

Legislative Assembly.

Monday, 1st July, 1895.

Strengthening of Telegraph Line on the North-West Coast—Dams at Southern Cross, and the races leading thereto—Export Duties Repeal Bill; third reading—Address-in-Reply; adjourned debate—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

STRENGTHENING OF TELEGRAPH LINE ON NORTH-WEST COAST.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, whether the Government proposed to take steps to strengthen the telegraph line on the North-West coast, in those places where it is liable to be washed down by floods, so as to keep an open communication by cable with England via Broome.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the responsible Minister had the matter under consideration, but feared that nothing more could be done in the matter. Every effort was being made to make the Service efficient.

DAMS AT SOUTHERN CROSS, AND RACES LEADING THERETO.

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

1. What quantity of water had been impounded in each dam at Southern Cross during the recent rains.

2. Whether it was correct that the races leading thereto had been made in material which, from its nature, is porous, and permits the water to escape before reaching the dams.

3. Whether the Department contemplated lining the races referred to with cement or other material suitable for the purpose.

4. If so, when would this work be carried out.

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

1. There are two dams at Southern Cross, and the quantity of water impounded in one of them during the recent rains was 290,000 gallons, and none in the other one.

2. There are no rock mounds at Southern Cross, as in the case of most of the other

reservoirs, and the catchment races leading into the tanks had necessarily, therefore, to be cut through porous ground, as the whole of the ground in the vicinity is porous, and it was consequently never expected that any water would get into these tanks other than in exceptionally heavy downpours; but it is hoped that in exceptionally heavy downpours they will catch some water, and one of them did actually catch 290,000 gallons during the recent rains.

3. Whether lining the catchment races with cement, or laying earthenware pipes or troughs in them, would be of any material benefit, is a question which was raised some short time back, and is now being carefully considered.

4. I cannot say at present exactly what will be done, or when it will be done, as it will depend upon the reports which I have called for on the subject.

EXPORT DUTIES REPEAL BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

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

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mr. Speaker—I do not think that any honorable member has any reason to complain, so far, of any want of liberty that has been granted to him in the discussion of this Address-in-Reply. I notice that there is a tendency, and has been of late a growing tendency, on the part especially of Ministers, and indeed of Houses generally, to curtail the debate on the Address-in-Reply, the idea being that it is something of the character of a waste of time. But I do not think, Sir, that here that has been the case; and I am glad of it, for I look upon the debate upon the Address-in-Reply as occupying very much the same place in regard to the general policy of the Government, in our Parliamentary procedure, that the second reading debate occupies in connection with a Bill, and that it is calculated to save a considerable amount of time later on. I notice that in South Australia, where their Parliament at the present moment has reached somewhat the same stage as we have to-day—that is, they are in the act of discussing the Address-in-Reply—I notice that in that colony 38 members have already spoken to the Address,

and one of them has spoken for four hours. I can assure this House it is not my intention to speak for four hours to-night. (Murmurs of satisfaction.) I think, however, it is desirable that a considerable amount of latitude should be given in this debate on the Address-in-Reply, in order that the actions of the Ministry may be brought under general review. It must be remembered that for about seven months of the year the Ministry have a free hand. They do exactly what they please, without any criticism whatever, so far as Parliament is concerned; and, although so far we have had perhaps but very little cause to complain in reference to Ministers in Western Australia, the time may come when we may not have such perfect Ministers as we possess to-day. The time may come when there may be defects of administration. The time may come when things may be done of a character during the recess, by those in office, that may call for the censure of Parliament. Possibly, therefore, it is as well that Parliament should retain hold of its right of reviewing the actions of Ministers during the recess. Without any further preliminary remarks, I desire, Sir, to enter at once upon the work which is before us, and that is to deal with the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech. The first thing that suggests itself to me in this Speech is that it pertains somewhat to the definition we used to have in our school days of a geometrical line—length without breadth. I think I might use the words of Lindsay Gordon in regard to it, and say it is mostly "froth and bubble." Or I might apply to it an expression which another great writer, Charles Dickens, puts in the mouth of one of his characters, when he said that what he knew and what he didn't know would make a good book, especially what he didn't know. I will say the same of this Speech: what is in it, and what is not in it, would make a first-class Governor's Speech, especially what is not in it. Surely, never before in the history of Parliaments was ever so much language put into the mouth of a Governor, with so little in it. Looking at it, boiled down, it amounts to something like this: Ministers have to report that there has been an increase of revenue, bringing the year's revenue up to over a million. In the next place, they have to report that they have raised a loan at 3½ per cent., which realised a premium of £3 ls. 4d. per cent. In the third place, they have

to report that, during the recess, five representatives, including the Premier himself, went to Hobart to attend the Federal Council, but that the Ministry do not believe in Federation. Next, they have to report that our railways have attained this position: that they are paying not only their working expenses, but also the interest on their first cost. Next, they report that they intend to remove the Railway Workshops from Fremantle to the Midland Junction, and that they are going to build a branch of the Royal Mint, and are also going to reduce the freights on our railways. Then they tell us that they are going to bring in the Municipal Bill, which this House passed last session, and that they are going to revise the Mining Laws, and that they are going to appoint Inspectors of Mines, that they are going to amend the Electoral Act, that they are going to repeal the export duties on pearls and sandalwood, that they propose to abolish the Ecclesiastical Grant, and that they have already surveyed the railway to Bridgetown. The sum total of the whole of this long Speech may be thus boiled down; and I want, briefly, just to look at it as it stands before us. There is an under current going through the whole of this Speech which I think Ministers must have got from paragraphs which have appeared in some of our newspapers—a sort of constant and never-ending laudation and gratulation, which reminds me of a friend of mine who went to Sydney. After being there for several days and being asked about fifty times what he thought of their harbour, and putting on a somewhat cynical expression when asked the same question by one gentleman, that gentleman turned upon him, and said "You don't seem to appreciate our beautiful harbour." "Well," the answer was, "I think you have great reason to be proud of your harbour, but what I object to is to your eternally talking about it, as if you had dug it out yourselves." Now, Sir, I have no objection whatever to the most being made of the fortunate circumstances in which Ministers are placed just now in this colony. Truly, "The lines have fallen to them in pleasant places, and they have a goodly heritage," which we all rejoice to see. But what I object to is this everlasting talk, this eternal chorus of congratulation, as if the present prosperity were due to the action of the Ministry. Let us look at the first cause for congratulation that comes up

in this Speech: we are told that the revenue has increased to a million. Very well. What about that? When we were discussing the Estimates last year I made this remark, which appears in *Hansard*, on page 819. Speaking of the estimated Customs revenue, I said: "Then we come to the Customs, which is the source of the direct taxation of the people. Here we expect to receive a revenue of £424,000, according to these estimates. I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but if this amount does not come out by the end of the year at £550,000, instead of £424,000, I shall be very much surprised." Now, any business man who watched the signs of the times could have told the Premier that there would be a very much larger revenue than he estimated, and he was told so at the time in this House. Of course it is a good thing for us to have all this money. We are all pleased to hear about it. But supposing there had been a mis-estimate on the other side? Supposing the Treasurer had been £200,000 deficient in his calculations, instead of having a surplus of £200,000? I say if the Treasury cannot estimate its revenue (in estimating a matter of a million) within one-fifth of the whole amount, there must be something wrong. We are now pledged in this House to the borrowing of a million and a half of money, and what I want to emphasise is this: If the Treasurer had last year led us to suppose that instead of a revenue of £834,000, which was his estimated revenue, we were going to receive a million, I venture to say that this House would not have sanctioned the borrowing of so large a sum as £1,500,000. There was no necessity whatever to have borrowed it. I therefore count it as a defect on the part of the Ministry, rather than as a subject for congratulation and adulation, that they have under-estimated the country's revenue by upwards of a quarter of a million. I think it is to their discredit rather than to their credit that they were so far out of their reckoning. I think they ought to have been in a position to have given us a nearer estimate of what the public revenue was likely to be, so that we might have been in a position to have formed a judgment as to whether it would be wise or otherwise to have proceeded with the raising of so large a loan as that of a million and a half of money, when it turns out there was no necessity for it. Looking at this perpetual

