as public men of ability and character, securing general respect outside as well as inside this Chamber, he alluded to as men who had not “won their spurs.” Surely it is beneath him. Surely it is untrue. As we know perfectly well, and as the country knows, the right hon. gentleman wished to put spurs on them, and they would not have them. [THE PREMIER: I deny that.] Don't we know that he (the Premier) sought the assistance of the member for Albany in the formation of his first Government? And don't we know there was a certain amount of love-making

going on in another quarter in connection with another possible position? So much for the attitude adopted by the Premier in dealing with this question. And then he hoists the flag to the mast-head, as he is always doing to keep his followers in order, over there; and when one looks at their serried ranks, one realises how he drills them—how like they are to old and well-drilled circus hacks, such as you see in Fitzgerald's circus. There is not one of their actions that is not made in accordance with the tuition and absolute dictation of the ring-master. I am sorry the right hon. gentleman does not approve of my description of his supporters. I may say I have absolute faith in the promises of the Colonial Treasurer, recorded in the public press, when he states, in regard to the duties, that “some would be reduced, and some abolished.” I accept that promise. I never knew him break one. I have a great respect for the right hon. gentleman, so far as his sincerity and integrity go. I accept his promise with regard to these duties; but might I suggest to some of the gentlemen who purpose opposing this “bogey” motion of want of confidence to-night, the extreme danger they run in deferring the alteration of the tariff. It is of immense importance to their personal interests and personal safety that they should have the alteration immediately. I would suggest one item in the tariff, at any rate, which should immediately have a duty placed upon it that would prohibit its introduction within our borders, and that would be the very useful commodity known as “Rough-on-Rats.” One speech of the right hon. member for Bunbury at the Federal Convention consisted of the ejaculation of the word “Rats!” It was appropriate. He ought to know all about them; and by the time this division is over, he will know more about them. He went over there and he came back; and he will find that he is sailing in a ship that is half-full of them. It was interesting also listening to the speech of the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory). The hon. member, so far as I gathered from his remarks, considered that the reduction of the food duties was a very important question, and he looked upon the keeping of the Forrest Ministry in office as being also of great importance. And I was

then reminded of something I had seen in the press, because I am a man who looks to the public press of the colony for very valuable information; and I read in the press that the member for North Coolgardie had telegraphed to his constituents to know how he should vote. I wonder if he had an answer to the telegram. [MR. GREGORY: It is incorrect.] Ah, the press is wrong again! Those wretched reporters always go wrong! We shall have to do something to prevent their misrepresenting members of Parliament. I was wondering whether he got an answer to his telegram, which enabled him to decide whether he would support the Government in this want-of-confidence amendment. With regard to this amendment, so far as I am personally concerned, I may say that so long as those who occupy the Ministerial benches will allow the Opposition to control them as we are doing now, I am prepared to support a monthly vote of continued confidence, and allow the members of the Ministry to retain the emoluments of office. I am not an office-seeker. I have noticed that some of the hon. members on the opposite side have been playing the game of "bob cherry." The Premier said the object of the amendment was to endeavour to change the Government. I do not think that was a fair way of taking the motion, because it is admitted generally by the House that this question of food duties has been occupying the public mind for some time. The Premier went on to say that the issue was whether the present Government or their friends on the other side should administer the affairs of the country. It is nothing of the sort. I do not suppose such an idea ever entered the mind of the member for Albany, when moving his amendment. The Premier's speech might be aptly described by a quotation from Disraeli: "The honourable gentleman exhausted time, and entrenched on eternity." We export gold, timber, wool, and pearls. Can any hon. gentleman in the House suggest anything that is protected there? How can we protect these? And yet I am safe in saying that 96 per cent. of the men employed in the colony are employed in connection with these industries. I maintain that you cannot possibly protect more than 20 per cent. of the men employed in the industries of the coun-

