

Legislative Assembly.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH JULY, 1896.

Message: Supply; in Committee of Supply and of Ways and Means—Supply Bill, £250,000; first, second, and third readings—Returns: Cost, &c., of Mullewa-Cue Railway; Cost, &c., of Northam-Kalgoorlie Railways; Leases on gold-fields, and Rentals; Expenditure on Perth-Fremantle Road; Claims and Payments re Railway Goods Damaged—Motion: Committee of Inquiry re Fremantle Harbor Works—Address-in-Reply; resumption of debate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

MESSAGE—SUPPLY.

The following message from His Excellency the Governor was presented by the Premier, and read to the House:—

“GERARD SMITH,

“Governor.

“In accordance with the provisions of ‘Section 67 of ‘The Constitution Act, ‘1889,’ the Governor recommends to the ‘Legislative Assembly: that provision be ‘made to the extent of £250,000 towards ‘defraying the expenses of the various ‘Departments and Services of the ‘Colony during the year ending the last ‘day of June, 1897.

“Government House, Perth, 15th ‘July, 1896.”

Ordered—That the foregoing message be referred to the Committee of Supply, so soon as constituted.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Supply (the Standing Orders having been suspended so as to permit of a Supply Bill being passed through all stages at one sitting),—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved, “That there be granted to Her Majesty, on account of the service of the year 1896-7, a sum not exceeding £250,000, towards defraying the expenses

of the various departments and services of the colony.”

Agreed to.

Resolution reported to the House, and report adopted.

IN COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS.

On the motion of the Premier, a resolution was agreed to for granting a sum not exceeding £250,000 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, in accordance with the resolution passed in Committee of Supply.

Resolution reported to the House, and report adopted.

SUPPLY BILL, £250,000.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), by leave and without notice, introduced a Supply Bill for applying out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of £250,000 to the service of the year ending 30th June, 1897. The Bill was read a first time, also a second time; and, having passed through committee without amendment, the Bill was read a third time, and passed. The Bill was transmitted to the Legislative Council.

RETURN—COST, &c., OF MULLEWA-CUE RAILWAY.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid upon the table, showing,—1, the cost of construction of railway from Mullewa to Cue, inclusive of extra embankments, &c., between Yalgoo and Magnet; 2, the total cost of rails, fastenings, &c., also of stations or other works not included in Baxter and Prince's tender; 3, the cost of rolling-stock for above line; 4, the amount of surplus available from moneys voted for construction and equipment of above line.

Agreed to.

RETURN—COST, &c., OF NORTHAM-KALGOORLIE RAILWAY.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid upon the table, showing,—1, the total cost of railways from Northam to Kalgoorlie, inclusive of permanent way material, stations, &c., not included in

contract; 2, the cost of rolling-stock for above line; 3, the balance available from loan moneys already voted for above railways.

Agreed to.

RETURN—LEASES ON GOLDFIELDS AND RENTALS.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid upon the table, showing,—1, the number of leases in each proclaimed goldfield of the colony; 2, the total area of all lands held under mining leases; 3, the total annual rentals received for the years ending June 30, 1894, 1895, and 1896 respectively; 4, the approximate rentals for the year ending June 30, 1897.

Agreed to.

RETURN—EXPENDITURE ON PERTH-FREMANTLE ROAD.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid upon the table, showing,—1, the amount voted for the construction of the Perth-Fremantle Road; 2, the amount expended out of public funds on said road to date; 3, the amount required to finish said road.

Agreed to.

RETURN—CLAIMS AND PAYMENTS RE RAILWAY GOODS DAMAGED.

MR. RANDELL, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid upon the table, showing,—1, all amounts paid by the Railway Department in compensation for goods signed for and short-delivered or damaged in transit, otherwise than by accidents to trains; also, compensation paid for personal injuries to passengers; 2, claims paid for goods, &c., damaged or destroyed by accidents to trains; also, to passengers or their representatives for personal injuries; 3, a statement of claims made but not yet adjusted.

Agreed to.

MOTION—COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY RE FREMANTLE HARBOR WORKS.

MR. GEORGE moved—"That, in the opinion of this House, a committee should be appointed to inquire into the working and cost of the Fremantle harbor works,

with power to call in such professional assistance as may be found necessary." He said he was quite aware that in this motion he would receive no support from the Government benches, for, if he did, that circumstance would give considerable point to questions which were raised in the able speech of the honorable member for Nannine, on the previous evening, with regard to the Engineer-in-Chief. The reasons for asking for this return were that, in his opinion, and in the opinion of many practical men who had carried out a considerable amount of heavy public works in other colonies, the costs that had been laid before the country in relation to the Fremantle harbor works were not such as would meet with the commendation of those persons who would be engaged in carrying out such work if let by private contract. It was very easy to present a return of cost which might be accurate in some particulars, but entirely misleading as to the actual and final cost of the works. There had been considerable comment among practical men—not theoretical men, for unfortunately theoretical men were always backed up by their colleagues, whereas practical men were more open to conviction, and more inclined to question the things set before them—as to the cost of carrying out these works, and there were grave questions as to whether they ought to be carried out in the manner now pursued. The Engineer-in-Chief was responsible for the statement of cost which had been placed before the country, but he (Mr. George) ventured to say that that gentleman, able and experienced though he was, had not time to give to the necessary supervision of that work, or to see that it was carried out in a proper manner. The Engineer-in-Chief had lieutenants, it was true, but those lieutenants were not guided by the same principles which they would be guided by if working for private contractors. It was very easy indeed to give a small cost of public works, on paper, but those persons who were accustomed to that class of work would readily understand that the adding or subtracting of a few thousand yards of material would make a considerable difference in the percentage of cost, and, if he (Mr. George) was correctly informed, there had been no cross sections of the bill taken from which this material

was removed, that the mode of calculation adopted for it was that so many tons had been carried into the sea, or placed on the base, and so many trains per day had been run carrying a reputed quantity of tons. If that was correct, it was a false and misleading way of calculation—a way that did not obtain for a single moment amongst those persons who had to reckon pounds and shillings in their calculations, instead of reckoning hundreds or thousands of pounds, as was done in large Government works. He was told there was a weighbridge on the works, but he did not think it was used in weighing the material. The usual practical way of calculating contents was to take the cubic contents, and from this calculation to deduce the quantity of tons. The present Engineer-in-Chief had a weakness for calculating in tons. He had left the old-fashioned practice of calculating cubic yards, and preferred to reckon in tons. While the Engineer-in-Chief was allowed to carry on these works by the pernicious system of day labor, he might make a show of cheapness by calculating so many tons thrown into the sea; but he (Mr. George) ventured to say that, if the committee he asked for were granted, and were empowered to call for such professional assistance as might be required, the country would be somewhat startled by the result. He would freely admit, and perhaps in doing so he was giving to the Government one of the strongest arguments they could bring against him, that he did not think it possible for any Government department to carry out works as cheaply as they could be done by contractors. One argument used against the contracting system was that the material in this case was of such a peculiar nature that it would be difficult to judge which portion should be used in the mole, and which should be thrown into the river, if contractors were to carry out the work; but that statement carried its own refutation, for if those in charge of the work were not capable of drawing up a specification to meet the case, they were not worthy of the position in which they were placed. He had not the slightest doubt that if this system, which was going on throughout the country, of doing Government work by continuous day labor, and which the Premier seemed to

favor, were allowed to go on, the ultimate result would be to enhance the value of the heads of those huge departments, and make them, as it were, the one sole controlling power throughout the colony. He did not wish to disparage the Fremantle harbor works. On the contrary, he would be prepared, on proper occasion, to go even further than the Premier proposed to go; but he did argue that, while they gave the most it was possible to do in this respect, let them give it economically and justly to the rest of the country, and he did not believe they were doing that now. He believed that the costs that were placed before the House last session were about as false as it was possible to be. Grant this Committee, and he would try to show that this was so. But, of course, if the Government were to consent to this Committee, they would at once admit that the gentleman in whom they put their faith for the Coolgardie water scheme was perhaps a little wanting in the foresight necessary to carry it out.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir John Forrest) said that, as he had had a good deal to do with the Fremantle harbor works from their inception, he had asked his honorable friend, the Director of Public Works, to allow him to reply to the honorable member for the Murray. He (the Premier) hoped that the honorable member would not press his motion, as there was really no occasion for it. The Government were fully prepared to give every information that the House desired in regard to these works. They would give a return in any practical shape that might be asked for by hon. members, as to the expenditure, as to the way the work was being carried on, and as to the cost of everything. Indeed, they would give as much detail as the House desired. But for the honorable member to ask for a Select Committee to inquire into the working and the cost of these works, with power to call for professional advice, would imply that there was something going wrong in regard to the construction and the carrying out of these great works. He (the Premier) was in the way of hearing the opinions of the public, as well as most members, and he had never heard, during the time these works were going on, anyone express dissatisfaction either as to the

progress of the works, or the way in which they were being managed. He had never heard anyone say that there was any undue extravagance in carrying on the works. In fact, he had heard no complaint up to the present. This was perhaps strange, that no one should make a complaint, either from Fremantle or from the members of this House, as to the arrangements that were being made for the carrying out of this great national work. That being so, was it wise or reasonable that a committee of this House should be appointed to inquire into the working and cost of these harbor works, and be empowered to call for engineering advice, when the present was the first occasion on which any complaint had been made?

MR. GEORGE: What about last session?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir John Forrest): The hon. member admitted, by his own words, that to appoint such a committee would be a censure upon the gentleman who was entrusted by the Government with the control of these works. The economical way in which these works had been carried out by the able and experienced officer in charge of them did not warrant the motion of the hon. member. As to the quantity of stone that had been cast into the sea, he had no doubt the department had many ways of getting at it. First, there was the quantity carried on the trucks, then there were the absolute sections of the work as it existed so far as it had gone; and hon. members could have these sections by measurement and by sounding, showing the absolute position of the structure and the slope from end to end. Drawings of these sections could be placed on the table of the House, and he would ask the Director of Public Works to have them placed there, so that the hon. member for the Murray, or others, might be able to calculate for themselves whether the amount of stuff reported to have been thrown into the sea had actually found a place within the particular section. As far as the Government were concerned, they had nothing to hide or keep back in this matter. The hon. member seemed to think that the work might have been carried out cheaper by contractors. He (the Premier) was not going to say that day work under the direction of a Government department, or carried out by any

one else, was quite as economical as if the same work were let out by contract; but in letting a contract there were many contingencies, such as law-suits of an interminable kind in regard to details, and unless the department made conditions that might appear unfair or harsh, it would not be easy to provide for all that was necessary in some Government works. That was especially the case in carrying out harbor works, where some of the details were not known to a certainty, and if such works were let out by contract, he did not feel so sure that they would be done more economically. Indeed, he believed that in the present case it would be much more expensive to have carried on these works by the contract system than by the present system, and would not be so satisfactory. It was too late for the hon. member to talk now about doing this work by contract, because they were hoping to see it in a fair way towards completion in a short time; and any observations with regard to what the Government ought to have done two or three years ago would not have much weight at the present time. Therefore, in view of the offer he now made to the House, to supply the sections and any other reasonable information which the hon. member for the Murray or any other hon. member might require, he would ask that hon. member not to press his motion; and he would ask the House, if necessary, to divide on the matter, in order not to cast a slur and censure on the able and experienced officer who was doing good work here, and was raising up a monument to himself and the colony in these harbor works at Fremantle.