adulation of the Ministry that has been going on ever since they have been in office, it appears to me that if one-tenth of the praise that is lavished upon them by their friends and admirers were true, a grateful public ought to have started a guinea subscription and raised a golden monument to the Forrest Ministry. This imposing structure should have four of the Ministers artistically placed, one on each corner, and the Premier standing aloft in the midst of them, looking over the whole, with something of the proud air which I can imagine Nebuchadnezzar to have assumed when he cried out "Is not this great Babylon which I have builded?" That seems to be the feeling of the present Ministry. For the last six months there has been one perpetual talk, in some quarters, of the success and prosperity of this country arising from the efforts of the Ministry. Sir, I think it is right to say and to point out that so far as the success and prosperity and the expansion of the revenue of this colony, is concerned, the Ministry has no more to do with it than the man in the moon; and possibly not so much, if that ancient gentleman has as much to do with influencing the weather as some people say he has, for the recent rains have done as much and more for this country than any Ministry can hope to do. Indeed I am reminded of the words of Oliver Goldsmith:—

"How small of all that human hearts endure
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!"

The men who have made this country great and prosperous are not the Ministry, but the men who have taken their lives in their hands, going forth into the waterless desert prospecting for gold. These men have done, and are doing, more for Western Australia than twenty Ministries; and, if there is to be any laudation, if there are to be gratulations and congratulations exchanged, let us give honour to whom honour is due. Let us give it to the hardy and undaunted men who have fought the battle, and won our prosperity for us. Let us give it to the men who, by their energy and their self-sacrifice, and their persistent efforts, have raised the revenue of the country from £414,313, which it was in 1890, to the present total of over a million. I am not prepared to give the Ministry very much praise or to offer them much congratulation on the part they have played in bringing about this satisfactory result. Another point

which is brought up in this Speech, as having contributed to the country's success and its present position, is the fact that we have been able to raise a Loan at 3½ per cent at a premium of £3 1s. 4d. What is there that we should go into ecstasies over in this, when we find that even defeated and dishonoured China can succeed in raising its millions, in the present condition of the money market? While on this point I ask permission to read a line or two from the money article that appeared in the *Argus*, as late as the 22nd June last. The writer says:

The broad upward movement in Colonial Government securities has continued during the past week, the individual advances ranging from ¼ to 2. We have got back to the halcyon days of colonial credit, owing partly to the extraordinary dearth of first-class securities in London, and partly to the steady regularity with which the public obligations of the colonies have been met. The British investing public recognise that one of the greatest financial convulsions of modern times has not postponed the payment of interest for a single day. At present, borrowers in London can obtain the use of money at the small charge of ½ per cent. per annum. And there is over £38,000,000 of gold and bullion in the Bank of England.

MR. A. FORREST: You can't get money in Western Australia at ½ per cent.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then look again at poor discredited Victoria, which is so much "down in the dumps." That colony has lately made larger advances in its bonds than any other Australian colony. We know this is not in consequence of any special prosperity enjoyed by Victoria. On the contrary. It is because of the vast amount of money that is seeking investment in London. Now, I ask, why under such favorable circumstances as these, did not the Ministry raise the whole of their loan? Why is it that they have gone upon the market with something like one-half instead of the whole, of their loan? If they have acted upon the advice of their financial advisers in London, that will be to me a sufficient reason; but, if they have acted upon their own advice and contrary to the advice of their financial advisers, I think they are to blame. In any case it seems to me there is nothing to get excited about in our having raised this loan, in the present state of the money market, at the price we did, when poor unfortunate China has been equally successful, and is able to raise £30,000,000 if she wants to. Yet this is put in the Governor's Speech as something which this great colony ought to be proud of, and something which was considered worthy of finding a place in this Speech, with its great

length without breadth. The next point I desire to refer to is the question of Federation. What the Ministry have to tell us about this may be briefly stated thus: "Five of us went to Hobart"—I suppose the Premier paid the expenses; I presume he paid them out of his own pocket; if he did, of course we have no right to complain, but if he comes here and asks the public to pay I think we have reason to complain, because what the Premier tells us, in effect, is this: "Five of us went to Hobart to take part in the Federation Conference, but I am not in favour of Federation; we simply went to Hobart for a trip, without any desire or intention of throwing in our lot in the interests of Federation." That is something which I cannot understand. But that is the position assumed by the Ministry towards this great question. Apart from that, I regret that the leader of the Opposition—it is known I am not an Oppositionist myself—who has recently been to the other colonies, seems to have imagined that the few people he came in contact with expressed the feeling of the whole community amongst which he moved, when he told us the other day that no interest was taken in this question of Federation in the other colonies. Why, Sir, in a speech which Sir John Downer made, only a few days ago, he says that Federation is the greatest question in Australia to-day. It is not so very long since that we had Sir Henry Parkes here, and even the Premier was carried away by the eloquence of the "grand old man" on this question of Federation, and gave us to understand that he was in favour of it. If we read his speech at Newcastle, and other speeches which he made here before that, he made us believe he was strongly in favour of Federation. Yet he comes to this House now, and puts it in the mouth of the Acting-Governor that he is not at all in favour of Federation.

THE PREMIER: No, no!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is what the Speech says.

THE PREMIER: No, no; read it correctly.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am quoting the Speech.

THE PREMIER: Quote it then. The Speech does not say so.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is how I understand it. I think, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of meeting you for the first time at a dinner in the Queen's Hall of the Parliament Houses of Victoria, when this question of Federation was discussed. On that occasion

the Hon. James Service said there was a lion in the path of these colonies federating, and that lion was the question of the Customs tariffs, and that Federation must either kill that lion or that lion must kill Federation. At a later dinner, at which I think you, Sir, were also present, Sir Henry Parkes said that the lion was only a poor harmless opossum, that could be easily snared out of the way. I venture, however, to suggest that the lion is still in the path. I venture to suggest that the real question upon which Federation will have to be fought is the question of the Tariff. But I do think, inasmuch as I believe we are prepared to make some sacrifices in order to make Australia a united nation, it is useless for us in this colony to attempt to arrest the tide of public feeling in that direction. It is useless for us, with our little handful of people out here in the West, to suppose that we can put back the clock which is going to strike the hour of the birth of a great Australian Empire! It cannot be done. Federation, is in the air. Federation, as Sir John Downer recently said, is the great question for Australia to-day; and it will be carried out whether Western Australia consents or not.