try. You cannot possibly protect more than one in five. Seeing that is the case, the duty must press heavily on the people. No one has more at heart the opening up of the country than I have. Not the most rabid agriculturists in the House can accuse me of not doing what I can to assist all native industries. The honourable member for Yilgarn (Mr. Oats) told me that when he paid sovereigns to some man in the country for doing some work for him, the man pointed out to him that they usually did business at barter, and that it would be better if he had given him an order on the firm of Monger and Company, or Shenton and Company, and he would regard it as safer. That was the condition of agriculture nine or ten years ago in those districts. The gold-fields lifted many men from abject poverty to comparative affluence; but those men never went ahead beyond that. No doubt the old story is true of the genial party in the district so ably represented by Mr. Harper—the story that on one occasion the worthy tiller of the soil remarked, "We do not have to work half as much, but we get just as much money for our hay." The question of the unimproved lands is becoming a very serious one. Some lands are contributing magnificently to the employment of the people, but there are other lands on which tens are found, where there ought to be thousands of people. Now, there is the great Peel estate. I want to know whether the Government cannot find some means of compelling improvements or of taking the land over. People are being taxed for the building of railways and the improving of the value of every acre there. God knows, taxation is pretty heavy already! It seems to be the object of the Government and their supporters to take as much, instead of as little, out of the people's pockets as they can. The time has come when Parliament should face the question, and offer a reasonable source of a small but possibly a growing revenue. The great injustice underlying the food duties is that the incidence of the taxation is unjust. It will be readily agreed that the happiest system of taxation is that by which members of a community contribute towards the cost of the Government according to their means. Is

that the case in regard to the food duties? Do we not know that these duties fall more heavily on the wage-earners in the country than on people engaged in what may be called genteel pursuits? Another distinctive feature, which in all periods of history follows as the sunset follows sunrise, is that every reduction in taxation on the necessities of life leads to increased consumption, and, with this increased consumption, no damage can be done to the revenue. I suggest these matters for the consideration of the House. Then there is another feature. We are expending large sums of money well and wisely at Fremantle. We have made a great harbour there, one which will be a credit to us. It will make us the first point of call for the people from the old world, and the last point of departure for those who are going Home. The shipping industry, therefore, is a great industry for Fremantle, and everything should be done to encourage it. It appears to me that the farmers are being placed in a false position. First you bolster them up with duties, you tell them to throw away their legs and use crutches. Surely the Ministry are not jockeying us. They tell us they are going to "abolish and reduce" the duties. I am content with that. Seeing that we are four months in the financial year and that it would upset the financial position to make the reduction at once the proposition is a reasonable one. I have no wish to deal with it in an unreasonable manner. It will also interest the public, who are watching these matters very closely, to know how many public batteries the Government are going to erect. I am wondering how much this division will cost the Government; remembering that when a battery has been set up in one district, there will be no end of demands by other districts for similar favours. There have been some very valuable contributions to this debate, especially from the hon. members for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) and West Kimberley (Mr. Alex. Forrest). I was very much interested in the way they put their cases before the House. I was under a misapprehension with regard to the election of the hon. member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran). He told us he was returned first to support the Forrest Ministry, and then to secure if possible a remission of the food duties.

MR. MORAN: I never said anything of the sort.

MR. SIMPSON: I thought the first was the more important question of the two. I had it in my recollection that the hon. member said that, and I went to the trouble of looking up the hon. gentleman's speech, and I found that he was returned on a great big question, that of the amendment of the labour conditions. I found that Mr. Wilkinson, who opposed the hon. gentleman, was in favour of the reduction of the labour conditions, and that the hon. member had been returned to the House as a supporter of the labour conditions as at that time existing, and that the support of the Government was a minor matter, so far as he was concerned. I do not think the Opposition have any right to ask for more than has been conceded in this debate. The division will result, I do not know how—it is a mere detail of numbers. We have the pledge of the Premier that these duties will be altered. It was suggested to me to-day that the Government had initiated a policy of pandering to the goldfields. I do not think that can be so, when we have had such strong assertions made about people having to tread over the Premier's dead body before something can be done—

THE PREMIER: I did not say anything of the sort, in regard to that matter.