MR. SOLOMON said he had watched the progress of the Fremantle harbor works, and, as far as he could see, the work was being done efficiently. Possibly there had been some extra cost with regard to the sand-filling which had been attempted by means of a dredge, but he understood that that was now being altered. In regard to the motion before the House, if the hon. member for the Murray had asked for a return on any matters connected with the works, he (Mr. Solomon) would have been very glad to have supported him, but he thought that at the present moment when they were entertaining ideas for important new works, it would be in-

jurious to the colony to have a board appointed. He thought he could go as far as to say that the Government had imported a good man to carry out the harbor works, but that the Engineer-in-Chief had too much to do in connection with the railways. He hoped that in this matter there would soon be a change, and that the Engineer-in-Chief would be relieved of a portion of the railway work.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said that, while he was of opinion the hon. member for Murray had not taken the best means of arriving at the object in view, he (Mr. Illingworth) had not, like the Premier, failed to hear reflections upon the manner in which the works were being carried out. Regarding the matter of cost, there were prominent men employed on the works who asserted that there was a misleading process adopted with reference to the quantity of material that was being made use of, and that the actual cost of the works would not therefore be shown. He did not place very much importance upon these representations, or he would long before have brought the matter before the House. After all, the country had to pay the cost of the work, and the appointment of the board would not alter the price, and, therefore, he would not vote for the motion. But, after all, it was only to the quantities of the material, and not the cost of the entire scheme, that the misleading process to which he had referred applied. Of course it was unsatisfactory that such a misleading process should be going on. It would be far better for the House to know every detail of the price of the material. He did not think that the passing of this motion would further the interests of the colony or lessen the total outlay. He was perfectly satisfied that the accurate figures were not being given per ton or per cubic yard. He was perfectly satisfied that there was something wrong. [THE PREMIER: Ask for a return.] Although he was perfectly satisfied that there was something wrong, he was sure that the hon. member for the Murray would not get at what was wrong by the process by which he attempted to arrive at it, and consequently he (Mr. Illingworth) would not vote for the motion.

MR. GEORGE said that, while he had gained a little information, he had not

said anything about the Engineer-in-Chief that was so disrespectful as the statement of the hon. member for South Fremantle, who had said that the Government had imported the Engineer-in-Chief to carry out the harbor works, but the hon. gentleman omitted to say whether the Engineer-in-Chief had come in under bond or at *ad valorem* duty. He did not think it was necessary to discuss the motion any further, but he might say that he had so much respect for the Engineer-in-Chief that he thought he was entitled to more than the miserable sum of £1,200 per annum. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] As the Premier had promised him that he would obtain a full and detailed return—[THE PREMIER: Reasonable and practicable ones.]—he would on that understanding withdraw the motion, but he must be allowed to judge at to whether the returns were ample for his purpose, it being possible for the Public Works Department to bluff inquirers in their search for information. He would ask the leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

DEBATE RESUMED.

MR. SIMPSON: I do not know whether it is that I am growing older or becoming more practical, but I really think that this process of the Parliamentary programme that we go through on the consideration of the Governor's Speech and the formality of moving an Address-in-Reply savors something of the ludicrous to the members of this House. When the gentleman who is responsible for this Speech, the Premier, appealed to members as he did last night to avoid discussing any clauses of the Speech until his views were before the House, I think it is a waste of a great deal of very valuable public time for us to consider the Speech at such length. It must have been pleasant to members of this House to listen to the hon. member for the Moore in his genial and courteous fashion moving the motion, and they must have been slightly amused at the ardor exhibited by the hon. member, which is so indicative of the earnestness of proselytes in a new cause. And it was, indeed, with

pleasure that I read the remarks of the hon. member for West Perth. I was glad indeed to be assured how closely he is in touch with the advancing condition of the colony, and I believe that he will break away from the old conservative side, that Tory bent of the present Ministry, and that he will be a more progressive and active administrator of the affairs of the people of this country at the present time. The Speech, of course, exhibits the great prosperity of the colony, and the splendid way our resources are beginning to open up. Although I am not wishing to look at the colony despondently, I like to look facts plainly in the face, and when one reads the report of the Collector of Customs, he finds no great grounds for extreme satisfaction. Our industries are not expanding in all directions as fast as we should like to see. The gold export is increasing enormously; last year we turned out nearly ten tons of gold. The opening up of the mines is beginning to tell, but when one looks at the commercial enterprise of the colony, one cannot be very specially satisfied. If we are to eliminate gold from our exports, I do not think there are any very great grounds for congratulation yet, but I do not want to look upon the dismal side. I have been always looked upon as an extreme optimist. We have only just begun in the development of the country, and I think as a people in this great big part of the British Empire that we have only just started in pursuit of our goal. But I do not think that there is any very great ground for congratulation when we get away from the gold industry. And if I might be permitted to suggest an innovation in our Parliamentary procedure, I would like to point out, although it is a little early to do so, that we have not as yet the departmental reports. Doubtless, Ministers have the information, but I think it would be for the public good if the reports of the various departments were placed in the hands of hon. members at the meeting of Parliament. I can see no reason why they should not be placed before us. I know that the reports of the Lands Department have reached the morning daily which is the great supporter of the Government, but they have not yet reached the members of this House. [THE PREMIER: Well, it is on the table

of the House.] Then they have not been distributed to the representatives of the people who, I think, should receive the reports of that great department called the Lands as soon as a newspaper. In the early part of the Speech the question of Federation is alluded to, and I must really congratulate the Ministry upon their accelerated activity with regard to this question. Personally, I thought that their attitude towards this question, so far as I have been able to judge, was luke-warm. I had never gathered from the Premier's action, or that of any other member of the Ministry, that they were strong on the federal idea. The Federation question is talked of as if it were a new subject. I trust that when a measure dealing with it is submitted to Parliament, and representatives are selected to attend the Convention which is spoken of, the public will be given every opportunity in the selection of those representatives, and that they will be enabled to speak definitely, supported by strong public opinion. The great question that comes next is that of additional representation. It is one that excited some rather angry remarks from the Premier last night. [THE PREMIER: No, no.] I do not know why the hon. member should be so peculiarly thin-skinned when any matter is suggested coming from the hon. member for Nannine. I believe, and I think that every member of this House believes conscientiously, that this Parliament, sitting here on the 15th July of this year, does not represent the people of this country. The changing conditions of the colony establish the fact that the members of this Parliament are not distinctly representative of the wishes and desires of the great majority of those whom the Electoral Act enables to elect as the representative of the people. I was a little surprised to observe that the statement has gone forth throughout the country that some members of Parliament are opposed to representation on the basis of population. I appeal to the House to extend honor and justice. On what other basis than that of population can representation be given? Let the superstructure be what it may, this should be the foundation, in giving to the people the rights and freedoms which are their birthright—the recognition of the

principle contended for by our forefathers that there shall be no taxation without representation. I do hope that in the future of this great country equitable representation will be given to the people, that due consideration will be given to the basis of population, and that at the same time the wisdom and integrity of Parliament will be so combined that the Houses may be able to give due representation to the various industries and interests of the country. I cannot imagine that such legislation is incompatible with the best interests of this country. It seems to me that we have got to look the question straight in the face, and we have to realise that indeed, growing as we are, with enormous revenue coming into our treasury, we must give the people who find the means a fair voice in saying how the revenue is to be spent and how they are to be governed. Clause 5 provide railways. Well, certainly, in the present condition of the colony the work of the Legislature is very largely to make provision for opening up Western Australia by means of railways and roads, not exclusively to make provision for the agricultural interests and the development of the resources of the land. These works to which Clause 5 alludes shall have my hearty support, and I hope it will be realised in connection with these works that this colony is getting beyond the sandalwood and pork stage—that this country wants to make a move a little further on. There is a good deal of mercury and quicksilver in the colony; and it is about time that we realise that we must push ahead in our development, if we are to keep abreast of Australian progress. I notice that mention is made of drainage, sewerage, and water supply to the towns of the colony. I hope that these works will be carried out under a comprehensive measure, and I hope that the Government in their wisdom will see the advisableness of adopting the suggestion that was made last year in the form of a motion by the hon. member for Beverley, that a public works committee should be appointed, to whom these matters shall be submitted for consideration before they are brought before the House. If such a committee had been appointed in the other colonies, they would have been saved the expendi-

ture of enormous sums upon unproductive works which have caused many of their troubles. In Clause 6, reference is made to measures dealing with customs duties. The phrase is so vague that it does not even indicate whether duties are to be put on or taken off, but we may suppose, from the interjection of a Minister, that a reduction of duties is intended. I hope that the Government will not be long in dealing with this matter, and that Western Australia may soon become a place where it will be possible to live as cheaply as in any part of the world. For the more money we take out of the pockets of the people in the form of taxes on the necessities of life, the less they have to devote to the development of the country. I shall welcome any measure that is designed to take off customs duties and to cheapen the cost of living. The Agricultural Land Bank is to come up again for a little help, a little tinkering, and a little suggestion. I am perfectly satisfied that one form the bank will take will be an application for more money. At the present time I am unable to say that the bank is doing good. It is unfair to anticipate what the results from it will be. I desire to deal with the bank in perfect fairness; and, within the limits of reasonable security, it behoves us to make it do more good. I shall only be too glad to hear that it has succeeded. The reference to new mining legislation is not clear as to whether it relates to mineral land, or whether it relates to the gold-fields. I shall be very glad to see an extension of the land law with a view to helping the producer. But it seems to me that the pastoralist is as much entitled to free land as the agriculturist, who now receives it. I am convinced that if a man will improve his holding, and turn it to the best account, it is to the interests of the colony that he should have it free of rent. We want to create industries in the colony; and we should place the pastoralist upon the same basis as the agriculturist, if we desire to make the new measure an equitable one. I have heard for the last five years sympathy for the squatter expressed in this House. I very seldom sympathise; I don't care about it. I would rather try to help; and if we start with a principle that we give land to any deserving settler, I see no reason why we should not apply the

rule to the pastoralists. With regard to the public works that are alluded to, I hope that during this session some action may be taken touching the architectural branch of the Public Works Department. When complaints were made in the House last year about the Government architectural branch, we were told that the cost for plans and supervision of works was not more than five per cent. I am absolutely in possession of facts which show that the cost is over nine per cent. In travelling about this country a great deal as I do, I see things called buildings in the form of hospitals, court-houses, post-offices, and police-stations, which are sights for gods and men. Nothing is more scandalous than the expenditure in the architect's branch in this colony. In the back blocks the other day I was talking to a practical man, who stuck his knife into the material of one of the Government buildings. He said—"In the name of God, did you ever see such wasteful extravagance?" In saying these things, I hope I speak the words of soberness and truth. I hope the Government will take action in the form of abolishing our architectural department, which is remarkable for nothing but enormous waste. In the other colonies, the public architects have been abolished as being extravagant and corrupt. The neighboring Governments were driven to that action by the force of public opinion. Clause 12 leads up to the Bunbury harbor improvements. On reading the Vice-regal Speech I found this brought in in a very apologetic sort of way. It was to be found at the bottom of a page, at the very last line, and wore a sort of "I hope I don't intrude" air. Well, Ministers having placed it there among railways to agricultural centres and other large public works, I thought that as a public matter it was my duty to look into it carefully and consider the reasons for harbor works at Bunbury, so I turned up the Collector of Customs' report, which I thought would furnish me with exact and positive information, which I think the Premier himself will not gainsay, and sure enough I found the information. Page 24 of that report furnished me with a schedule. At the end of schedule 9, dealing with the number, tonnage, and crews of vessels entered and cleared out of various ports in the colony during 1895, I saw "Bun-