MR. A. FORREST: We do not want it yet, at any rate.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: As to the question of whether we want it here or not, the difficulty in our way will probably be the difficulty referred to by Mr. Service—the tariff question. But I venture to suggest that this question of the tariff is not so much of a lion, after all, as some people imagine. True, we receive a large amount of revenue through the Customs, but it is not wholly upon goods that are manufactured or produced in the other colonies. More than half of this revenue, I venture to suggest, is derived from goods that are first imported into the other colonies, and then sent here. If that be so, inasmuch as the idea and intention of Federation is inter-colonial free trade, and free interchange of products between the various colonies and protection against the outside world, then this bugbear of the tariff is not such a great obstacle as some people imagine. Most of the goods that come to us, even from South Australia or from Victoria, New South Wales, or Tasmania, are goods that have been first imported to those colonies from other countries, and these goods will still have to pay duty; so that all we should lose (as regards this question of the tariff) would be the duties in

respect of goods which are the products of the other colonies. It is time, I submit, that these wretched fiscal barriers were broken down. It is time that we cherished a proper patriotic feeling with regard to the potentiality, of an Australian united nation. What was Switzerland before the federation of her cantons? What was America before her States became united? What was Canada before the States of that Dominion federated? And what will Australia be until her Colonies unite in the bonds of Federation? Simply four or five separate provinces, each raising barriers against the other, and demanding a toll from its neighbours. I admit there are difficulties in the way, but what great question was ever settled without meeting with difficulties? The attitude I want to see this House and this Ministry assume towards Federation is not to meet the advances made by other colonies in this direction with a rebuff, but to be prepared to extend one hand to them and to say to them that we are ready to join them upon an equitable basis. Depend upon it, when the other colonies are prepared to take this step, the wisest position for this Parliament and this country to assume is to be ready to make such a promise. Instead of the Ministry being adverse to Federation they should be in favor of it, so long as we can obtain it on equitable terms. If it be so—I do not think it is, but if it be so that the people of this colony are not yet prepared for Federation, then the sooner the leaders of public thought endeavour to educate them to this grand standard the better, and we expect the Forrest Ministry to begin to teach them their first lesson, instead of throwing cold water upon the movement, as is done in this Speech. The next thing we are told is that our railways are paying their way. That is absolutely the best piece of news in the whole Speech,—if it is to be credited. [AN HON MEMBER: Question.] My friend questions it. So do I. I very much question it. If the figures were properly analysed, and the various items charged to their proper claims, I doubt very much if it can be shown that our railways pay as we are told they do. I do not believe it. I have a lively recollection of the Loan Bill of last session, a Loan Bill which amongst other things was to borrow money to build a washstand at the Fremantle railway station. Oh, I have not forgotten it. To borrow money in England, to build a washstand at the oldest station we possess! I tell you I have not forgotten it, and I am afraid

that a good many items of that character have been debited to loan moneys that ought to have been debited to the profit and loss account of our railways, and that this is one way in which our railways are said to pay. I hope it is not so. I shall rejoice greatly if it turns out to be that our railways have really reached this standpoint, that they not only pay their working expenses, but also the interest and sinking fund upon the loans raised for their construction. If that is so, I think the management of our railways is deserving of the very highest credit. If it be proved that such is actually the case, it will go a long way to do away with the hundred and one objections that are raised against the management of this department. If it can be demonstrated that our railways have really reached such a standard that they not only pay their working expenses but also provide the interest and the sinking fund upon the capital expended in their construction, then we have reached a standard which no other Australian colony, except perhaps South Australia, has been able to reach yet. I only hope it is true. The next thing we are told in this Speech is that the Government intend to move the Railway Workshops from Fremantle to the Midland Junction. I am not surprised at it. In the speech I made in the course of the debate on the Address-in-Reply last year, I told the House that the Government had purchased a piece of land for that special purpose, and I was told it was very good land for the purpose, and for a dozen other purposes. I have taken the trouble since the House last met, to go down to look at the other proposed site, at Rocky Bay—a site that has been sneered at. Now I am not going to speak of the part of Rocky Bay that has been cleared. There has been some misapprehension on this point. That piece of ground that is levelled down and is now in the hands of the engineer in charge of the breakwater, is not the piece of ground I am referring to, but a piece of ground to the north-west, up towards the line, where there are upwards of 100 acres of land that can easily be obtained by the Government, and which can easily be levelled, and I take it that 50 acres of land would be sufficient for the purposes of Railway Workshops for the next fifty years. The whole of that other land, which is now being levelled down, can be used for storage purposes. I say this: if the Government are going to take these Workshops to the Midland Junction they are going to perpetrate the

greatest political job that ever has been perpetrated in this colony. They are going to do this for some purpose which I cannot understand at present, but I appeal to all sensible men whether the removal of these workshops to this site is desirable, expedient, or advantageous in any way that will justify such removal. Here we have at the present time a crossing at William-street, in the centre of the City of Perth, with eight lines of rails already across it; here we are, also, with only one line of rails between Fremantle and Perth, and it is now proposed to bring the whole of the goods and material which will be required for railway purposes, right through the city, and across that William-street crossing, which is already a menace to human life. What will it be with additional traffic caused by the haulage of material for the Railway Workshops? What will it be with the mass of goods carried over it, and that will have to be carried over it, if these shops are placed at the Midland Junction? What also will become of the single line of rails between here and Fremantle? Already the volume of business done requires the duplication of this line, but if these shops are removed to Guildford, and all the railway material is to be hauled 22 miles inland, we shall require something more than a duplication of this line. I am not an engineer, nor do I pose as an engineer, but it strikes me that the Government will require two sets of metals for themselves, to carry their own railway material, which means the construction of 44 miles of railway for the express purpose of these Workshops, and it will mean the haulage of thousands of tons of material over 22 miles, which there is no necessity for. Is there any reason beneath the sun why such a thing should be done?

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: Not the slightest.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Certainly not. There is no reason whatever for it, beyond the fact that Mr. Allison Smith has recommended this site; and I venture to say that Mr. Allison Smith did not recommend this site until the Government had bought the land. We know how these things are done. I do say this, that a grave and serious mistake is proposed to be made by the Government, and, if these Workshops are taken to the Midland Junction, the time is not far distant when they will have to be brought back again, at the expense probably of £100,000 to this country. I know my friend, the leader of the Opposition, does not agree with me in this matter, because

he was a member of the Commission that once recommended this site. Nor will my friend on the right (Mr. Loton) be in accord with me, because he also was a member of that Commission. However necessary it may be to remove these Workshops from their present site, no earthly reason has been shown in this House why they should be taken to a site that will necessitate all the railway material required for these shops to be taken right through the streets of the city. There may be some reasons, as I said when the subject was under discussion last year, and I say it again now—there may be some reason for removing these Workshops from their present site. In fact, they must be removed. That is imperative. But it is not imperative that they should be removed to the Midland Junction. I say that again, and I do call upon the Ministry and upon the members of this House to seriously and earnestly consider this question. It is not a party question, because the Government themselves say it is not so. It is a good job perhaps for the Government that it is not a party question. Members are therefore free to act upon their own judgment in this matter, and I ask them to consider what is involved in carrying the whole of the future traffic in connection with these workshops right through the streets of the city. That is the main objection I see to the whole thing. I am not speaking in the interests of Fremantle. I am not connected in any way with Fremantle. Nor am I speaking in the interest of any particular district. I do not stand up in my place here to argue questions of this kind in the interest of any particular district. I am looking at it as a national question. I may be mistaken, but that is how I view the question, and I say in all seriousness and in all earnestness that the Government, if they persist in their intention of removing these works to the Midland Junction, will commit a huge blunder, and do a piece of work that will have to be undone, sooner or later, at great expense to the country. For this reason, I appeal to this House not to have it done. The next matter brought up in this Speech is the proposed establishment of a branch of the Royal Mint. Now, I suppose that, being a representative of a gold-mining district, I ought to support this proposal of having a Mint in Western Australia. Well, I find that Queensland heads the list of Australian Colonies last year for the output of gold, with its 695,000 ounces. Yet Queensland has