MR. SIMPSON: The Premier said at Bunbury that the growers of produce would overtake the demand in five years, and the Commissioner of Railways, who represents the Williams district, told us he would catch up to the demands of the country in two years. The Minister of Education has been ungracious enough to seek out those members of this Assembly who happen, by mere accident, to have been born in Western Australia, and he has appealed to them on that ground to support the Government. The allusion is not a happy one, and, looked at in certain lights, it is absolutely ridiculous; because I do not know any one in this Assembly who would say he had any part in the choice as to where he should be born. Personally, I have only the kindest thoughts about the colony, although not born in it. Such allusions as the Minister of Education made are particularly inappropriate, when we know

that the native-born in Western Australia are in a minority on the present occasion. I do hope the House will get away from the practice of looking so much to the lines on which the development of this country compares with the state of things in Victoria. I have had Victoria very prominently before me as an object lesson, and, visiting that colony lately, I have realised painfully that walking about Melbourne and some other places is like walking about the graveyard of capital, as one sees there that the poor are absolutely starving for want of work. The world has got a bit wiser on this fiscal question, and is coming to the question of what is expedient to be done. I am content to believe that every member of this House is as perfectly independent and as clean-handed as I am in voting on this question, and I see no good to be got by imputing motives. That the price of meat is extreme is generally admitted, but whether the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) can alter it, I do not know. If, in his kindly nature, he could reduce the price of it, the public would possibly be much better pleased, and would agree with us in saying we are quite agreeable to let the Ministry stay on the Government benches, go through the weary drudgery of administration, and retain the emoluments of office, upon which, I am perfectly sure, they will not grow fat. I do hope that, in carrying out the pledge the Premier has given to the House, he will consider the great opportunity that is before him. The Premier says cheap food means cheap wages. I challenge him to produce an instance in any established country. [THE PREMIER: Ceylon.] I do not know what he means by cheap wages. To my mind, cheap wages are very often the highest wages. I have always found it through life that low wages do not necessarily mean cheap wages. I do not know enough of the country which the right hon. gentleman alludes to; but I would say that this would be a splendid opportunity to relieve the great mass of our working people. It will readily be admitted that the great mass of our working people are engaged in these gold industries. I do hope it will never be laid to the charge of the right hon. gentleman that, in his administration, he compelled the poor man to sit down to his

breakfast of a morning while the food he ate was seasoned with a sense of injustice, that he will never have it laid to his charge, and—notwithstanding the interruption of the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty), who possibly can have little sympathy with the poor who are helping to build up this country—will never have it said that he aided in any policy of grinding the poor. Standing here to-night, I am content to listen to the laughs and the sneers of the incarnation of fat dividends who sits over there (Mr. Doherty), and I say that, much as I admire the hon. member's speeches, and while I recognise to-night the intellectual advantages secured to this Chamber by his brilliant contribution to this valuable debate, I do hope that many members of this House will, in later times, look back to the alterations in the revenue tariff that are before the House to-night—that when occasion arises, they will be found doing service in putting the great industries of this country on a sound basis. But I cannot avoid the impression that the grave underlying feature in connection with these food duties is the injustice in the incidence of taxation—that we are taking from the poorest in the land an undue proportion of the revenue that we are spending on the development of the country. I submit my views on the question with deference. The House has been kind enough to listen to me with patience. The mere numbers in the division I do not care about. The concession has been granted. I do not even care to look upon it as a concession. The request has been agreed to. It has been distinctly pledged to the country that, of these duties some will be abolished and some will be reduced; and I have too great a respect for the sincerity of the Premier to imagine that when the people have asked for bread he will give them a stone, or to believe that he has merely suggested something with the idea of “jockeying” members out of their votes for a temporary purpose, without intending to carry out the pledge that he has distinctly given to the country. I shall support the amendment.

MR. HOLMES (East Fremantle): As the seconder of the motion on the Address-in-Reply, and one of the youngest members in this House, I wish, first of all, to refer to some of the remarks made

by the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), and the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth). These gentlemen were good enough to ask the younger members not to forget their pledges—to stand by the promises made to their constituents, and to vote accordingly. I stand here prepared to do my duty in the interests of the electors of East Fremantle. I stand here as a protectionist returned by what our friends opposite call a freetrade constituency. I made no promise other than I gave to the rest of the country, and I am prepared to stand by that. I value the good opinion of the hon. member for Albany, but I value more my own self-respect, and the good opinion of the people who sent me here. I should not like it to go forth that I was a mere voting machine. So far, none of the hon. members on this side of the House have attempted to dictate to me; but unfortunately I cannot say the same in regard to some of the hon. members sitting opposite. The Premier has made this statement, that at the next sitting of Parliament he is prepared to go thoroughly into the subject of the food duties, and I am prepared to accept that statement rather than be hoodwinked by a few political agitators sitting opposite. If any move is made in the way of an absentee tax, or a land tax, I will support it; but even the returns from such a source as this would be only a small item of revenue, and after all is said and done, the revenue must be borne by the masses, and not by the classes. The only reasonable way to look at it, if the revenue is to be borne by the masses, is that they do not care how it is imposed. It has been said that, in the recent election, the main point at issue was the abolition of the food duties. That may have been so in some parts of the country; but, speaking for myself, I give the statement an emphatic denial. It was rather the outcome of a few political agitators. About the only argument adduced by the members of the Opposition is that money is being sent out of this country. Money has been sent out, and is being sent out, to maintain the wives and families of men who have come to this country; but the money would be sent out of the country just the same, if the duties were put off to buy articles coming from another colony, for the exist-