bury—1 vessel entered, 498 tons, crew 13;" and it never went out again. It never got out. [THE PREMIER: Those are foreign vessels.] I don't know anything about that. There was one vessel; and here we are to be asked to spend thousands and thousands of pounds to make a harbor there. [THE PREMIER: Oh, you know better than that.] This is an official report, and it shows that one vessel entered at the port of Bunbury, and she never got away. (Laughter.) I trust that the House will accept this schedule; it is the only information I could get about Bunbury, and Parliament is asked to spend huge sums of money for harbor works there. So much for Bunbury. It is gratifying that a large timber industry is growing up. I am sure that honorable members will remember the Premier recently sat in the classic fields of Bunbury and met his constituents. I have always observed that when he has visited Bunbury—whether it is due to the splendour and geniality of his welcome, or to the blue-star champagne that they are so fond of down there—he always makes some remarkable statement. When he was down there this last time he said that he was preparing some schemes that would stagger some people. Well, I may say, with Mr Dick Swiveller, that this country has had an unmitigated staggerer. In Clause 4 it is proposed to take water to the top of Mount Burges. The Premier sometimes drops into poetry. I think I remember on one occasion that he recited that poem entitled "Jump Jim Crow." It is amusing that the Premier in the short space of nine months can so Jump Jim Crow. Perhaps it will suggest to some members the danger of reading poetry, as it might be in danger of working itself into their beings. But here we have the Premier's speech last year on the electric supply and waterworks bill. On the 9th October, 1895, the Premier asked the House to pass this simple bill giving Crown licences to people who were willing to spend their money on enterprises of this kind, that the Government were not willing to undertake to supply goldfields with water and light. The Premier's words were:—"The Government are not prepared to recommend to Parliament any practical scheme for conveying a permanent water supply to Coolgardie. a

work which might cost millions of money, and in these circumstances it seems only fair that a private syndicate who may be prepared to undertake the task should have the opportunity of doing so." That is one member of the Ministry. We have other members speaking on this question. The Commissioner of Crown Lands, who is distinguished in this House for his integrity of purpose and stern sense of duty, speaking on the same matter on the 10th October, 1895, said:—"The fact of the matter is that the Government have been pestered with applications for small schemes, which it was very desirable indeed should be carried into effect. The Government could not do it, and they could not give anyone else permission to do it." The Attorney-General, whose words carry weight in this House, follows in the same strain. He says that the Government have no idea of carrying out any scheme of this sort for the supply of water to the goldfields. I referred to this matter last June when I was addressing my constituents. I said then that there was a scheme in the air. I knew that there was. I knew that materials were being prepared to construct an Engineer's monument—another one than that referred to last night by the Premier. The Government said "We will have another water tap on the top of Mount Burges which it will cost millions of pounds to complete." I challenge the Government to produce a mining man, of any grade from a mining engineer down to the commonest dry-blower, who would say that such a scheme was asked for from the Government or will be required. I have here a letter, with which I do not propose to weary the House, against the scheme, and I have a communication from a leading man connected with our goldfields, a man whose operations attest the confidence reposed in him by capitalists, and who affirms that there is no necessity for the Government to attempt to carry the water from the Darling Ranges to Coolgardie. I say, and I yield to no man in knowing the development of the goldfields, that we shall be able to strike water more or less at any depth. [THE PREMIER: Very much less, sometimes.] Then, again, there is danger in the air. I have received an urgent telegram, one asking for an immediate reply

about the Government water supply, and stating that if it were what it had been reported to be, further expenditure was to be stopped, and indents for materials withdrawn [THE PREMIER: That's Wilson.] It is Mr. Wilson, a man who has done a great deal for this country, who was in the forefront at Broken Hill, who was the very spine around which that great place, Broken Hill, had been built up—a man whose representative position and capital cannot be sneered at by the Premier, nor "snuffed" out by any premier—a man whose invested thousands give proof of his confidence in this colony. We know from another place the Government have distinctly agreed to allow persons to carry out schemes of water supply on to the goldfields, and are these to be blanketed by the Government pawning the credit of the country to raise another monument to an Engineer? [THE PREMIER: Name? name?] I will give the name. The leader of the Government in the Upper House, in speaking on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply last night, said that three private Bills would be introduced this session—[THE PREMIER: But they are going to introduce them themselves. Anyone can introduce a private Bill.]—to supply water to the goldfields. But these Bills are to be introduced with the consent of the Government; that is the position, for anyone who asks for names. [THE PREMIER: We have given no promise to anyone.] No, but we have heard the Premier in his place strongly urge that we should be very careful about any legislation which would involve the country in a doubtful expenditure. The public have made no demand for this scheme. I say that it was conceived by the Government, and thrown down by the Premier at the opening of the Coolgardie railway as a bribe to the goldfields. I say that the greater part of it is not for the goldfields at all; it is to supply failures in the railway system, as we know perfectly well that the railway tanks will not hold water. There were no advocates for the water supply until these railways were opened. Why not call it part of the railway system instead of a water supply scheme? However, we will have an

opportunity of debating this question later on, as the Premier says we are to have full information. The Premier said the policy would stagger some people. I do not know that that phrase is adequate to express it. The only name I can give it is an absolute and unmitigated staggerer.

THE PREMIER: You are the agent for the private speculator.

MR. SIMPSON: If I am, I am not so fortunate as the Premier, for he obtained for Dunn's Syndicate £500 from the revenue.

THE PREMIER: I never had anything to do with it.

MR. SIMPSON: Well, the whole matter was before the Supreme Court.

THE PREMIER: It was only £100, and I never got it for them.

MR. SIMPSON: £100 establishes the principle as much as £500.

THE PREMIER: I say again I never had anything to do with it.

MR. SIMPSON: You made a profit out of the Wealth of Nations, at any rate.

THE PREMIER: You are personal. My record is as clean as yours.

MR. SIMPSON: You started on me. If you attack me I will hit back. The Government appointed a Civil Service Commission, and we all expected that they would secure for that commission the best culture, integrity, and ability of the country, and when secured that the commission should be in a position to have ample opportunities of obtaining information. Instead of which the Government are wet-blanketing the enquiry. It has dragged its weary length along, and, although I am a member of it, I say it is an object of public contempt. It has developed into a political enquiry. On the other hand, the New South Wales enquiry, which had the assistance of the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, the general manager of the Australian Mutual Provident Society, and one gentleman representing the Civil Service, and which was wholly independent from political or parliamentary influence, wrought great good by a report, which will have happy results on the finances of that country; when we realise this, we see the necessity for condemning the action of the Government in the

matter. The Government hoped and believed at the time that the Commission would never accomplish anything. I regret to see that no steps have been taken to bring the great question of banking legislation before Parliament. A few years ago a tremendous panic arose here in banking affairs, and although we have now got through the worst of it, this is the time, when we have a strong Ministry who can calmly survey the facts, to take steps to prevent, to a great extent, such things occurring again. Then there is the question of an amendment of the Companies Act. The Premier said, amidst his bombastic and blustering attack on the hon. member for Nannine, that people had invested 60 millions in the country.

THE PREMIER: I said the British public.

MR. SIMPSON: There never have been 60 millions invested. There is a very wise measure going through the House of Commons, and we can easily make provision to amend our Act so that full particulars as to the original vendor and the amount of capital available for development will be disclosed when the company is registered in the Supreme Court. With regard to the investment of capital, the usual procedure is to form a syndicate, say, in London, then float it into a company and make a large profit; but I say that not a tithe of 60 millions has been invested in this colony. Of course, I do not say that we can control operations in mining stock, but we can establish a reasonable basis for arriving at the amount of capital coming into the country for its development. I congratulate the hon. member for the Williams on his patriotic assumption of office as Commissioner of Railways. I notice that the Minister, in speaking lately about the gentlemen forming the Cabinet, said that they could make as much money as they now do if divested of their public duties. I believe they are slaves to the people. I admire and respect them. So far as I know they are not office-seekers, and in addition to that I would congratulate the honorable member on the pluck he has shown in view of the retirement of his predecessor. Judging from the correspondence, and in view of the whole circumstances surrounding the case, I have never in history heard of a more

brutal exercise of despotic power than that which caused the retirement of the late Director of Public Works.

MR. HOOLEY: I would like to touch lightly on a few points in the Speech. Whatever else is said about it, it is sufficiently comprehensive, for the matters refer to almost every part of the colony. With regard to Federation, no doubt that question occupies the minds of public men in the other colonies, and at the present time it would suit the eastern colonies, but whether it would be beneficial to ourselves is doubtful. Almost everything we consume comes from the east, and we send nothing in return; therefore, I should be sorry indeed to see this colony federate at the present time, although we might send delegates to the Conference. The rapid development of the goldfields is a matter which concerns everyone in the colony, and I venture to say that there is not a single member of this House who is not anxious to further the interests of the various goldfields throughout the country. I regret to observe that differential questions arise from time to time between different classes of industries, more especially between the goldfields population and other sections of work. It is unfortunate that one class should be pitted against the other. It should be obvious that the mining interest, the pastoral interest, and the agricultural interest, are really dependent upon one another, and I really do not see why one interest should be favored more than another. I hope this feeling will gradually die out. I certainly cannot approve of the scheme for water supply brought forward by the Government. I am quite sure that, considering the vastness of the goldfields, it will be unworkable, and that the amount of money proposed to be spent—two and a half millions—will not be sufficient for the work: it may deliver a certain amount of water at Mount Burges for supplying a few places, but it will be quite inadequate to maintain a proper supply for the different parts of the goldfields. It may be sufficient to supply one or two of the immediately surrounding districts, but I refuse to entertain the idea that it will supply Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and other mining districts.

THE PREMIER: The scheme will pay.

MR. HOOLEY: I am very doubtful of that. We know from previous experience, and especially from the experience with our railways, that although people now profess to be willing to pay 3s. per thousand gallons, I am quite satisfied that as soon as the supply is available there will be, in a few months, an agitation to reduce it to 2s., and afterwards to reduce it to nothing at all. I don't see why the Government should do this work, if private capital will construct it. I don't think the Government can make a profit out of it, and I am certainly not in favor of it.

THE PREMIER: No; we want to make it pay.

MR. HOOLEY: It is quite a different thing for the Government to build railways, give telegraph and postal communication, and open up roads to the goldfields. Two and a half millions will not do the work. It will require five millions, and the Government should certainly not undertake anything of the kind. If private enterprise will step in, the Government should give it every facility. I do not see why the Government should give the people a supply of water, for it is the duty of the companies on the fields to do so, as they are supposed to provide everything necessary for carrying on the work in the interest of the shareholders, and if they provide other things, why not a water supply? I give the Government credit for doing their best, but they will make a mistake if this scheme is undertaken. With regard to the Fremantle harbor works, I consider they are a standing monument to the honor of the country, from which, perhaps, we shall not receive full benefit during our lives, but those who come after us will. I am satisfied that it is a splendid work, and will be of lasting benefit. I notice in the Speech that it is intended to extend the north mole another 1,000 feet. I have no large amount of professional experience, but common sense tells me it would be advisable to turn the north mole 100 feet to the south. There are no engineering difficulties in the way, and then vessels could run in at any time for shelter. Any hon. member who has been to Fremantle and experienced the effect of the strong westerly gales will admit the necessity of this. I am very pleased

indeed to see that the question of harbor accommodation for the different coasts of the colony has been given due consideration, and money expended in this direction will give very good results. I am pleased to see all parts of the country considered, even Bunbury. I do not see why Bunbury should not have harbor works as well as other places. In conclusion, I have much pleasure in congratulating the members of the Government on their policy in general.