no Mint. Sydney has a Mint, but I am not quite sure it has ever paid its way. I do not think it has. [AN HON. MEMBER: The Sydney Mint pays.] Possibly; but the other one doesn't, nor is it likely to. I am alluding to Melbourne. In the greatest but one of the gold-yielding colonies—for Queensland, as I say, took the lead, for the first time, last year—the Mint does not pay. Yet it is now proposed to start one in Western Australia. I like the idea in one sense. There is a grand show of hopefulness about it. There is something expansive and noble in the conception. It says, in effect, that this colony of ours is going to be the largest gold-producing colony of the group, if not of the whole world; and I am glad to think that may be true. But I do say this: we must be prepared, if we accept the views of the Government in this matter,—we must be prepared for a distinct financial loss. A Mint will not pay. The question of prestige, perhaps, is worth something. Whether it is worth what this Mint will cost is another question; but I suppose we shall have an opportunity of discussing this question later on. Another matter touched upon in the Governor's Speech is the proposed reduction of railway rates. Well, if they are going to reduce the rates on the Southern Cross and the Mullewa Railways, I am with them. If they intend to bring down the present penal rates upon the goldfields' lines, and reduce them to the level of the rates charged upon our other lines, I shall be with them. But if they are going to continue the penal rates on the Southern Cross and the Mullewa Railways, and reduce the rates on the lines to Bunbury and other districts in that direction,—if they are simply going to reduce the railway rates for produce upon what my friend on my right calls "spud" railways, then I think this House should carefully consider the proposal, because, if our railways are paying now—which is a doubtful question, to my mind—but, if they do pay, I should like to see the Commissioner of Railways keeping them in that condition. But that won't be the case, if he lends himself to this principle: that because a district has produce which the settlers cannot bring to market and make it pay, they therefore should have their railway freights almost free. If he commits himself to that principle he will go astray, and he will find that his railways, if they pay now, will not pay by-and-bye. That principle has been tried in the other colonies, but what has been the consequence? Their

railways have been overloaded and brought into a ruinous condition, and the very people they were intended to help have not been helped. If the producer, whether it be of "spuds" (as my friend here suggests) or of wool, cannot produce it and bring it to market and make it pay, without these trifling reductions which the Railway Department are going to give him, I am afraid he will not succeed when these small reductions have been made in the railway rates. Something else is required.

AN HON. MEMBER: It will be a help.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It may be a help, but it will only be to help them to linger out a miserable existence. The next thing we are promised in the Speech is a Municipal Bill. We dealt with that Bill last session, and as it is coming before us again, I need not now dwell upon it. Then we are promised an amendment of the law relating to gold-mining,—a measure which members on this side and on the other side of the House have most strongly advocated. I hope it will be a good Bill. I hope it will, amongst other things, reduce the fee for a miner's right to 10s., and that there will be a considerable reduction in other fees. I also hope it will have a provision that people will not have to pay for surveys before they get their work done; and a lot of other things. We may take it for granted, I think, that it will be a good Bill. I believe the Ministry have carefully enquired into the whole subject during the recess, and that it will be a good and useful measure. If it is, I shall support it. I always support their good things. I would always support the Ministry if they were right. I am only sorry they are not often right. If they show themselves a good Ministry, I shall always support them. I am not an office-seeker. I am not concerned in the question of the coming in or the going out of Ministries. Some members may be. If they are, let them try it. In any Speech that I make in this House, or in any vote I give, I shall not be influenced by any consideration as to whether Ministers stand or fall. If a vote of mine happens to turn the balance in putting any Ministry out, I shall be prepared to do my duty in any position which the country calls me to. But as for seeking office, or giving a vote for the mere purpose of putting a Ministry out, I am not going to do it, in this House or in any other Parliament. There is one other point in the Speech for which I commend the Ministry, and that is their promise to bring in a Bill dealing with the regulation

and inspection of mines. This is an exceedingly necessary and important Bill. Already accidents have occurred in our mines, and the deeper these mines go down the larger will be the number of accidents we may expect; and I hope that drastic measures will be used for the protection of men engaged in these perilous undertakings. We next come to another measure of importance to the future of this country, and that is the promised amendment of the Electoral Act. While on this point, I ask the attention of the House to a few figures which indicate the necessity for a reform of the present Act, and which I have taken from the Registrar-General's own office. I find there were in this colony on the 31st March last, 57,574 males. I exclude females because we have no female suffrage here yet. Out of these 57,574 males, about 38,000 are over 21 years of age. That is to say, there are 38,000 adults who ought to be voters, and I think I may say that about 20,000 of these are upon our three principal goldfields. These three goldfields' electorates have three representatives in this House, and they have 1,162 voters all told. So that out of 20,000 men on our goldfields who ought to be voters, there are only 1,162 who possess that privilege, and these 20,000 have only three members representing them in this House. I regret there is not, in connection with this promised amendment of the Electoral Act, a declaration in favour of the redistribution of seats, and I hope that before the session closes the Ministry will see their way clear to remedy this great defect. But to return to these figures. I find there are only 13,384 voters on rolls in the whole colony. That is, when this House was elected. We have 20,000 adults on the goldfields alone, yet we have only 13,384 enfranchised voters in the whole colony. The members of the present Ministry sit for electorates representing an aggregate of 552 voters, and they all had a walk over. They have never once had to contest a seat. There are eleven other members in this House (one-third of the whole number) who in the aggregate represent 887 voters, whereas my friend the hon. member for Perth represents 947 voters. Surely there is something wrong about that. Eleven members representing only 887 electors, and one representing 947 electors! Then I find there are 17 members in this House—a clear majority—who sit for 3,519 voters, and every one of these 17 members

may be relied upon to support the Government. A clear majority in this House, who may all be relied upon to support the Government, only represent in the aggregate 3,519 voters. With these 17 members, and the four Ministers having seats in this House, we have 21 members (or nearly two-thirds of the whole House) representing in all only 4,071 voters. These are the majority who rule the country, and who control the expenditure of this million of money which the 80,000 people of the colony were taxed to produce during the past year. These 80,000 people are paying taxes, and those who vote the money only represent 4,071 voters. These are facts. Members may smile, but they are stern facts, and they bear upon the question that it is time we had a redistribution of seats, as well as electoral reform. I say it is high time there was a redistribution of seats, when we look at these figures. I hope in any case that the amended Electoral Act will at any rate benefit in some measure the thousands of hard-working and honest men who are toiling to make this country great and prosperous. Surely these men have a right to a vote, and they ought to get a vote, and I hope the Ministry will give them a vote. Of course they will all vote for the Ministry. The Premier tells us they are all well fed, well clothed, and contented; and, that being so, how can they do otherwise than vote for the present Ministry? The Premier has told us more than once that he is in favor of manhood suffrage, and that he is not afraid to trust the people. Let us have some practical evidence of the faith that is in him. Let him give the people a vote—the people who are making this country great and prosperous. Let them have a voice in the administration of the country. Let them have some voice in the disposal of the taxation which they themselves raise. Next we come to another question—tariff reform. I am surprised at this Government stating in this House that they do not intend to repeal the Stock Tax. If there is one thing the Ministry ought to do they ought to be prepared to repeal this tax. But there is not a word about it in this Speech, though the Premier told us the other day the Government did not propose to repeal it. The Premier thinks, I suppose, there is no necessity for repealing it. He says the people are well-fed and contented, though they are paying 10d. a lb. for rump steak! Has it come to this, that we have gone back to the Roman

period, of “bread and jam?” Will the Premier, with his majority of 17 at his back, representing 4,071 voters, tell the people of this colony that they ought to be happy and contented while the price of meat is as I have stated? Or will he tell the people of this colony that they ought to be content; when only 13,000 out of 38,000 of them who are entitled to a vote possess a vote?