ence of these wives and families. They may just as well remain where they are, where they can get cheap rents and goods, until such time as this country is developed sufficiently to feed a larger population. The whole secret of the high cost of living in nearly every instance is that the demand is so far away from the supply. The only way to get over the difficulty is to increase production, and protection is the only means of increasing production. In the far North we have a country capable of producing stock for all the requirements of the market. The proper course would be to give shipping facilities at all the principal ports on the coast. If chilling works were constructed at Fremantle, our own cattle could then be brought down from the country and treated there. If these and other reforms were brought about, they would do more to reduce the cost of living than anything I know of. A lot has been said about the difference between the charges on dead meat and the charges on live meat. It has been set forth that the duty on sheep is 2s. 6d., while that on frozen meat is 7s. 6d. The fact seems to be overlooked that, when a Victorian or a New South Wales pastoralist ships a sheep carcass of 40lbs. to Fremantle on a freight of 1s. 8d., the same weight arrives here. It is very different with the squatters of this colony. During transit here, a sheep on which 5s. to 6s. must be paid may lose five or ten pounds in weight, besides other incidental losses. Compare 1s. 8d. alongside 7s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. with 2s. 6d. To encourage local production, the duties must be kept on until the local meat can be chilled and sent into the markets. Much has been said about the "meat ring." I suppose, if hon. members spoke their minds, they would include me in that "ring." I say, most emphatically, no "meat ring" exists. The law of supply and demand regulates the price of meat. The hon. member for North Coolgardie instances the fact that meat is cheaper in Menzies than in Coolgardie. The fact is that Menzies is supplied from the Murchison district, and local supply reduces the price. The hon. member for West Perth said it was impossible for small butchers to start business in this colony. I give that statement a most emphatic denial. Two months ago I visited the eastern colonies, and, if the House will

pardon me, I will go into a few figures. I went, not in the interests of anyone else, but on my own account. In New South Wales, I purchased 2,500 bullocks and 20,000 sheep. I had a clause put in the agreement to the effect that, in the event of a change made in the duties, I should reap the benefit. Yet, in the face of this, we are told that the consumer would profit by a remission of the duties. Let the hon. member for West Perth purchase the meat from me, and if he wishes to become a philanthropist, let him distribute cheap meat, and his constituents may appreciate his efforts. This colony must be built up as all the other colonies were built up, and the only way to do that is by a policy of protection. I will, however, admit that a revision of the tariff is necessary. We have the assurance of the right hon. gentleman that this question will be carefully gone into next session. Consequently I am prepared to support the Government and vote with them on the present occasion.

MR. PENNEFATHER: I regret that the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson), who delivered an address on this subject, is not in his place; but, at the same time, I cannot lose sight of the fact that the hon. member, in the earlier portion of his speech, in criticising the address of the right hon. the Premier, was led into making many remarks which were unfounded and incorrect. I can quite understand how it was that he fell into such a mistake. It was due, of course, to the fact, as we all know, that the hon. member was not present in his place in the House when the Premier delivered his speech, and I dare say it may also be due to the fact that some heated advocate, who sympathises very warmly with the views of some of the hon. members on the opposite side of the House, may have coloured and unintentionally mis-stated what the right hon. gentleman said. I feel sure that the hon. member for Geraldton would not intentionally attribute to any member of this House a statement which he did not believe had been uttered; and therefore it is another illustration how dangerous it is, even in a deliberative assembly as well as in a court of law, to take hearsay evidence, and only upon the most guarded acceptance of the term. The hon. gentleman made merry and enlivened the debate, I

am sure in a most interesting fashion. At one time he was master of the ring, at another he had hon. members running round as well-trained horses, and then he made a bound outside the ring, and made merry with our unfortunate friend, the cockey, otherwise known as the farmer. If the hon. member is sincere in what he told us, then he is one of the greatest admirers of men who earn their living by tilling the soil. At the same time, he told us that he does not think the farmer needs any protection whatever. That is a statement which in itself is inconsistent.