Mr. THROSSSELL: The hon. the Premier said some time ago that the Government programme would stagger some of the more conservative members of this House. I think it may be said to have done so. The Government policy is simply a development of the lines laid down on the adoption of Responsible Government, and I see no reason to withdraw my support from that policy, as when we are in a position to build the house we must put the roof on. Whatever fears other people may have, personally I look forward with enthusiasm and hope for the future. I hope honorable members will not think me at all rash in thus supporting the Government. As a practical business man, when I expend money I like to see something coming back for it, and I have no fear with regard to the spending policy before us. It is what I may term a water and railway policy. The great question of the day is the supply of water. I consider that the Premier in the debate last night entirely met the objections brought forward by the honorable member for Nannine as regards the proposed expenditure of five millions. When we look back over the past five and a half years, and remember that we started Responsible Government with a population of only 45,000, which has increased to 125,000, or a gain of 80,000 people, the success of that policy can be seen. The Premier has practically acknowledged that he has gone in for the public works policy in favor of the goldfields; but, to my mind, I consider that it would be advisable to increase the settlement. We must remember that this increase represents in value the payment of interest on eight millions sterling, that is to say, taking every 10,000 people to be worth £30,000. If the figures are correct, as we know they must be,

reckoning every individual as worth £3 per annum, I think there is no fear of this colony being unable to discharge its liabilities. The great fear is that although we may be able to attract population we shall not be able to retain them. There would be ground for these fears if we stopped short in our policy of development; it would be suicidal. The goldfields are not only attracting a large population, but these people are becoming permanent residents in the colony. This can be seen along the line of railways, for where there used to be men alone, now there is a large proportion of the wives and children of the miners. If we hope to retain these people we must supply them with water. I think the Premier reckons the water at 1s. per day per head of population of the goldfields; say one half as much, that would be a contribution of £9 per annum each. How can we hope to retain them if we do not make their conditions of life easy? I should fear, indeed, that we would lose them if we hesitated to make the conditions of life more attractive. What I doubt about the water scheme is that it is not large enough. It is quite clear that not a single scheme will suffice for the goldfields, as they have such a scattered population. The best plan would be to supply the principal centres, such as Coolgardie, but there is no reason why we should not do something. We must have a national supply, and side by side with it, encourage private enterprise. I believe, judging from the way the goldfields are going ahead, that private enterprise will undertake the work. I say again that the Government should take care to retain the chief supply, which would be of use for all time, controlled by either the Government or the municipality. We have had a very good rainfall lately, and Coolgardie, which is generally a waterless region, has lakes of water. But we must be wise and take the experience of the past. Last year there was a great scarcity, and we should not rely entirely upon the rainfall, for it is not to be depended upon, and not only conserve but try for artesian supplies. Great issues hang upon this question of the water supply for the goldfields, for the people who have invested money here and who may live in Paris, London, and

I may say all the world over, are anxiously watching our movements in this respect. I am sure that this scheme will be subjected to the most severe criticism and examination by experts, and if it can be proved that water can be sold at 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons and leave money available for interest and sinking fund and other necessary charges, it would be criminal on the part of the Government to hesitate to embark in it. This water supply will have my warmest support. Passing on to the railways, one must rejoice that the Government intend to not only extend them to the goldfields but also the agricultural districts. Everyone who admits the necessity of the goldfields railways should equally admit the wisdom of constructing agricultural railways. I hope the Government will make no mistake, and that these will be agricultural railways pure and simple, and not for enhancing the value of large private estates over which we have no control; we have made too many mistakes in that direction. I can demonstrate that already we have between Newcastle and Mooraubine tapped over 1,000 miles of country, over which the Government have no authority; this is a waste of national wealth. Even in the eastern districts we have land locked up to the value of one million sterling. I have every confidence that the Government will be able to open up these great areas of country, if need be, even by compulsory conditions. Indeed, unless such conditions can be brought about, I shall not support the agricultural railways. Examples have been quoted from Victoria against these railways. We know that that colony has made huge mistakes, not only from the broad gauge but because they ran lines through long stretches of private land, and this development of huge private estates has been one of the reasons why these railways have not prospered in Victoria. I hope that if the Government consider it necessary they will introduce a method of taxation so that these locked-up lands may be available to the settlers. I am sure that the Government are alive to the importance of these agricultural railways, but I must again emphasise my statement that the country must have some guarantee that the land tapped will give wealth to the State. An equitable

basis should be arrived at whereby the large landowner, although he may keep his land, must comply with certain conditions of improvement, under a penalty. If it is necessary we should introduce a land tax, or, if that will not suit, repurchase the land. I am glad to see that the Government propose to repurchase land to a certain extent. If we take care to make these purchases through an independent Land Board, and every acre before purchase is made to run the gauntlet of this House and full particulars given of the terms of purchase, we have nothing to fear. With regard to the water supply for municipal purposes, I must heartily congratulate the Government in keeping faith with these bodies, for I see that in the proposed comprehensive scheme every municipality may have its own water supply on paying a fair share of the cost. Everyone must recognise the wisdom of the Government in proposing the deep drainage scheme for Perth and Fremantle, but it is not quite clear whether it is to be free or not. [THE PREMIER: Not free.] I ask that because, if the works are given free to Perth and Fremantle, other places will want the same concession.

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

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

MR. THROSSELL: Resuming my remarks on His Excellency's Speech, and referring to the question of railways, I notice with some surprise that no remark has been made in the Speech as to the suggested purchase of the Great Southern Railway by the Government. From what had appeared in the columns of the press, we were led to suppose that some proposal would be laid before Parliament for the purchase of that great work, and I can only say that, in my own opinion, the question is only one of price. I believe it will be an act of statesmanship to purchase that great property; always remembering that such conditions should be made as will allow the tenants of the company to become the tenants of the Government. If this be not done, it will only become a source of agitation later on, and we shall only have to face the agitation as an increasing trouble. The purchase of this railway will not interfere with our credit in raising the loan which the Government contemplate

for other purposes, for it will be possible to purchase that railway and the company's land upon debentures, redeemable in a given time. I say again that it is only a matter of price, and I believe that hon. members only want to be assured that the price we shall have to pay will be fair and equitable, for the purchase to receive the support of this House. The same remarks will hold good as to the purchase of the Midland Railway, for it is only a matter of time when that will have to be done, and it would be an excellent thing if, by so doing, we could remove the difficulties which now retard the settlement of people on the extensive lands of that company. We know those huge lands are locked up, and it is not feasible that the company which holds them in this unoccupied condition will ever be able to settle the land so long as they are asking such prices as 18s. to £2 an acre, when at the same time the Government are offering their blocks for free selection, with financial assistance in the bargain. I hope that when the time comes for arranging terms to purchase that property, the Government will be enabled to acquire it on terms satisfactory to the House. I notice that it is proposed to make an amendment in the Savings Bank Act, and I would only express the hope that, in doing so, the Act will be dealt with in such a manner as to allow Savings Bank moneys to be invested and used for developing the country districts. Particularly at this juncture of affairs, if care be not taken, we shall have the Government advancing money on Fremantle and Perth properties at boom rates, and it behoves the Government to be cautious in the matter. Every day sees the value of city property advancing, and if the Government are ever allowed to lend money on a huge hotel or other city building at boom rates, they will make a mistake. Why should not the Government make advances on country properties, in the same way as they make advances on town properties, from Savings Bank funds? The safest possible investments for these funds, under wise conditions, will, in my opinion, be to lend them out upon estates in country districts, with good security, and upon conditions that will ensure the development of the land.

Allusion is also made to alterations in the land laws. I do not know what direction that will take, but I do hope the Commissioner of Crown Lands will be prepared to introduce the blocker system, which has been so successful in South Australia. Side by side with land purchase, I hope provision will be made, in the vicinity of large or thriving towns, for blocks of Government land suitable for the artisan and laborer, within walking distance of their work. In this way we can do great good to the country, and retain a permanent population. At the same time we enable our artisans and laboring men to enjoy the ownership of their little homesteads. As it is now, in the vicinity of towns like Northam or of Perth and Fremantle there is no Government land open for the artisan or laborer, so that he may get a homestead on fair terms. As to the building of more railways, as suggested in the Speech, I should like to see pioneer railways radiating out from the city of Perth, and going four or five miles in different directions, thereby enabling poor men to have a chance of getting cheap blocks, and making their homes within a convenient distance of the city. At present the tremendous price asked for land near Perth prevents poor men from settling, as they would otherwise do. The roads in our city cost at the rate of £2,000 a mile, or £25 a chain, and the laying down of pioneer railways, at a rate less costly than such roads would be, would do a great deal in the settlement of lands within a moderate radius of the city and port. Coming to the question of goldfields representation, I rejoice to see the Government propose to bring this matter before the House; and I may express a hope, as an agricultural representative, that the Government will face this question boldly and endeavor to settle it on broad and liberal lines, knowing that by so settling it they will render agitation in the future unnecessary. I believe that if this question of representation be settled in a right way, the goldfields will rally round the Government, and I say—Do not be niggardly in the representation you give. Now that there is a clashing of interests arising, especially through the great and rapid development of the goldfields, it has become impossible for any one man

to adequately represent large areas of mining country. At both Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, the interests which were alike a short time ago are becoming so distinctly marked that it will be impossible for any one man to adequately represent large areas of that country. The goldfields railway, too, is a factor in creating new and separate interests, and he would be a bold man who should attempt to represent now a large area of the goldfields, including such a centre as Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie. I say it would be wise on the part of the Government to give them representation to an extent even more than is expected, and so do away with the cleavage that is apparently drawing near between the agricultural and mining districts. Respecting Federation, I pass it by with the remark that it should be the aspiration of every Australian to see the United States of Australia. Difficulties there may be, but difficulties have to be overcome, and I would recommend members of this House to travel to Brisbane and back, and they will find the necessity for Federation, even in railway matters. I am not foolish enough to imagine that we can do away with our Custom tariff, but, like wise men, we can do as has been done in other places—arrive at a common standard, if not at Free Trade. Coming back to the alteration of the land laws, I would point out for the consideration of our respected Commissioner of Crown Lands the desirability of continued and greater surveys of land in the older settled parts of the country. I think there is not sufficient enthusiasm exhibited in the Lands Department. The Meckering agricultural area is an instance, showing the settlement which follows upon the survey of land suitable for cultivation, and I am glad to be able to say that the settlement of this area is realising all that I foretold about it. I think great care should be taken in respect of poison leases, and although the Commissioner of Crown Lands has been on his guard, there are instances in which persons have acquired large areas of land under poison leases, which land would have been better retained for agricultural purposes. We should be very careful that this Act for dealing with poison leases is not abused. I again refer to the