AN HON MEMBER: Why don't they register?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How can they register under such an Act as we have now in force? A man has in some cases to be about six years in the colony before he can get on the roll. Then we have the question of repealing the export duty on pearl shells and sandalwood, which we have already disposed of. I give the Government credit for bringing in that Bill. Then we come to the proposal to abolish the Ecclesiastical Grant—a proposal which has my complete sympathy. I am quite prepared, as I believe other members are, to be liberal with the Churches, but I do think it is time we got rid of this objectionable grant, and I hope the Government will make one vote of it and be done with it. We have plenty of money, the Premier says; therefore let us pay this debt, if it is a debt, and see the end of it. There is one other point to which I must take exception, referred to in this Speech, and that is the survey of the Bridgetown Railway, which the Government has undertaken during the recess. I am not going to speak against the railway; that is not the point. We shall talk about that at the right time. But I do say it was an improper thing for the Ministry, during the recess, to continue the survey of this Bridgetown Railway, when they knew that a majority in another place absolutely declared against the railway last session, and when they must be aware of the constitutional difficulties with which we were confronted over the same railway—difficulties which nearly landed us in a very serious and critical position. Yet, while Parliament was in recess, the Ministry took upon themselves to continue the survey of this railway, well knowing it was calculated to cause friction between the two Houses, and to bring about a state of things we ought to very much regret. I hope that members in another place will have the good sense to pass over this indiscretion on the part of the Government. But it was an indiscretion, all

the same,—though I trust it is an indiscretion that will not occur with any future Government that may come into power. I do not suppose I shall live to see any other Government in power except the Forrest Government. I do not expect it. Nothing will shift them. There is another question of considerable importance to the City of Perth and to other towns of the colony—the question of sanitation. I do not intend to occupy the time of the House many minutes further, nor to go into the question of sanitation. But I would point out again that I believe the Government would save some hundreds of thousands of pounds to this country, and many valuable lives, if they took the trouble to investigate the Liernur system of sanitation. Deep drainage could be dispensed with if that system were adopted, as I pointed out last session. If Perth is to wait until deep drainage is introduced, I am afraid there will be hundreds of lives sacrificed before it is accomplished. Why not adopt this Liernur system which has proved so successful in Europe, and which could be introduced here at far less cost to the country than any system of deep drainage. So much for what is contained in the Governor's Speech. I will trespass on the time of the House only for a moment while I refer to what in my opinion ought to have been in the Speech—the Ministry's sins of omission. First of all there ought to have been something said upon the question of Education. I say distinctly the present educational system of this colony is a dishonour to it. There are no high class institutions, there are no colleges or universities here available for the youth of the colony, and we ought to see that the standard of our educational system is raised to its highest possible degree. I am not speaking of one side of the question or the other at present, but I say the children of this colony ought to receive a good system of education, and the Government ought to take the question up, and the system ought to be a national one,—free, secular and compulsory. But the Government seem to be afraid to face the question. Why? Never in the history of Parliament has a Government had the advantages which this Government possesses. They are absolutely secure.

MR. SIMPSON: They may die.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Die! The Forrest Ministry will never die. They only reconstruct. They have 17 members (which is a majority) who will vote with them under al-

most all circumstances. I am not quite sure whether they will all be prepared to do so on this education question, but almost on all subjects they may rely upon that majority. They have a splendid opportunity in bringing in liberal and broad legislation into this House, legislation which would be to their honor for all time, and legislation which a weaker Ministry would have the utmost difficulty in carrying through. Now while things are flourishing, while the community is at peace, while the finances of the country are everything we could desire, and while the Ministry have the power in their hands,—now is the time they ought to deal with the great questions which the country requires them to deal with. They have the power to do so, and they have the ability to do so—I will say that; but they have not the inclination. No Ministry will ever be in such a good position to deal with these great questions as are the present Ministry. No Ministry will be in such a good position to deal with this education question, and I regret they have not, up to the present, had the courage to face it. I hope that, if not this session then at the next session, they will settle it for all time. Then there is another question, which, though perhaps not of so much importance to the whole country, is still of considerable importance to a large number, and that is the question of Civil Service reform. Of course I am aware that we have a Commission sitting, and we hear some very strange things about that Commission. This, however, is not the time to discuss those things. But we have heard some very strange rumours about that Commission, of ways that are devious and dark, and of things that we do not at all comprehend. But I think the Ministry, while they are strong ought to bring in some measure dealing with this question of Civil Service reform. The Service, we know, is not in a satisfactory condition. Look at the reports of the Auditor-General. Look at the condition of things at Coolgardie, and the vast amount of money irregularly dealt with in those parts. Look at the number of irregularities that have occurred in the Railway Department, in connection with the funds of the department,—all of which afford ample proof that things are not going on satisfactorily in the Civil Service of the colony. We also know that members of the Service themselves are not content, and cannot be content, under the present system. Therefore, I trust that the Ministry, if not

this session, will, later on, deal with this question also, while they are able to deal with it as a strong Ministry, with a large majority at their backs, and they are in a position to deal with such reforms. They cannot be afraid of being defeated,—certainly not in this House, until at any rate we have a general election, and perhaps not then. I am not anxious myself to see them defeated. I have not the slightest anxiety upon the question. All I want is good Government, and I don't care who are the Government. There are some questions which I do earnestly urge the Ministry to consider. Amongst others I have already mentioned is the question which has largely agitated the other colonies—the relation of capital and labour. Now is the time for dealing with such questions here, while things are quiet. We all hope that as time goes on we shall have important mining industries in our midst, and thousands of men employed on our goldfields, and, sooner or later, the question of strikes will become a serious question here as in other countries. Now then is the time for the Ministry to deal with such questions, when everything is favorable to their solution, and they may prevent the distressing state of things that have been witnessed in the other colonies. The present Ministry are strong enough to deal with it, or to carry anything they like. A gentleman of my acquaintance in this city said to me the other day:—"If the Forrest Ministry brought in a Bill to enact that what has hitherto been black should henceforth be white, and that what has hitherto been white shall in the future be black, they would be able to carry it, with the majority they have at their back to support them." That is what this gentleman told me. I do not say so myself, but it was said to me the other day.

MR. A. FORREST: Name.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I will not name. He was an intelligent and honorable gentleman, a man of education and high culture. Then there is another question I should like to refer to. It relates mainly to the Premier's Department. Some time ago a strong anti-Asiatic agitation took place in this colony, and public meetings, attended by some 2,000 men in Perth, and about 1,500 men at Fremantle, were held protesting against Chinese and Asiatic immigration, and a deputation was appointed to wait on the Premier, who refused to receive the deputation. (THE PREMIER: No, no.)