MR. SIMPSON: He wants no protection beyond a railway tariff.

MR. PENNEFATHER: The tariff may be both protective and revenue-producing. It is an incident that it is a revenue tariff, where the main object is that it should be protective. I say this only on the surmise that the hon. gentleman is a freetrader: of course if he is a real freetrader, there is no use in arguing the matter from the protectionist point of view. My hon. friend has also heard a piece of evidence about myself, and he has not heard it properly. It is quite true that in Victoria, when I stood for Parliament, I did advocate that in the condition the colony was then—that was three years ago—in consequence of the colony being then a large exporter of produce, there was no longer any reason for protective duties; and the hon. gentleman will allow I was right, for the object of protection is to encourage the people to go on the land to produce up to the exact point of being able to supply enough to meet the demand. After that time there is no necessity for protection, because all the protection in the world cannot help the farmer then.

A MEMBER: I am glad to hear that.

MR. PENNEFATHER: That is common sense. After that stage, some people recommend bonuses; but, from my knowledge of Victoria, it is a most disastrous policy. Instead of going into the hands of the people whom it was intended to help, the money got into the hands of the middleman. Seeing the way in which the generosity of the Victorian Parliament had been abused, the bonus system was very speedily restricted.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But it did its work first.

MR. PENNEFATHER: That is an assertion without proof, like many other assertions that I have heard from the other side of the House. If it be necessary to encourage the export of produce from this colony, it will become a question as to how the bonus system shall be applied; and I hope that any such system may not be applied here in the way in which it was applied in Victoria, where it had a disastrous effect, by making the middleman rich and draining the pockets of the general community. The result of that experience has been that the bonus system of Victoria had to be revoked.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There was an export.

MR. PENNEFATHER: Of course there was an export, or they would not have had the bonus; but who got the bonus? The middleman—the man who went round to gather up the produce of the farmers. It was he who never raised the produce, but exported it, and got the bonus on the export.

MR. VOSPER: Did the exports cease when the bonus ceased?

MR. PENNEFATHER: No; because, by a wise system of protection which that colony established, there had been raised a large class of farmers in the country, who were able to produce more than the colony could consume, and so the export went on. Now let me understand one thing. I have heard it said—and I am glad to be reminded of the fact, for I had almost forgotten the incident—by no less a person than the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), that in this country the farmer was so sleepy and so indifferent to his own interests that he was not to be relied on to seriously undertake the task of meeting the demand for produce. Does that hon. gentleman think for one moment that in new country, in virgin country, in country covered in parts with dense undergrowth as well as huge timber, the land can be cleared in a year or two?

MR. VOSPER: How about the density of the settlers?

MR. PENNEFATHER: The density of the settlers is about equal to the density of the hon. member who inter-

jects, though the hon. member plumes himself upon having a very keen intellect. I will again return to my subject, if he will allow me to proceed. New country requires time to clear. The man who goes into a forest to clear it takes, so to speak, what is practically a farewell of his friends for at least one year, when he gets beyond the region of railway communication. He lives certainly, during that time, in a far worse condition than the miner—why? Because he has not the common indulgence—or shall I term it endearment—of meeting a fellow creature. He leads a hermit's life, away from his fellow man. When, at the close of the day, that man returns to his humpy, or whatever he has to sleep in, how does he enjoy himself? He feels, I might almost say, aghast at the mighty stillness and desolation which surround him, no human creature to talk to. The miner on the field has his mate. He is in his camp at night, and, no matter how he has worked during the day, he is cheered up by the voice of his fellow-man; but the man who goes into the forest to cultivate the soil has to pass through privations which, I venture to say, if they had to be endured for three months by some of those hon. gentlemen who are smiling and chirping opposite, would make them the most solemn-looking individuals imaginable, and they would wear their hair right down to their knees. Some hon. gentlemen opposite are very liberal—they propose to do wonderful things for the unfortunate farmer. I do not say he is unfortunate: I wish to qualify that absolutely; but I say, let us give to the man who has to till the soil of this colony the same advantages as the other colonies gave those who went on the land there. We seek no more, and we certainly ask for no less. It may be said this is a subject that has been threshed threadbare. So it has, particularly during this debate. But I am only too glad when an hon. member who differs from me in opinion will do me the favour and the honour of eliciting information from me upon any subject concerning which he is not well informed. I was sorry to hear the observations that fell from the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), this evening. But I do think that what he said must have been said in a nervous condition of