desirability of advertising our lands, especially in the old country. It is true that we have had a huge increase of population, but great ignorance obtains even now respecting our land laws, and the liberal advantages we offer to settlers. Therefore, I say again, we want a system of advertising, and boldly advertising our lands. In travelling along the Great Southern Railway, the first thing that strikes one's eye is the large railway board advertising the company's lands, and I think something of that kind might be done in advertising along the Government railways. During my recent visit to the colonies, I was amazed to find the great ignorance that prevails respecting the Western Australian land laws, and the advantages which are offered to new settlers. We never had such an opportunity as we have now of increasing settlement on the land, and if we do not take full advantage of it now, we shall have to pay the penalty later on, as our respected Premier has often referred to. Without trespassing further on the time of the House, I will only make reference to the paragraph in which it is stated that the Government intend to reduce the Customs duties. It seems to mean anomaly that at a time when they propose to borrow five and a half millions for public works, they are able to propose a reduction of Customs duties; but if we can afford to incur this great liability of five and a half millions and still reduce our duties, I do not see why we should not do so. The prosperous outlook of this colony fills me with enthusiasm for the future. I have no fear of the loan; I have no fear of the amount. The only fear I have is the mode of spending it. Let us be quite sure this five and a half millions is going to be wisely expended on reproductive works, and then we need not fear as to the future. The thought comes to one as to what they will say in England, and what effect this loan will have upon those who have entrusted their millions to our care. The answer can only be that the bold policy of this Government is such as to inspire confidence in every thinking man, whether on this or on the other side of the globe. It is sometimes said that we are pushing our railways into the wilderness, but I say if this water scheme of the Govern-

ment is what it professes to be, we shall not only have the honor of making our way into the wilderness, but also of creating water in the desert. As a lover of my country, as a believer in my country, I think the policy of the Government as shadowed forth in the Speech of His Excellency is such as to inspire every lover of Western Australia with pride in the present and confidence in the future. Our increasing prosperity and our increasing population justify the proposals of the Government, and if they can only show that they intend to spend this money in a wise way, it shall have my hearty, loyal, and enthusiastic support.

MR. GEORGE: It is very refreshing for so young a West Australian as myself to find that those who have grown grey in the country still possess so much faith in it, and while I congratulate the hon. member for Northam on his enthusiasm, I certainly hope that when my turn comes to arrive at his years the same enthusiastic faith in my adopted country will permeate me. With regard to the Speech of His Excellency, last year, in my inexperience of Parliamentary procedure, I referred to the then Speech which was placed before us as being a progress report, and as being unsatisfactory to me as a business man, because it was not accompanied by the figures which should accompany every report with regard to the progress and the conduct of a business. This year I cannot give it that term. I would say that evidently the mining boom has been in the air, and when we take this Speech we almost fancy we are reading one of those glowing prospectuses which tell us of lodes and leaders, quartz and crushing, and so forth, and that this Speech has been drawn on those lines. However, there is one thing that strikes me in connection with it, and if I am wrong I hope the House will pardon me, and that is where there are so many measures to propose, and which the Government have evidently thought over for some considerable time, would it not be possible for these Bills, or some of them, to be circulated amongst members of this House during recess? If it were possible to do this, I think that when the House met for business we should be better prepared to discuss them on their merits, instead of having to a great degree to speak tenta-

tively for the purpose of gaining information. This great scheme with regard to the water supply is one that no one can speak upon from the information before us, and I ask hon. members whether they consider it quite fair that they should be asked to give their opinions upon an important matter like this. It is well known that this scheme has been under the consideration of the Government for many months. It is well known that it has so far progressed that a great many details have been published in the inspired press. Why should not the Government have circulated this Bill amongst members of the House, and so have enabled them to come to an accurate judgment upon it? Such a course would be fraught with good, and would probably considerably shorten the debates we may have upon it in the House. With regard to the question of Federation, I hope to live to see the day when Australia shall be one united country. I hope to see the day when people, in whichever colony or country they may have been born, and in whichever part of Australia they may place their homes, may be able to meet as brothers, not only in blood, but in a fraternal spirit in every respect—meeting their brothers in a spirit worthy of the grand old country from which most of us have sprung, and dwell here together as brothers under the Southern Cross. One of the many questions that will be placed before us is that of giving increased representation to the goldfields. I am not experienced enough to be able to say what is their proper proportion, and what is a fair means by which this should be brought about, but I do say that, when considering a scheme which has to do with the electoral rights and duties of the people, there is one principle we should keep in view, and that is—one man one vote. We have a right to say that we should do away with the system of sending proxies. We should do away with the system which enables a man of means to exercise an undue amount of electoral power by voting for a piece of land which he may never have seen, and doing so merely because he has a small interest in the land. Why a man who contributes only the same ratio of revenue to the country as a man who works daily for a wage, and has to support himself and family,

should be able, by having the control of money-bags, to exercise the greater voting power, is a principle which I think should no longer exist. It is a very difficult matter for people to get on the roll. Some persons have said it is very easy, if those who want to vote will try to get on the roll, but I can assure honorable members that it is not so easy to do, and I should like to see that conceded to a man which his manhood gives to him as a right. In other colonies the police have powers given them which enable them to place qualified persons on the roll, and in scattered countries such as this, no one knows so much of those who are entitled to be placed on the roll as a policeman who is stationed in the district. As to the Fremantle harbor works, I may suggest whether it is not possible that some portion of that scheme can be made available for ships even now, without waiting for the completion of the whole. Surely the genius of the Engineer-in-Chief should be able to arrange that some portion of the work may speedily be available for shipping, instead of our having to wait two or three years for the completion of the whole of the magnificent scheme.

THE PREMIER: We mean to do that.

MR. GEORGE: I am glad you do mean to do so. You did not tell us so before. There is a question also of deep sewerage for Perth and Fremantle. I thank the Government for having considered this matter, and I shall thank them the more when they carry it to a successful issue. The municipal councils have neither the funds nor the machinery to carry out such a scheme, and so far as the sewerage is concerned, I think I should have confidence even in some of the Government departments to carry it out. Reference is made also to an extension of the powers of the Agricultural Bank Act. The Agricultural Bank has had, as a manager, a gentleman whom we all respect, and who has tried to do his duty, and, so far as the Act will allow him, he has done that duty well, though he has been so circumscribed by the regulations under which he has to carry out the Act that he has not been able to do it so successfully as we should wish. If this Bill will so widen the scope of the Act as to enable struggling

farmers—I mean the honest ones—to borrow money for necessary improvements under proper conditions, that extension will have my support. Of course it has been objected that men may obtain money from the Bank, and not carry out the obligations under which it is lent; but I say that it would be better for this country that even 10 per cent. of the loans should be irretrievably lost than that 90 per cent. of deserving settlers should be kept out of any of the funds which the country can well afford to advance for assisting them through their difficulties. The hon. member for Northam has spoken of advertising the fertile lands of the colony. I am quite with him in that, and not only the fertile lands but other possessions, for I think every means should be brought to bear for letting the public know what Western Australia really is. I should like to know whether anything has been done in England with regard to bringing our lands under the notice of British farmers. You may rest assured that money could not be better spent than in thoroughly advertising and making known through the length and breadth of the United Kingdom of Great Britain that there is in this colony land which, when railways are made to it, is as fertile as any land in any part of the world. With regard to the question of public works that have been done, there is a long list yet of works authorised, but not finished or not begun, and I wish the Government in their wisdom could have placed alongside the list of completed works a list of the works that have been projected but not carried out. It would be very instructive reading not only to members of this House, but to other persons scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land, because the Public Works is a great department, and promises to become greater, and appears to be full of enthusiasm. Perhaps the biggest instance of that enthusiasm is that, before the department has done the small things that are authorised and wanted all over the country, it brings forth a scheme which will require all the big heart of the Premier and all the large faith of his supporters to carry it through. I am very doubtful indeed if the proportion of works that have been carried out

and completed, and the works approved but not carried out, bear any proper ratio to the expense incurred. I am quite satisfied on this point, that the work of preparing plans, not only in the Railway Department, but in the Architectural Department, is so costly an item that if this House only knew what it does cost and understood the process they undergo, I am sure the House would refuse to sanction them. Mention was made by the hon. member for Nannine of grievances in the Police Force. I do think if any class of public servants requires fair consideration, it is the guardians of the peace. Their position is not an enviable one. They have to be out in all weathers; they are exposed to all kinds of inconvenience; and, in many cases, to insults which they must not resent. Assertions are made, and which, I believe, can be proved, that the system of promotion in the Police Force has been unfair; that men who have been long years in the service, and against whom very little, if anything, can be said, are kept back from promotion, and new-comers placed over their heads. There is in this matter something requiring investigation. Is it length of service that entitles a man to promotion in the Police Force, or is it caprice, or is it favor? There is another thing that is a great injustice, and that is that even when a policeman has done his day's work he cannot go out with his wife and bairns like an ordinary citizen. The regulations require that he must wear his uniform, even when off duty. Why cannot he be allowed to go about in ordinary dress, the same as a private citizen? This may seem a little thing, but it creates a great amount of feeling amongst the Police Force, and so small a matter might well be remedied without much trouble. I congratulate the Government on the fact that they are going to make a start in doing public works out of current revenue. I am of the opinion that that is about the soundest plank of any programme they have put forward. If, as the Speech seems to suggest, the Government are going to construct agricultural railways out of revenue, I hope that in each case they will do so only after thorough investigation of all the facts concerning that railway. In the old country there is what is

called an Intelligence Department, and before surveys are made for a projected railway, enquiries are made by competent officers as to the population and prospects of the route. The results of that enquiry are laid before professional advisers with full facts and statistics as to the merits of the route, the population, and the trade which may be expected from it. That information also becomes useful when the railway is completed, and instead of a new railway being started by men who have to learn the resources of the district, the practice in the old country is that men are placed in charge who know exactly what to expect, and what traffic may come to the line. There is one proposed railway in this colony about which a deputation recently waited on the Premier, and I accompanied that deputation; and that is a railway to the Williams district. If hon. members object to borrow money for agricultural railways, they cannot object to that railway as a purely agricultural line, because, although it will assist a worthy and struggling population, as far as agriculture is concerned, it will land us right in the middle of one of the best forests I have ever seen in any part of the Australian colonies, and it will enable the exports of this colony to be considerably enlarged, and so in some measure allay the fears expressed by my hon. friend, the member for Nannine. The Premier has not told us that we are going to have that railway, but as he states, through His Excellency's Speech, that we are to have railways built from revenue, I think that we can be pretty well assured he intends to construct the Marradong railway. Some reference has been made to a harbor for Bunbury, and the members who have referred to it evidently know very little about it. I do not know very much about it myself, but I do know that if a safe harbor can be made at Bunbury for a reasonable sum, I want to see it made. I know there is plenty of first-class timber down there, and that there is an unlimited market for it in the old country. I know that when timber can be shipped from Bunbury as cheaply as from Rockingham or Fremantle, instead of there being two or three hundred men employed in the saw-mills in that