I understood so. With regard to this surplus revenue, of which we are all very glad to hear, the Ministry have not told us yet what they intend doing with it. I am going to make a suggestion to them: let them make a railway with it from Port Headland to Marble Bar, so as to include these other goldfields in our railway system. Here is an opportunity for the Ministry if they want to embark upon a reproductive public work. I differ with the Ministry, however, if their idea is that this surplus revenue should be expended on reproductive works only. It is no borrowed money. I agree that borrowed money should be expended on reproductive works, but surplus revenue should be applied to works which are not necessarily reproductive, but which of course are necessary and useful works. Dealing with all these questions as they stand before us I regret that the present Ministry, with the powers they possess, have not had the courage to face that liberal legislation which this House and the country desire. They look at things from too narrow a point of view. They imagine that the few electors they represent, and the few people who they meet from time to time, represent the true feeling of the country. But that is not the case, and, if this Ministry will not take upon itself to do this necessary work which the country is looking for, the time will come—perhaps not during my lifetime—but the time will come when this country will put in other men to do the work. With their majority, with their powers, and with their experience—and I suppose few men can surpass the Premier in his experience of the requirements of the country—with all these advantages, I say the Premier of the present Ministry ought to be able to face any difficult question of legislation, and he ought to be able to deal with such questions in a broad and liberal spirit. What I call for from the Ministerial benches tonight is that these things, some of which have been omitted from the Governor's Speech, but which the country desire—such as the redistribution of seats, a proper Education Act, a proper Electoral Act, a good Mining Act, a good Mines Act, a measure dealing with early closing, and some measure dealing with capital and labour, as well as an effort to advance the great question of Federation, which should convert these colonies into a great nation in these Southern Seas—I ask them while they are strong, while the finances are flourishing,

and while all the circumstances are favourable, I ask them to approach and deal with these great questions in a broad and liberal spirit.

MR. COOKWORTHY: I have come to join the chorus—

AN HON. MEMBER: Hallelujah!

MR. COOKWORTHY: The chorus of congratulation which has greeted the statements put forward by the Ministry in His Excellency's Speech. At the same time, I do not intend to go into ecstasies, though I agree with the honorable member for Naunine in not wishing to see the Forrest Ministry go out of office, and that is the reason why I support them. I am not prepared to impute all the success this colony has met with to the action of the Ministry, but I do say that the present Premier has met with signal success, and has shown much judgment and discretion in the management of public affairs. That being the case, why should we not praise him when praise is honestly due? Why should we not say to him "Well done! thou good and faithful servant." It is very easy to find fault. Any one can pick a hole in another's garment. But it is only right that praise should be accorded to those who deserve well of their country. I certainly think His Excellency's Speech is a very satisfactory statement of affairs, though I certainly am not going into heroics about it. It is something more than "length without breadth," as one hon. member has described it. It is characterised by common sense, which is what the country wants. As we have an overflowing revenue, it is, perhaps, only right that there should be certain reductions made in the Customs duties, and the proposed reductions will, I think, be of great benefit to the colony at large. Reference has been made to the Stock Tax, and it has been said "Why not repeal it?" I ask, why not repeal the duties on agricultural produce? Why not repeal the duties on chaff, corn, flour, and all the rest of such articles? Are you prepared to do that? (An hon. member: Yes.) Then you may as well have the courage of your convictions, and propose it. If you repeal these duties you may as well shut up the Southern line and all your agricultural railways, and get rid of the small farmer who is trying hard to make a home for his family. We know very well that without some protection the farmers of this colony would not be able to exist. It is all very well to talk about the high prices

that rule for certain articles of consumption—meat for instance, and to cry out for a repeal of the Stock Tax. The producer does not get the benefit of these high prices. What does the Stock Tax amount to, after all? The small fraction of a penny.

AN HON. MEMBER: Then what is the good of it?

MR. COOKWORTHY: Because, as I have said, the farmers cannot do without some amount of protection. They would not be able to exist otherwise. As I have already said, you must not run away with the idea for one moment that it is the producer gets 10d. a lb. for his beef, or anything like it. If he gets 3d. a lb., it is as much as he gets. It is the butcher and the middleman who get the benefit of the high prices. I am not blaming the butchers. They do like we all do, the best they can for themselves. If you want to remedy the present state of things the remedy rests with yourselves. You must have co-operation; you will then have cheap meat. The fault lies with the people themselves. If they adopt the co-operative system amongst themselves, and endeavour to keep it up, they will have their meat at a reasonable price. But as for Free-trade, I do not think the colony would care for it. I believe I have the common sense of the colony at my back, when I say that the people here are not prepared for Free-trade. As for Federation, well, I don't think it was very much use for members to go from this colony to Hobart to attend the Federal Council, except, perhaps, that it afforded them a very pleasant outing. But this colony, at present at any rate, is not prepared for Federation. When the proper time comes, no doubt Federation will come with it. It is said that with Federation we should have intercolonial free-trade. I am afraid the only benefit we would get from that would be that our colony would be inundated with the worthless products of Victoria and other colonies. If we go in for free-trade, let us have free-trade with the whole world, the same as the mother country, and not intercolonial free-trade alone, and have all the scrubby products of our neighbours poured into our markets. The Government, I am glad to find, promise to make a reduction in our railway rates. This will be good news to our farmers. Those who live at a distance from a market know very well that the present freights press very heavily upon

producers. There are other things besides a reduction of freight rates which I hope will be introduced in connection with our railways, one of which is a better and simpler classification of goods. At present there are seven different classes of goods, and, when you get a consignment note, you never know under which head to classify your goods. I also hope something will be done to accelerate the speed on our railways. It has taken me 8½ hours to come 150 miles. Five and fifty years ago I have done hundreds of miles in India in the same time. I know railways where they can get nearly a thousand miles in 12 hours and stop on the road, but these are railways in the hands of private companies; they are not Government lines. I am sorry the Government has not shown more firmness in carrying out their public works during the recess. I am not going to commit myself, but I have one thing to say, however, with respect to what the hon. member for Nannine said just now. He said that there would have to be something like 12,000 tons of goods carried every year through Perth from Fremantle to the Midland Junction. Well, supposing there are 12,000 tons of goods, does he expect they will all remain at Fremantle? Will they not have to be brought through Perth, and be distributed all over the colony. If you have the workshops at the Midland Junction, all these locomotives and trucks will in due course have to be repaired, and then they will not come through Perth. Do hon. members understand? These 12,000 tons of goods would, it is said, be landed at Fremantle, and would, of necessity, have to be brought through Perth to be distributed all over the colony from Coolgardie to Busselton. I do not think there is much in the argument used by the hon. member for Nannine, when he said that these goods and rolling stock would have to pass through Perth, for he was evidently advocating the vested interests of Fremantle, which puts me in mind of a tale of Sidney Smith. Through the vigilance of the police, the highway men of Hounslow Heath were to be put a stop to, but they pleaded that their vested interests, as His Majesty's subjects, were being interfered with, and they should be considered. It is the same thing now, but I would point out we have to consider the interests of the whole colony. The Engineer-in-Chief, who is the official adviser of the Government, thinks it is in the interest of the colony that the workshops should be re-

moved. He has said he has no particular bias in favour of one place over another. He only gives a professional opinion as to which he considers the better place, and considering that opinion has been given, and that it is backed up by the findings of a Commission, the only thing that surprises me is that the Government have not shifted the Workshops before now, for it would have greatly reduced the expenditure on the Government railways. With regard to this question; whose opinion ought we to take, so long as we believe in his ability and honesty, but that of the man who has to carry on the work? He ought to know the best way and the best place to do it, and he says the Workshops ought to go the Midland Junction. I have come up here to vote for the Address-in-Reply. I have been called a voting machine, but I am not ashamed of my vote, and shall continue to give it honestly and fearlessly. I agree with the hon. member for Nannine in this, that I think there is no show of getting the Forrest Ministry out.