mind, in which condition, unfortunately for some people, their tongues run away with their heads.

MR. SIMPSON: I think he is pretty cool, you know.

MR. PENNEFATHER: If he is pretty cool, then that is the worst possible apology he could offer, because I do not think for one moment that a gentleman who shows such personal feeling, and who makes such personal allusions to those who differ from him, should say that he does so intentionally.

MR. VOSPER: You are a nice man to talk about personal allusions!

MR. PENNEFATHER: I am exceedingly glad to again have the honour of being interrupted by the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie. He is a walking encyclopædia of human knowledge. He carries it about in every pocket. It overflows even into his boots.

A MEMBER: What has that to do with the food duties?

MR. PENNEFATHER: It has got a lot to do with the food duties; because the hon. member is so full of information on the subject that he can give it out by the yard, and statistics to support it. What does it all come to? The members of the Opposition have not met the point at issue. We have been told by some that the food duties amounts to 10d. per head per week; and another authority has stated that the duties amount to three farthings per head per day, while a third authority gave the amount per head per annum. These facts have never been contradicted by any member sitting on the Opposition benches. If hon. members on the Opposition side could have proved they were not correct, they should have shown in what respect they were wrong.

MR. VOSPER: You contradict yourself.

MR. PENNEFATHER: I must say, when the hon. member is humorous he is pleasant and cheerful, and will say more in a minute than others could say in a month. He gives a thrust, and then retires into safety. He attacked this side of the House with great vehemence. Occasionally his voice rose to the highest pitch, and again it was soft as a cooing dove. The various gradations of the human gamut were brought into full play. One of these days, the hon. gentle-

man will adorn another platform, and I am sure he will be a shining light in such a community. The hon. member for Geraldton, after exhausting all his arguments and comments, wound up by paying the highest compliment he could to his leader. The hon. gentleman said he did not think there was any necessity for prolonging the debate, as they had the assurance of the Premier that the subject of tariff revision would be dealt with next session.

MR. SIMPSON: Do you agree with my idea?

MR. PENNEFATHER: The hon. gentleman represents essentially a town constituency—he represents the small town of Geraldton, if I may be pardoned for saying so, and he speaks with an airy indifference as to the people who live in other districts. He is a free lance; he is a freetrader; but I question if his views would be acceptable to people in any other constituency.

A MEMBER: They like to listen to him.

MR. PENNEFATHER: They listen to the hon. member for Geraldton, because he is always a lively entertainer.

MR. SIMPSON: I hope I shall be able to reciprocate.

MR. PENNEFATHER: The hon. member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) pointed out that he had two classes of constituents to represent—the farmer and the saw-miller. I suppose we may designate the miller as an artisan, and say that the hon. member for the Canning is in a quandary as to what to do on this question of the duties. [MR. WILSON: Not at all.] If chaff has to be protected, it is only a slight stretch to something else being protected. In a few months, perhaps, the hon. member's constituents may be raising other products, and, no doubt, it may be felt desirable to protect these as well as chaff. I do not think farmers are so dead to their interests as to neglect to raise any products which promise a profit. A man may suppose that the seed he has put in the ground is not growing, because he does not see it. But he has only to wait a few weeks until it springs forth. The farmer is supposed to meet the wants of any excess of population. Who sent the miner on the land? Himself, of course. We do not blame him. We admire