district, there will soon be two or three thousand. I say nothing about the coal trade in connection with the harbor at Bunbury. The coal, so far as we can see at present, has yet to be proved, but there is coal there, though whether it will be a commercial success when put on the market we have yet to learn. As to the timber there is plenty of it, and it certainly can be made a commercial success. In connection with cheap facilities for shipping at Bunbury, people in the old country are crying out for timber, and pay bigger prices than ever were paid while I was with the Jarrahdale Timber Company. Of course I should not be in favor of spending a tremendous lot of money without due consideration, but if it can be shown that we can get a fair harbor at Bunbury for, say, £100,000, I should not oppose it. The hon. member for Nannine referred last night to the purchase by the Government, during the recess, of half a million pounds' worth of rolling-stock. The hon. member reflected upon the Government for the purchase, but I say that the rolling-stock was necessary. The country could not wait for Parliament to meet for the order to be given, and I think that whenever the Government orders rolling-stock in similar circumstances we shall be quite ready to acquit them for having ordered it without the authority of the House. The only thing I blame the Government for is that they did not order the rolling-stock sooner. I congratulate the Government upon the choice they have made in the new Minister of the Railway Department. I think that the hon. member for the Williams will fill the position as well as any man in the House. He brings to his work the unbiassed mind of a man who has not had much experience in railways, and is therefore not prejudiced in a professional groove. I know that he is an active and courageous man, and that he will do his best to do away with red-tape and officialism, which are strangling the department. As a member of the Civil Service Commission, to which some allusion has been made, I can say that we had before us heaps of correspondence which had employed the valuable time and energies of highly paid officers, thrashing out trivialities of no value to the country, and which any business man would have settled in a few minutes. It

is not to be believed that the reams of foolscap correspondence which we saw are to be produced, merely by the aid of a shorthand writer and typist, in a few minutes, without much time being sacrificed by the heads of the departments. Why, in one case it transpired that, if an officer in a certain branch wanted to ask a question of another, he did so through the form of a formal minute instead of a few words' conversation through the telephone, and waited some days for a reply. So diffuse were the communications as to make any man who saw the correspondence feel that the money of the colony was being wasted upon pens, ink, and paper. This is the position which the Commissioner of Railways is striving to put an end to; and I wish him good luck in the endeavour, and I shall be glad to give him all the support in my power. Now, there is nothing said in the Speech about a fair payment of the railway staff. When we find that Government men are working for six shillings to six shillings and sixpence per day, while private employers are giving from seven to nine shillings per day, I think it is time that the anomaly should be explained, especially when that which purports to be nine hours per day labor in the Government service is more like twelve hours. I think that in the prosperous state of the department it should be possible to pay the men employed in it a fair wage, as they work in season and out of season, sometimes at the peril of their lives. There is another matter that might have found a place in the Speech. Last year we were told that measures were being taken for placing the railways under the control of a general manager, but I see no reference to it in the Speech. The Engineer-in-Chief, we were told last session, wished to be relieved of his connection with the Railway Department, but the Government have not relieved him. The increasing requirements of the colony put too much upon the Engineer-in-Chief in his dual position; and he should be allowed to devote his time only to the largest matters of construction and control which are in keeping with his ability and his experience. If we do not do something to improve the management of the department, and do not do away with the General Manager who does not even

generally manage, we may expect a repetition of the serious accidents which have lately been occurring on the eastern line. It is not too much to ask, seeing that the colony has so full a treasury that we can shake hands all round, that the attention of the Premier should be called to the delay in the payment of the wages of railway officials. It is clear that when a man has worked all the week he is entitled to his money on Saturday night, and if he does not get it punctually a working man and his family may be seriously inconvenienced. The railway men should be paid every week, and complaints have been made that that has not been done. [THE PREMIER: Not lately.] In regard to the Coolgardie water scheme, I wish to adopt the advice of the Premier, and to suspend judgment regarding the undertaking until the full details of it are before us. But there are just one or two points that I should like to suggest that we should be fully informed upon. As a practical man, I should like, in the first place, to know whether the Government have fully considered how they are going to get the pipes to the place where it is proposed to lay them down? Have they considered that, if the scheme is to be carried out, the carriage of the pipes will employ a railway line almost by itself, and that the scheme certainly involves the duplication of the Coolgardie line? And I should like to be assured that every provision has been made against the contingency of a breakdown. When we are asked to sanction the expenditure of two and a half millions of money, we are entitled to be furnished with the fullest and clearest information as to how it is to be spent, and I trust that after this information has been given on the subject that has occupied the Government for some months, we shall be given a reasonable time, say a week or a fortnight, to analyse and weigh the information before we are asked to decide upon the scheme. While, as I say, I am suspending my judgment upon it, I think it will be found that the pipes that will be required cannot be supplied in anything like the three years which it is said will be required to complete the work, and I think that as far as Coolgardie is concerned, occupied as it is by men of the

highest standing and ability, they will have overcome the water difficulty long before the water passes through the pipes to that city. The Premier, whom I admire for the unflinching way in which he goes forward, advises us to be brave and patriotic. Well, I think that if we pass this scheme we shall be fairly brave as far as courage is concerned: we, on this side of the House, have as much courage as those members who sit on the Ministerial benches. In regard to the statement of the hon. member for Nannine that the House does not represent the country, I think that the members of the Assembly do fairly represent their constituents, and that a great many of us, if we had to appeal to them, would be returned again. I think that the measures we may deal with this session will be fraught with much importance to the country. These measures should be considered strictly upon their merits, and not from a feeling of devotion to one man, so that the best may be done for this part of the British Empire, to which we are all proud to belong.

MR. CLARKSON: I do not intend at this time to touch upon many of the important matters contained in His Excellency's Speech, but I should like to congratulate His Excellency upon having assumed office at such an auspicious time in the history of the colony, at a time when our population and wealth are rapidly increasing. The first subject alluded to in the Speech is Federation. Well, it seems to me that the people are not very earnest upon this question of Federation, and I think it can be deferred for consideration until public opinion has been more definitely formed regarding it. Far more important matter is contained in paragraph three, namely, that of increased representation for the goldfields and other important localities. It is quite right that the goldfields should be properly represented, but I am under the impression that they will ask for more than they are entitled to, and more than I hope they will receive. They are already well represented by all the members of the House, and also by the member for Nannine, and for Geraldton, who is a host in himself. I claim that every member in this House represents the goldfields, as the goldfields are part of

this colony, and I think that we are giving them all the assistance that can be possibly afforded them. Have we not built them railways, telegraph lines, and spent thousands and thousands of pounds in obtaining water for them? I think that we have done everything that it is possible to do. I heard it said at Coolgardie the other day that the Government of this colony had done more for the mines of that place than any other Government in Australia had done for the mining interests, and I really believe that they have. I think that a great deal of this cry for increased representation on the goldfields is in the imagination of the hon. member for Nannine and a few others. I really believe that the miners themselves do not care very much about it. Why should they? They come here, as the hon. member for Nannine said last night, to make money as quickly as they can, and then they leave the colony. Why should they trouble themselves about being represented in Parliament when they do not intend to make their homes amongst us? Is it not only natural that these men who come here from other parts of the world should wish to make money and return to their native lands, where they may spend their gains among their friends and relatives? I have not the least doubt that if Western Australians went away and made money elsewhere, they would desire to come back to their own country to spend the remainder of their lives and their money. With regard to the proposal that is to be brought before us to provide water for the goldfields, I will not at present express any decided opinion upon the subject. The Premier has promised that he will lay the details of the scheme before us early next week, and then we shall be in a better position to discuss the matter. There is no doubt that water will have to be provided for the fields which have had the benefit of a heavier rainfall than usual during the last few years. I can speak from experience, for I travelled over the country years ago, and I know that between the years 1861 and 1864 there was no rain at all, or nothing to speak of. The country was a perfect desert. I have no doubt that some scheme for providing water for the fields must be devised. (Hear, hear.) But my opinion is that, before we enter into any

very expensive schemes, the country should be properly tested to ascertain whether it is possible to obtain an artesian supply or not. Geologists tell us that we can find no artesian water there. Well, I have not that overweening confidence in geologists that some people have. We know that as a matter of fact there are over twenty wells in and around Coolgardie, from which is drawn a certain quantity of fresh water. Of course the wells would not yield an adequate supply for the fields, but they serve to show that if water can be found in them at a depth of 150ft. it may be possible to tap a larger supply at a depth of 1,500ft. or 2,000ft. I hope therefore that the Government will do everything that they possibly can to press on with thorough tests in the effort to obtain artesian water. The Premier told us last night that boring would be gone on with, and I hope that he will continue to give the country a fair trial. I am pleased to say that the Railway Department is prospering so well. I think, however, that at present there must be a shortage of rolling-stock. At any rate, at the country stations if a man wants to get a truck he must give, at least three days' notice, and sometimes it is a week before he can get one. A great deal of dissatisfaction is expressed with regard to the work of the railways. Goods are constantly left behind, or in many instances are lost altogether. On a future occasion I shall have something more to say on this point. We do not know who is to blame, but we suppose that it is not the manager of the railways, but some of the officers under him; but it is true that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in regard to the way the railways are being worked at present. In paragraph 9 it is stated that the eastern railway deviations have been finished. Well, that is very satisfactory as far as it goes, but it is a very great pity that those deviations were ever commenced. A passenger travelling with me to town, who is thoroughly conversant with railways, assured me that a man takes his life in his hand every time he travels on that line. He also expressed the opinion that the new deviation was more dangerous than the original line, and that the breaking of a bolt would hurl passengers into eternity.

As a matter of fact, passengers are really afraid to travel on that line, which ought to have been made by way of Chidlow's Brook. That route will have to be adopted, for the gold-fields traffic is rapidly increasing. The new line must start from some point on the Midland line, and run by way of the Valley to Northam, which is the route the line should have taken in the first instance, and which it will have to take eventually, in my opinion. I am glad to see that the Government adhere to that bold and progressive policy which they adopted when they first took office upon the introduction of Responsible Government in this colony. I well remember some of my old friends told me, when I was supporting the Government, that it was a mad policy, borrowing, and I was remonstrated with for supporting the Government in carrying the first loan, which I think was for £1,300,000. The croukers said that the colony was going to ruin. Well, it does not look like it. The colony is rapidly advancing, and I believe that the progressive policy adopted a few years ago gave it a great impetus. I have a considerable amount of confidence in the Premier, who has proved right in the past, and therefore we have reason to hope that he will prove right in future. However, I will not at this stage commit myself to favor all the schemes set out in the Vice-regal Speech. [MR. SIMPSON: You will have to follow.] I am not in the habit of following, and I defy the hon. member for Geraldton to say that I have not very frequently voted against the Government whenever I have thought that they were not in the right. I think that my action in this House will bear scrutiny. I have been just as independent as the hon. member for Geraldton. The hon. member for Nanine is always talking about going to the country, but if he does not mind he may not have the pleasure of coming back again from the mulga thickets about the Murchison. I think that the miners do not care a fig about representation, but only about making money—(hear, hear)—and when they make it they go away to spend it. I see that a claim is put in on their behalf for a reduction of Customs duties. Why should the miners not pay anything at

all for the cost of maintaining the country? Many of them come from a colony which is more highly protected than Western Australia, and if they are so much in favor of free trade why did they not adopt it in their own colony? I will not refer to other important matters in the Speech, discussion on which I have always regarded as to a great extent a waste of time, as the business referred to in it comes before us in another form; but as other hon. members have spoken on the Speech, I thought I would say a few words. There is one very important matter, namely, that it is proposed to construct agricultural railways; but before dealing further with that question I shall wait until I have the details before me. I want to hear my hon. friend for Northam, who, I believe, has some scheme in his head for working agricultural railways three months in the year.