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: Mr. Speaker—Sir, I cannot expect to receive from the hon. members of this House such a pleasant hearing as my hon. friend who has just sat down, for I am afraid my remarks will be somewhat dry, and possibly tedious, and may not interest the House very much. Much has already been said by some hon. members in alluding to the Speech. Some have thought it necessary to make an apology for the length of their remarks, while others have stated they considered it a waste of time to refer at any length to the Speech. I must say that I incline to the latter opinion, that there is very often a very great waste of time in discussing this Speech, inasmuch as the greater portion of the items dealt with in it have on future occasions to be brought before hon. members for their consideration, and can then be dealt with in a better way; although on the other hand, very often the freshness of the debate is much removed and lessened by the length of the remarks that are made upon these various items. Still I agree also somewhat with what fell from the hon. member for Nannine, that there are occasions when the time of the House is saved at a late period of the session by the remarks made by hon. members when speaking on the Address-in-Reply. Sir, some hon. members have referred in items of disparagement, more especially members on the other side of the House, to the tone of the Speech of

His Excellency the Administrator. I may say that I scarcely know what those hon. members expected from the Government. It is very well known to them, as it is to most of us that we cannot expect at each succeeding session of Parliament the Government to represent to us a bill of fare, such as we had presented to us last session. They cannot always be bringing forward Loan Bills for a million or a million and a quarter, nor can they always be offering to us extensive schemes of public works which involve the expenditure of enormous sums of money. They cannot always be presenting such bills of fare as these, and if hon. members expect them to do so, they must be somewhat disappointed, for the Government must occasionally fall a little short of placing before hon. gentlemen such enticing dishes as we have had placed before us in previous sessions. At the same time hon. members know that in what appears in the Speech, Ministers are referring to events, some of which are past, some that are now taking place, whilst in other parts of the Speech they refer to matters which are contemplated, and to schemes that they intend to bring before hon. members. Therefore, I do not think the Government or any other hon. member sitting on either side of the House, need apologise either for the length or the breadth of the Speech, as one member put it, delivered to us this session. The progress and advancement of the Colony is a matter which I need hardly dwell upon, because we are all well aware of the great and general progress that has been made. The finances, we are told, are in a thoroughly satisfactory condition, and the revenue for the year will far exceed the estimate. We all know that the progress of the colony must of necessity lead to an increased revenue; it is satisfactory to know that our anticipations were not mistaken. The credit of the Colony is at the present time in an excellent condition. It is a fact that at no previous period during the existence of this colony, or indeed ever before in the history of the other Australian Colonies, was it possible to realise £120, on the London market for our 4 per cent. debentures. They are now selling in London and in the old World at from £119 to £120. I think the Government and the Colony are to be congratulated upon the fact that our financial position is so good, and our credit so high all over the world. Reference is made to the

Federal Council, and I shall touch upon that subject merely because I think it desirable to say a word or two on the principle of Federation. I quite agree with what fell from the hon. member for Perth, namely, that the question of Federation excites very little attention indeed in the other colonies, and certainly that is so in Western Australia. Throughout the whole of Australia it is certainly not receiving the attention that it did some years ago. I am also in accord with that hon. member, when he says the time is not ripe for us to consider the question with a view to its future adoption, or that it suits our circumstances to join with our sisters in other parts of the Australian group, to form one great Australian nation. I am an Australian born, a native of Western Australia, and all my sympathies are with this great idea, but at the same time it seems to me the idea of Federation is more of a sentimental than a practical one. I hope to live long enough, for I know I shall then live to a good old age, to see this accomplished with great results. In no sense do I think it would be an immediate advantage to Western Australia, and that for many reasons which are too long for me to go into now. One is that there is very little chance of any tariff being instituted that would suit the circumstances of this colony. It would be to the disadvantage of Western Australia, whilst it would be of the greatest possible advantage to others members of the Australian group to adopt Federation now. According to the argument of the hon. member for Nannine, everything that is produced in the other Australian Colonies would have to be admitted duty free. How would that suit the manufacturers of this colony.

MR. MORAN: Very well.

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: It might suit the consumers of the colony for a short time, but would it suit the producing portion of the colony? The revenue of the colony would certainly suffer if everything produced or manufactured in the other colonies were to be admitted duty free. The duty on everything from the outside world would be charged as hitherto. This would be a direct bonus to the other colonies as against the mother country. That is only sentiment, perhaps, but is it fair to treat the mother country, from whom we have all sprung, in that way? Is it fair to make a tariff against all Home-made articles, and distinctly in

favour of our sister colonies? We might, perhaps, levy a tariff against other European countries, indeed, all other countries in the world, but why against the mother country, and in favour of the other Australian colonies? We know perfectly well that every manufacture that could be started in Western Australia would be strangled at its very birth, were the products of our neighbours admitted duty free. No industry in this colony could live, even for a limited period, and consequently I draw the attention of the consumer to this point. He might look upon the matter as a direct advantage, to be able to buy his food and clothes, and everything he needed, as cheaply as possible, but I would call his attention to one fact, unless he has money to buy what he requires, cheapness is of absolutely no service to him. Unless you provide him with work he cannot secure what he requires. But that is one, one of the things that may be said on the subject of Federation, so far as the position of Western Australia is concerned. One of the arguments used in the other colonies is that we should federate for purposes of defence, but suppose we did federate for that purpose, and that there was an Australian force, how many of such men would be available on this side of the Australian continent? I venture to think that should any war take place, Western Australia would have to take care of herself. Reference has been made to Canada and other portions of the world, and we have been asked what they were and what they did before Federation? I consider the circumstances, are not analogous. Here we are on one side of a huge continent, with a very large tract of what up to the present has been considered unexplored territory, and with practically no land communication, and we might as well be in Europe so far as defence is concerned, as be connected, as we are, with the other parts of Australia.

MR. JAMES: We could always fall back upon the Darling Ranges.

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: A very nice range to fall back upon. The honorable gentleman might, but there are some people here who would like to fight if there came the necessity for it. Now, Sir, I think these arguments might be extended at great length and might become tiresome, but I will not refer to them further. I think the Government are to be congratulated, and the country too, upon

the fact of the completion of the Mullewa and Donnybrook railways, and also the railway to Busselton. These are works that have been considered necessary for a long time past, and they have now become accomplished facts. We are told the Government have no reason to regret their action, for these works are not only proving useful, but are likely to become, if they have not already become, profitable. We are also told the railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie is about to be started. We all know, that the contract has been let at a very low price, at so low a price, indeed, that many who profess to know something about the construction of railways, including some of the other tenderers, say that the contractors will be unable to carry out the work. I hope in the interests of the contractors themselves, and in the interests of the colony, that these persons will be proved to have been in the wrong. The question presents itself to my mind whether we ought not in the future to give up constructing macadamized roads throughout the length and breadth of this colony, and go in for railways. If they can be constructed at these low prices they will be the cheaper in the long run, although, perhaps, a little more costly in the first instance. I believe this new contract will be a good test case as to whether or not railways can be constructed at these cheap rates.

MR. GEORGE: What about the rolling stock?