his pluck. The miner goes on the goldfields because the work has more attraction for him than the cultivation of the soil: he goes for better wages, or in the hope of making a fortune in a short time. It is admitted that every facility for communication with the capital must be given. That means the expenditure of large sums of money, for which the whole people of the colony are responsible. If the goldfields caved in, who would be the first man to clear out of the colony? The miner, who would leave the people tied to the land to bear the burden of the national debt. They could not get away. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Impress it on them.] I wish to impress it on them, and to appeal to hon. members as to whether my view is not that of common sense. It is said a lot of money is being sent to the other colonies. But what class of people are they who are sending money away? Many people run away with the idea that the only men sending money away are those who support their wives and families in other colonies because they cannot afford to maintain them here. That is true to some extent, but it does not account for all. Nearly every man who has come to this country has come to better himself. I do not exclude myself, and I am not ashamed of it. Many a man has mortgaged his little home on the other side before coming here. When he has raised a little money and attended to the immediate wants of his family, he tries to get rid of the mortgage. And when he succeeds, what follows? If he has sufficient money saved to return to his home and his friends, so great is the temptation in human nature that he skips across the border, although wages may be considerably lower there than here. These are positions you cannot get away from, and that is the reason why I say that these people, for whom large expenditures have been made in railways, post and telegraph service, and so on, should contribute their full share to the revenue. As these big public works have been erected for their benefit, it is only fair that they should contribute something to the national exchequer for the liquidation of the large sums that have been spent on their account. [A MEMBER: They have paid it all.] They have not. It is no use running away with that idea. If a man succeeds here, and is lucky enough

to make his fortune, what does he do? Look at Bayley's Reward! What did the men do who discovered that fortune? Did they stay in this colony 24 hours? No; they cleared away to the colony from whence they came, and I do not blame them for doing it. One of the original men who discovered it went back to Victoria and died there. The temptation is strong. These people run to the goldfields and practically leave the agricultural part of the colony neglected. The policy of this colony is to build up the colony as a whole. We must try and look after the farmer, because if ever it does come about that the gold gives out, then will it not be wisdom on the part of the Government of this country to have done their very utmost to induce people to raise produce, and thus to be able to pay off some of the debts that will hang heavily on our shoulders?

MR. EWING: You did not say that in Victoria.

MR. PENNEFATHER: I do not know what the hon. member for the Swan means.

MR. EWING: You were a freetrader then.

MR. PENNEFATHER: The hon. member has just come into the House, and did not hear the explanation I gave to the member for North-East Coolgardie. If he will take the trouble of consulting the hon. member, he will learn why I advocated the abolition of protection in Victoria. What is the good of having protection, if you are able not only to supply the local demand, but to export? A protective tax in such a case would be inoperative. I do not wish to weary hon. members with any further remarks, but before I sit down I would like to make one observation about the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon). If I understand him rightly, he is a freetrader. He wants a free port. If he is a protectionist, then of course I am at a loss to understand his views. If he is a freetrader, and wants a free port, and all the shipping of the world congregated at Fremantle, it would, no doubt, be a grand thing for Fremantle, but it would be a very bad thing for the farmer. The Fremantle harbour was not built for the exclusive, and I may say selfish, purpose of scooping in all the money made in the colony, and leaving the farmer out in

the cold. If the hon. member felt rather keenly some observations which fell from the right hon. the Premier, he must remember that the remarks which prompted them came, I think, with rather a peculiar grace from the hon. member for South Fremantle, seeing that he was the one to second the amendment. That was where the rap came in, and if the hon. member placed himself in such an embarrassing position, he must put up with the political consequences of it. I hope that, whatever may be the views of hon. members on this question of food duties, they will be guided in their action by one thought: Is it opportune at the present time to call for a revision of the tariff?

MR. MONGER (York) : Representative of one of the agricultural districts in this colony, it is almost necessary for me to refer shortly to remarks which fell from some speakers on the Opposition side of the House. I must first refer to the comparisons made by the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie. From his statements, one would infer that the farmer and the squatter are two of the most undesirable settlers it is possible to have in any community. It is unnecessary for me to point out the small experience that hon. gentleman has had with these two sections of the community, and I will leave you to infer, from what we know of his experience, the reasons for his being so adverse to these industries. It is not my intention to refer to those minute items which have been the subject of such long speeches. It is unnecessary to refer to the argument as to why the duty on bacon and cheese, and one or two other items, should not be removed; but I shall refer to the general question at issue, and appeal to hon. members as to whether it would be in the interest of this great colony to try and down one industry, for the sake of saving the paltry amount which has been stated to the House in the figures plentifully quoted by hon. members. Is it desirable to put the country to the unnecessary turmoil of dealing with the question of revising the tariff at the present time? I say, no. I believe there is not one member sitting opposite to those on the Treasury benches who has any desire of taking the seat the Premier occupies to-day; and if it were a question of going to

the country, as one young member informed us, he amongst others would be about the first who would not be returned to the positions they hold to-day. [A MEMBER: Who is that?] The member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing). It was his desire that an appeal should be made to the country, and I venture to say that, if made, he and some others would not hold their seats in this Assembly.