MR. SOLOMON: It is not my intention to detain the House for long. It seems to me that when the colony is so progressive as it at the present time, we should be careful not to be imprudent by going too fast. Some of the items foreshadowed in the Vice-regal Speech are so large and important that they will need the most careful consideration, and a reasonable time should be given to us to think them well over after they have been propounded in detail by the Government. Adverting to the question of Federation, I think that it is necessary that this colony should be represented at the Convention. The Convention will be the most important one that has ever been held, having for its object the federal union of Australia. These delegates will meet for the purpose of framing the Constitution as the commencement of a great Federal Union, and we certainly should be represented and decide what position we will take with regard to this question. It will be necessary to give the delegates such instructions that they will act in accordance with the wishes of Parliament and for the welfare of the country generally. We should not forget that the other colonies out-number us in population, and we should therefore exercise more care in our deliberations on this account. The most important item in the Speech is that of the water supply for Coolgardie.

This is a proposal which, if carried out, will for many years affect Western Australia for either good or ill. Before we go into it we should have full details, so that hon. members can fully satisfy their conscience that they are doing the best for the interests of the country. We have to consider that if population increases it will be a good thing; on the other hand, if it decreases it will be a serious matter in the future. I remember years ago the present Commissioner of Crown Lands gave very sound advice when we proposed to borrow a million. He was most emphatic that we should not fix a mill-stone round our necks if it could be avoided. I think the same caution should be applied here as regards the borrowing proposals. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] As regards the purchase of rolling-stock, there are not two opinions as to its necessity, if the money is to be laid out properly and the railways put in thorough working order. I think the Government are to be congratulated on having already commenced to lay a second line of rails between Guildford and Fremantle, because if this had not been done, with additional traffic there would be considerable difficulty in carrying on work, and probably loss of life. At present the number of trains running on the single line is very great; in fact, I do not know of any other colony that is trying to do as much on a single line. Sewerage for Perth and Fremantle is a necessity, and should not be treated as a local matter. It should be taken into consideration that the hospitals at Perth and Fremantle have been filled with people from other parts of the colony who have contracted diseases which were formerly very rare in the large centres, and, as a result of this, very serious diseases have been disseminated through Perth and Fremantle, which would otherwise not have occurred. Unless we have a proper system of drainage, as in the other colonies, we do not know what may happen in the course of a few years. The proposed tariff reform is a step in the right direction. It has often been said that if the tax is taken off cattle it will not affect the consumer. Possibly at the present time the retailer gets the benefit, but if the tax is taken off we shall have greater competition. If any person ships two or three hundred head

of cattle, a duty of 30s. per head has to be paid. This is a heavy drawback when added to the risk run in bringing cattle over. I think there is no necessity for the tax. I know that within the last few weeks as many as 100 or 200 head have been lost in transit. The local producer has quite a sufficient set-off in the risk without the tax. I congratulate the Government on their bold policy, although candidly I must say that one or two of the larger items that appear in the Speech are questionable; still it shows that the Government are alive to the progress of the colony, and are doing all they can to push it ahead. But there is such a thing as overdoing it. It must not be forgotten that we have other public works and railways for which we must continue to find money for a considerable time. With regard to the water supply, if it is to be for the benefit of the speculator, I think he should provide the water. If there is money to be made out of it, as the Government say there is, why not let private enterprise come in? A private undertaking of this sort would probably be got up by a limited company, and, if it happened to be a failure, a small number would be the losers; but if the Government expended the money and failure ensued, the colony would have to bear heavy taxation as a consequence. However, we shall be able to fully look into the various matters when the full details are before us.

MR. COOKWORTHY: Speaking of the Address-in-Reply, I notice the first paragraph refers to Federation—[THE PREMIER: So it ought]—but I think the old remark "When the time comes" applies here. The House can send delegates to the Convention, but many things will happen before Federation takes place. The tariff laws of the eastern colonies are entirely opposed to Federation, and until we get over this difficulty Federation will be merely a subject for talk. In Clause 3 of the Speech it is proposed that greater representation should be given to the goldfields. This is only just, and I trust that the Government will bring in a fair and liberal measure for the representation of these people. The 4th clause deals with the question of water supply. What water the people on the goldfields have is

mostly salt, and they have to use condensed water for drinking, which is unsuitable for the purpose; at any rate, that is my impression from a visit through Southern Cross last year. I have heard that so great is the scarcity there that in summer a man cannot afford to wash himself, and in winter time it is too cold. Fancy a man 12 months without a wash! If we can do anything to relieve this difficulty we should do so. I fully expected that the members for the goldfields would have been only too glad to accept the proposals of the Government. I am sorry the hon. member for Yilgarn is not here, as I should have liked to have heard his sentiments. The hon. member for Geraldton, who is indirectly connected with the goldfields, and the hon. member for Nannine have astonished me by saying that the water is not wanted.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Nothing of the sort.

MR. SIMPSON: We don't want to spend two and a half millions of money over it.

MR. COOK WORTHY: Two and a half millions judiciously expended is not too much, in the present condition of the colony. I remember when the first loan was proposed there was an idea that we should be ruined, but borrowing is only bad when the money is recklessly expended, and the only question to my mind, as far as the water supply to the goldfields is concerned, is whether the money will be wisely expended. I am confident that the scheme is practicable. The Engineer-in-Chief has been with us for some time now, and in all undertakings he has been proved to be within his estimates, more particularly with regard to the Fremantle harbor works and railways. There is really no great difficulty about the scheme; it is simply a question of the amount of power required. The great difficulty is whether the water is wanted when it gets there, and I hope the Government, when they bring the question before the House, will be prepared to show that there is a demand for it. I have heard that there will be a ready sale for the water, and that the Government will have no difficulty in disposing of it. I have also heard of other private schemes of reticulation, and I do not think that the Government scheme should be allowed to interfere

with a private arrangement, especially if they will provide the water cheaply, as they propose.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Government will give it for nothing.

MR. COOK WORTHY: The Engineer-in-Chief assures us that the water can be sold for 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, and that the estimate allows for cost of construction, maintenance, sinking fund, and interest. Have we the least reason to doubt that these figures are correct? I hope hon. members will consider this scheme dispassionately, and not be biased by any private schemes which may be brought forward. I think we should construct the railways to Menzies and Kanowna, because these may be called agricultural railways, for they will assist to develop the agricultural interests, as well as assist the goldfields. I am glad to hear that the Fremantle Harbor Works are progressing satisfactorily, and am pleased with their progress. The proposed wharves will be a great convenience to vessels when they are able to come alongside, and will relieve the congestion which sometimes exists. The Government are acting wisely in proposing to build agricultural railways. They could not do better with their current revenue. The agricultural districts of this colony require as much development as the goldfields. A railway from Pinjarrah towards the Williams, I have every reason to believe, would tap splendid country and a magnificent forest. The timber industry of this colony is increasing rapidly, and when greater facilities are afforded, the large quantities required can be supplied without difficulty. I have heard some hon. members speak against the heavy introduction of imports as shown in the report of the Collector of Customs, but while the colony is prospering, and there is an expansion in the timber and gold industries, we should take into consideration that men will go wherever they are best paid. It is difficult to get men to go in for farming when they get higher wages on the goldfields and at the timber mills. There are few men, between twenty and thirty, now at work in the agricultural districts, and the difficulty is to find labor to produce. I know of my own experience that in nearly all the agricultural districts of the South-west there is not anything like the

production which was to be seen formerly, because the men are otherwise employed, and that the men find it best to buy their food stuffs, and to send away timber and gold. Although on principle I am a free-trader, I should like to see a certain amount of attention bestowed on the farming industry, which is now languishing and is in danger of being ruined. I don't think the Government want to see that, because it is admitted that the farming industry is the real mainstay and backbone of any country. I maintain that with the present state of the finances it would be wise to assist the farming industry. The time may come when we can throw our ports open, but that time has not arrived yet. I am also glad to see that the Government have introduced a Bill to amend the Agricultural Bank Act. Instances have been brought before me, and I now call the attention of the Premier to one of them, where a man has mortgaged his property to the Government at his own cost, and for 12 months he was unable to get anything from the bank, simply because he had not complied with all the conditions presented. I am glad that the Government intend to enlarge the scope of the bank's operations, so that men who give security can get money out, for by mortgaging they are unable to go elsewhere. [AN HON. MEMBER: How did he get his mortgage?] He sent his deeds to the bank, but could not get the money. That man was a very good sample of the farmers of Quindalup. That district can produce a great deal of the stuff wanted on the goldfields, and I trust that the Government will provide it with a railway in order to bring it to market. I have heard a good deal in this House about large land proprietors; down there there are 50 farmers who have small areas of land, who raise the very things required for the goldfields, viz., potatoes, onions, and vegetables, but they have no outlet for the stuff, and I hope and trust that the Government will give them a railway at no very distant date. The district is on the road to the Margaret, where the best goldfields of the colony will be found.

MR. JAMES: The Premier has listened to eulogies delivered by the hon. member for Sussex so long that I can quite understand why he blushes. Although I con-

gratulate the Government generally, I think that if we have nothing but praise to bestow, we might as well simply give our votes in the old party spirit. I think that, with all due respect, there never has been a more important Speech than the present. It is astonishing that a Speech contemplating an expenditure so enormous was received by hon. members—I say it with respect—without the least astonishment or criticism. I am always prepared to recognise that at this particular period of our history we must take upon our shoulders great responsibilities, and, therefore, I generally approve of the policy, although the lines laid down in that policy are somewhat narrow. With regard to this very large expenditure, we should not overstep the bounds of caution, and land ourselves in the terrible indebtedness which has fallen upon the sister colonies, owing to—I have to use a vulgarism — “swollen head.” I am pleased to find that Federation occupies a conspicuous part of the Speech. The matter deserves the first attention, and I say that Western Australia, occupying the position which she does, should recognise that this question is of paramount importance. If I show a want of patience at times when dealing with this question, I do not do so from any want of necessary respect to the Government, but because I desire to express my feelings on a question that should be dealt with immediately, and in considering it we should free ourselves from narrow parochial jealousies, and remember only that we are Australians. It matters not so much whether, as far as we are immediately concerned, we are successful and prosperous; we should aim at success and prosperity for Australia, and approach the question of Federation from that standpoint. We should not deal with it as we would with a purely local matter; we do not consider questions in this House merely as they affect Perth and Fremantle, but as to how they affect the interests of the whole of the colony. I hope it will not be merely a matter as to how much money we will make out of Federation, or whether Western Australia alone will make a gain out of it. If that is to be our attitude, we will never have our share of Federation, because we will not deserve it, and are not worthy of it. We might just as well approach the

question of the interest, say, of Perth as against Fremantle or *vice versa*, instead of the interests of the whole colony. If we enter upon Federation, we should do so to benefit the whole of Australia, and not to further the interests of any particular part of it. We are not told exactly what method is to be followed in appointing delegates. I would say, let them be elected by the whole of the colony, and I think that course would add greatly to the *personnel* of those who are so elected. I am afraid that we shall always be human in this House, and if we are given the appointment of these delegates, personal ideas may outweigh our sense of duty, and I don't think we could give the question unbiased consideration. It is not a question of party, and it is not prejudiced by any political considerations whatever, and I am certain that if the question of Federation went before the people of Western Australia to-day it would have most loyal support, and would be considered free from any side issues. I am glad that we are not going to isolate ourselves, but take joint action with the other colonies. I am pleased that the water scheme is not to be made a party question, and have great hopes that before long the Premier will recognise the correctness of my views, and that we shall be able to abolish "government by contradiction," and be guided in our decisions by principles, more or less laudable, rather than merely seek to occupy the Government benches in order to enjoy the power and draw the pay. If ever there was a national question, that question is that of the water supply. I want to keep my mind perfectly clear and open upon it. It seems to me that we shall require very weighty arguments to justify us in undertaking this work. We should not be satisfied with the opinion of only one or two men. I think I am correct in saying that this necessity was not recognised last year. [THE PREMIER: No, you are not.] Before we undertake this great work, involving not only a large initial outlay, but also a subsequent cost for upkeep, members ought to be thoroughly convinced that it is a good scheme, and not take it for granted that it is such merely because it is brought forward by the Government. We should deal with it as a national

question, apart from any party considerations; and I hope the Premier will carry out his promise not to make it a party question. If the Government put forward proposals for deep boring they would greatly strengthen the hands of the Premier on this question. I believe I am not mistaken when I say that deep boring was promised last session, and the opinion of the House seemed to be unanimously in favor of the proposal. I don't care what experts say: we want the test applied. It is curious and interesting that where artesian supplies have been found in places, in opposition to the opinion of authorities, the experts have always been prepared to find reasons why it should be so. It might be some satisfaction to the House if the Premier would ascertain how it is that so much delay has arisen, and so little has been done in reference to deep boring for water, and how it is that we are only getting this deep boring during the last few months, when this great scheme for conveying water to the gold-fields has been proposed. It has been rumored that obstacles have been thrown in the way of boring, and that the gentleman who is responsible for this large water scheme is responsible also for the obstacles which have been placed in the way of the boring. We shall have from the Premier, in a few days, full details of this large water scheme, and I want to keep my mind open concerning it. I have doubts in my mind at present, and I express them here. Even if I were convinced that this would be a good work, it will be a question with me, as with other members, whether, now that we are entering on our last session as a Parliament, we should be justified in undertaking a work of such magnitude, until the new Parliament can meet. We shall hear that point discussed when the matter comes up for consideration. It is a point worthy of the serious and careful attention of every member. In regard to the railway works suggested in the Speech, I do not think there will be any dissentient voice in the House. They involve the expenditure of comparatively small amounts, and I think we are willing to have the responsibility of undertaking them in this last session of this Parliament. I regret to see no reference in the Speech to the

question of the management of our railways. I was hoping the Speech would inform us that the Government intend to place the railways under the management of one independent Commissioner. We shall have to arrive at that state of affairs, and the sooner we do so the better. I may be wrong, but I think it undesirable that the railways and the works of this colony should continue under the control of one man. I think our Engineer-in-Chief, though an able man, cannot know everything, and if we can get a man who knows something about our railways, and can have a free hand in their management, we shall have better administration than at present. In connection with the question of railway rolling-stock, I was struck with the adroit manner in which the Engineer-in-Chief got out of that difficulty. I have been under the impression that the Engineer-in-Chief pretty well ran the railways in addition to the works, and that sometimes he even ran the Ministry. I have heard from a Minister himself, that you cannot come in contact with the Engineer-in-Chief, who ought to have been a lawyer, because he can always prove his case, however bad; and after an interview with him, you wake up the next morning and think what a donkey you have been. This gentleman does not like the railways to pass out of his control.

MR. SIMPSON: Why don't you relieve him of them?

MR. JAMES: Yes, why not? If you do that, the railways will be much better managed than they are now. I believe that if the Traffic Manager, Mr. Davies, had had a freer hand before the recent trouble, the railways would have been managed in a much better way; and if we are to have an independent Commissioner to manage our railways, I hope that Mr. Davies, who has served us so well, will have an opportunity of managing them in that capacity. I rejoice to see that the Premier has approached the important question of water supply for the goldfields with every consideration for the working man, and I do hope he will bring this principle home, and see that the Government men who are employed in the different departments are paid a decent wage. Even in this colony, where we are

supposed to have good times and prosperity, and where we certainly have expensive living—just look at the cost of living in Perth, and especially the house rents!—if we have this surplus revenue, some of it should be used to pay just wages to the servants of the Government. The question of subletting the Government contracts has cropped up, and I rejoice to see it is receiving careful attention from the Commissioner of Railways. Some of the contracts for public works in Perth have been sublet so much that half-a-dozen persons seem to live on one contract, and make a profit out of it. Complaints are constantly, and I think justly, made as to the way in which we pay our men in the Post and Telegraphs Department. Some men go on at 7 o'clock at night, and work till 8 o'clock next morning. I think there must be something wrong in an administration that allows things like that to go on unchecked. It ought not to be necessary for members of this House to bring forward such matters, or for constituents to go to members, asking them to draw attention to such abuses as these. The Civil Service needs remedying in lots of ways, and I was hopeful that we should have a Bill this session dealing with the re-organisation of the service. I regret very much indeed that that Bill has not been brought forward. As to the report of the Civil Service Commission not having reached the Government, I think the Government do not want it. They told us they were prepared to bring in a Bill directly the labors of the Commission ceased.

THE PREMIER: They have not ceased yet.

MR. JAMES: I am aware of that, but I was hoping the Government would have been prepared to bring in the promised Bill this session, for I do not think the Commission would have felt hurt if the Government had brought in the Bill. I rather think the Commission will strongly recommend the Government and this House to considerably re-organise the service. The Government are greatly to blame for the manner in which they are neglecting to build up a good Civil Service. Ministers take far too much of mere clerical labor on themselves, and I say again we do not want men who are placed in high positions to do depart-

mental work that ought to be done by clerks. If men in the service are not trained to do this work, the result will be that, when the present Government leave office, they will not leave behind them a race of servants qualified and trained to carry on the work while the new Ministers get into the way of it. If Ministers would get rid of incapable servants, they would do good for themselves, and lighten the labors of other officers of the Government. As to the architectural branch of public works, I say again, as I said last year, that I do not believe in all the Government buildings being designed by one man. I like variety in buildings, and if we had competition among architects for the Government designs—I do not mean the Manchester school of competition, getting the lowest price, but I mean getting a fair price—if we did that, I am certain we should have better buildings and better designs in every way, internally and externally, and the work would be done more cheaply, more promptly, and more efficiently. These are considerations to be borne in mind. In the Speech we have a railway suggested in connection with the agricultural interest. I should gladly support that, but I do think the Government are taking it too frequently for granted that, by the mere building of railways, you settle the lands. In building a railway we are apt to think that all land through which that railway passes is thereby opened up and settled; but I think the Premier, great as have been his services to the colony, could not do better, with his unique experience of the land laws and the state of the land in this colony, than to bring some scheme forward for the settlement of the land; and even if that scheme involves a million of money, I will “go the whole hog,” and support him in it, for I know nothing that is of more importance to this country than the settlement and development of the lands we have. So far as the re-distribution of seats is concerned, I think we are agreed upon the necessity for that; but I should be sorry if the Government proposed to give to the goldfields all the members they have been clamoring for. To talk about giving them 12 or 15 members is talking rubbish. I hope the Government won't forget that the com-

mercial centres deserve consideration; particularly Perth and Fremantle. I regret there is no reference to the restriction of the importation of Chinese into the colony. It is a matter engaging the attention of some of the sister colonies, and I will wait for the passing of a Bill on that subject now before one of the Australian colonies. We have a Chinese Restriction Act, which defines a Chinese as being a native of China; and all we have to do, by way of amendment, is to say that “Chinese” shall mean an Asiatic. That will settle all the trouble. Another important feature of the Speech is the suggested reduction of taxation through the Customs. In dealing with this question, it is nearly time we made up our minds whether we are going to reduce our taxation on protectionist lines or on free-trade lines. I do not believe in free trade, and if I thought any intended reduction was based on free-trade principles I would oppose it most heartily. I believe thoroughly in protection. There are many free-traders who are like the member for Sussex; for, while they talk loudly about free trade, they always want free trade for the other man, and protection for themselves. I want to repeat my regret that the Government have not brought forward more matters of what I may call domestic legislation. These are small matters, perhaps, but embodying important principles; and, if left, will become, as time goes on, more difficult to deal with satisfactorily. I should like to see the Government deal with State life assurance. It has worked admirably in New Zealand, and I am sure it will be in force in all parts of Australasia within 15 years. I think the Government might well take the initiative, and introduce it here. An Act embodying the principle has been in force in other colonies for 22 years, and that fact ought to commend itself, even to conservative members of this House. As to the improvement of people's properties by making Government railways through their land, why should we not ask those fortunate owners to pay back to the State some small portion of the large profit they make out of the enhanced value thus given to their properties?

THE PREMIER: Near towns, you mean?

MR. JAMES: I will support the principle if I can get the thin edge of the

wedge in anywhere. As to the licensing laws, they are chaotic; they are out of date. We have a great movement in the eastern colonies, and indeed throughout the English-speaking world, in connection with the liquor licensing question; and I do think the Government can do a great deal to lessen the evil of excessive drinking, by providing that all liquor sold shall be pure; by insisting, as far as possible, that the system of drinking in back parlors shall be abolished; by preventing the attractions or temptations to drinking that exist now; and, above all, by insisting that when a licensed house becomes a mere drinking-shop, the licence shall be forfeited. As to the practice of granting renewals in ordinary course, I do not suppose there has been an instance of a renewal being refused by the licensing magistrates here, unless there had been an outcry against the house. I should like to see the system so altered that, before granting a renewal, the onus of proving the applicant's fitness, and other conditions, should be thrown upon him in a stricter degree, so that the application for a renewal should not be granted as a matter of form. I heartily congratulate the Government on the proposal for the deep drainage of Perth. I do not quite follow the reasoning of the hon. member for Nannine, when he tells us that the healthiness of a seaport affects the whole colony, while that of the capital does not. If the people arriving in a colony, or others settled in it, have to come to an unhealthy centre in connection with business matters, as people now come to Perth, the risk to health affects the people all round, and is a risk that should be dealt with seriously. I hope this deep-sewerage scheme will not be characterised by those delays which too frequently characterise the Government works. So far as finance is concerned, my ideas are old-fashioned, and I always have a grave doubt when I see a large amount of money being spent, for I feel then that the day of reckoning must come, and I always listen to those who are inclined to preach the lesson of caution. Although we are anxious to push the colony ahead in a bold and progressive manner, I cannot forget that there is only a thin line of demarcation between boldness and recklessness. Let us en-

deavor to keep this in view in dealing with large and increasing expenditure, and I hope we shall be careful to avoid the temptations and disasters which have beset the sister colonies.

On the motion of Mr. HASSELL, the debate was adjourned until the next day.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.57 o'clock, p.m., until next day.

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 16TH JULY, 1896.

Motion: Correspondence re Abolition of Aborigines Protection Board—Motion: Return re values and duties on imports—Address-in-Reply: debate resumed—Message requesting appropriation of £2,500,000 for water supply to goldfields—Coolgardie Water Supply Bill; first reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

MOTION—CORRESPONDENCE RE ABOLITION OF ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD.

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, moved—"That there be laid upon the table of the House all further correspondence relating to the amendment of the Constitution Act, and the abolition of the Aborigines Protection Board."

Agreed to.