MR. DOHERTY: We would be sorry to lose him.

MR. MONGER: One member referred to a land tax for recouping the knocking away of these duties, but it was only his ignorance of the question which could have led him to make the mere suggestion of a land tax in Western Australia. Taking every acre of land that has been alienated from the Crown, including those held under poison lease and under occupation licenses, together with the lands granted to the Midland Railway Company, I say the total quantity of land alienated does not amount to ten million acres in the aggregate, and the whole of the land alienated embraces only 1-65th part of the total area of this colony; and any gentleman who attempts to advocate a land tax in this colony must see, when he realises the true position, that it would be a sorry thing for Western Australia in regard to the settlement of the other 650 million acres. The only reason for making that assertion is the fact that the hon. member has not visited the south-western and the eastern districts of the colony, where agriculture is carried on. Another member said a tax on the unimproved value of larger estates would be a means of further inducing settlement in Western Australia. I believe that, in the last session of Parliament, the Government were good enough to allot £200,000 for the purchase, under the powers of a Bill which has been passed, some of those large estates which have been referred to; and I believe the first gentleman who reaped the advantage of a purchase made under that Bill was the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson), a gentleman who started farming and gave it up after a very short time; so that the first gentleman who availed himself of that vote of Parliament was the hon. member for Geraldton.

MR. SIMPSON: I did not avail myself at all. The Government came after me.

MR. MONGER: Members on this side have been called upon to remember the pledges they gave to the electors. I would remind the hon. member for Albany (Mr. Leake) of the numerous pledges he made, when seeking election by that majority of one which returned him to this House.

[MR. LEAKE: What are they?] Several of those pledges he has not carried out. There are other small matters of detail referred to by hon. gentlemen on the Opposition side, but perhaps the most laughable one was the description given by the member for Albany of what you can buy for half-a-crown in the other colonies, as compared with what you can buy in Perth for the same sum. His argument was so weak that it hardly needs a reply, for in Perth and Fremantle you can buy almost as much for half-a-crown—even including frozen meat, and those other articles which have been so much referred to—as you can buy in Victoria or South Australia for the same money. There have been many very strong remarks about a supposed meat ring, and I think the answers from the gentlemen who are supposed to be connected with it clearly prove there is practically little or nothing in the suggestion. It seems to me a strong point, in all this debate, has been to try and bring about a supposed difference between the settler and the miner. It has been my pleasure on many occasions to visit the different goldfields, and as far as I can judge, from Kimberley down to Coolgardie the one desire has always been for the miner and the settler to work hand-in-hand together. I am pleased to see the majority of the goldfields constituencies have returned to Parliament gentlemen who appear to have that one desire in view. I hope that, as long as the goldfields continue to progress, they will continue to send as representatives, men who will have the one idea in view—that of advancing the whole of the interests of Western Australia.

Question—that the amendment (Mr. Leake's) be agreed to—put, and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	11
Noes	30
<hr/>			
Majority against	19

AYES.

Mr. Ewing
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Kenney
Mr. Oats
Mr. Oldham
Mr. Simpson
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Vosper
Mr. Wallace
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Leake (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Burt
Mr. Connolly
Mr. Connor
Mr. Doherty
Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. George
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hall
Mr. Harper
Mr. Higham
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Hubble
Mr. Kingsmill
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Locke
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. Moran
Mr. Morgans
Mr. Pennefather
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Rason
Mr. Sholl
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Veun
Mr. Wood
Mr. Hooley (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Main question—that the Address-in-Reply be adopted—again stated by the SPEAKER.

MR. QUINLAN: I move that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the next sitting was fixed for 7:30 p.m. (Wednesday).

The House adjourned at 12:40 midnight.