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: The question of rolling stock, of course, has to be considered, but if the line is constructed at £500 per mile less than the estimate given by the Engineer-in-Chief, or whoever has prepared the estimate, then it leaves an extra £500 per mile to be spent on rolling stock or to the good of the colony. While on the subject of railways, I would like to say in connection with the line from Southern Cross to Coolgardie, that it is a question for the Government to consider whether they should not have a survey made at once for an extension of that line to Hannan's, or to what is known at the present time as Kalgoorlie. I have lately returned from a visit to Kalgoorlie, and it seems to me only right that the line of railway should be extended further to the eastward, though it may not be due east and west, because it will tend to form another portion of that great trunk line which must hereafter be constructed right through to the border of South Australia. With regard to the Collie coal-

field and the deposit there, there is very great difference of opinion, though I think the objections which some hon. members had were removed by the experience they had on the occasion of a recent visit to the field. We saw—I do not wish to be funny—a coal seam or something that seemed to be coal. Many who had had their doubts before, had their doubts removed on that occasion, and I believe when the Government bring their Bill forward, they will have a large majority of members to support them. The progress of the goldfields has been such as to almost startle one. It is only about a month ago that I returned from a pleasurable visit to the Coolgardie district. I had not been up during the 12 months previously, and I found that a very great improvement had been made, not only in the town of Coolgardie itself, but in the whole district. There was a very large number of inhabitants, and there were signs of bustle and prosperity everywhere; and progress was evidently taking place of every hand. All the authorities I met or heard, or read of, agree that there is a great future for the goldfields of Western Australia, and I think this Colony has great reason to be thankful that we found gold, at a time when everything else, when our staple products, and all our industries, were at their very lowest ebb. I do not know what we should have done had it not been for the discovery of gold, for it has changed everything, and now the Colony is on the full tide of prosperity. Population is increasing. Our imports have largely increased although, unfortunately, our exports have not, except gold. These things, aided by (I do not expect the hon. member for Nannine to applaud this sentiment) a wise and liberal Government, have forced Western Australia ahead to the place it now holds—an unexampled, unparalleled position in the history of the Australian Colonies, probably if not in the history of any country in the world. Reference has been made to the Agricultural Bank, and some hon. members have expressed the opinion it has not been worked as it should have been. Of course, I know but very little about its operations, but I have the pleasure of knowing its manager, and I believe in making the selection they did, the Government acted wisely and discreetly. My only regret in regard to that appointment is that we lost the presence of Mr. Paterson from this House, but if anything would tend to make that loss bearable it is the presence here of

such a gentleman as now represents the Murray district. I think it would probably be well for the Government to consider, now that money is at such a low rate of interest—

MR. A. FORREST: Are you speaking from experience?

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: I am not speaking of my own experience, but now that the Government can borrow at such a low rate of interest, I think it well they should consider whether they could not give the hardy peasants, as my friend calls them, some consideration by reducing their rate of interest, to say 5 per cent. a concession, that would be much appreciated by a hard working class of people. There has been quite a chorus of congratulation on the progress of the Fremantle Harbor Works. So far as they are concerned they are progressing rapidly, and as far as one can judge, the work has been carried out well and economically.

MR. A. FORREST: How do you know that?

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: The hon. member for West Kimberley asks me how I know. Well, I do not know that I am a judge, but we are told by the Government, that it is so, and I have sufficient faith in their veracity to believe that it is as they say.

MR. JAMES: What do you think?

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: I will not say what I think. As to the ordering of two other dredges the Government have done quite right because if the work is to be carried out, the sooner it is done the better, and the sooner we shall know if the work is going to be all it was represented it would be, and whether it will do all we are told it will do. One thing we shall know when it is completed, and when all the money is spent, is whether Fremantle has become a first-class Harbour, and a first class port of call, at which the Orient and P. and O. Mail Steamers will call. If it is successful in doing that, then the Government and the country will have good cause for congratulation. Now, perhaps, it would be a fitting time for me to say that the Government have promised they will use every endeavour to secure the P. & O., Orient and other large ocean-going steamers to call at Fremantle, as soon as the Harbour is completed. Personally, I am very much obliged to the Premier for the efforts he is making to induce these steamers to call at Fremantle, but somehow I have this feeling or opinion, that it will not require any effort on the part of the Premier, or the Government that sits here

now, or that may be sitting here in the future, if Fremantle gives them the facilities which we are told it is going to do, to induce them to call without much pressure being brought to bear. I am sure it will be to the interest of these companies to call at the Port for the central portion of the colony, where the greatest quantity of goods is landed, and where the largest number of passengers should be landed, although at the present time such is not the case. It will not require much effort to bring this about, if the Harbour, when it is completed, meets all the requirements which I state it should do. And I may add that I shall never be satisfied until it does give ample facilities, and ample safety at all times, and in all sorts of weather, for the largest steamers afloat. Then the Government, and the Engineer-in-Chief who designed it, will be heartily congratulated, because it will be a success. We are told that the dredger has been working in Princess Royal Harbour and that good work has been done. I am very glad to hear it. I am pleased, as representing Fremantle, that the Government have done what I would term a graceful act, by allowing this dredger, which was introduced for the purposes of the Fremantle Harbour Works, to remain so long at Albany, and I think the Albany people should be gratified and pleased, because they have a harbour which they themselves are almost as fond of smiling at, as are the good folk of Sydney who were referred to by the hon. member for Nannine. We hear a lot of the harbour at Albany, but unfortunately they have not much else of which to boast of, except one thing. They have their representative in this House, who is an ornament to it and a most useful representative.

Mr LEAKE: He must be coming over.

Mr. SIMPSON: There is plenty of room for you over here—

The HON. W. E. MARMION: I notice there has been very little reference made on the other side of the House to the Midland Railway. This used to be the *bête noir* of so many hon. members, so long as the Government were in difficulties concerning it, and while they were endeavouring to bring that great work to a successful issue. So long as there were financial difficulties arising, so long as there was a chance of twitting the members of the Government, members on on the other side never tired of dishing up the Midland Railway to damage

the Government. The Midland Railway has now been completed, and trains are now running between the Midland Junction and Geraldton. In a short time the line will be handed over to the Company, a complete and great work, making a chain of railway communication between Albany in the South and Geraldton and Mullewa in the North. I think this a fitting opportunity to say, speaking personally, that I felt very much gratified the other day to receive from the General Manager an intimation than on account of my position as a member in this House, I was entitled to a free pass on that line. I had the pleasure of thanking the Manager, because it was a compliment I had no reason to expect. At all events we may congratulate ourselves upon the fact that the action of the Government has caused this railway to be completed satisfactorily, and even if the Company were to fail to pay the interest on the debentures to-morrow, the Government have a very good security, inasmuch as they could take over the railway at the low price of £500,000. With reference to the establishment of a Mint in this colony, I know there is a great difference of opinion. Personally, I do not think it a matter of very great concern. I do not think it is going to be a very costly thing in the first instance, and the annual expenditure need not be very large. It will be a good thing if only for one purpose, and that is it will be a grand advertisement for this colony to have imprinted upon the sovereigns that go into the pockets of the people all over the world, the fact that they were made in Western Australia. We are one of the greatest gold-producing countries, if not the greatest in the world, and when the question of the Mint is brought up, it will probably receive my support, unless the arguments are very strong on the other side. I see the Estimates of revenue and expenditure will leave a large balance in favor of revenue this year, and the Government seem to be in some slight dilemma as to what should be done with the surplus. I have referred to the continuation of the railway from Coolgardie to Hannan's. I do not know whether that is one of the works they will do with the surplus, but it seems to me one of the most useful works they could undertake with it. I ask the Government to be cautious and careful as to the use of these surplus monies. Although some hon. members have said that we need not be too particular about

spending monies of this class—we could spend them upon almost anything—I think we should be very particular that we use them in a good and useful manner. I would not ask that they be expended upon some immediately reproductive work. I think telegraphic communication is one of the works to which some of these surplus monies might be applied, and there are many other works that will no doubt be referred to when the expenditure of this surplus comes on for consideration. I do not desire to take up much further time except to say I hope the Government will give due care to the expenditure of this money, because although everything looks bright before us now, there will come a time when we shall regret the expenditure of this money, if it be spent unwisely or foolishly. Referring to the Tariff Bill which the Government have brought down, and looking at it only in a casual way, as I have not been able to do otherwise up to the present time, it appears they have gone in a fairly right direction, in removing some of these duties. I notice their aim seems to have been to follow the ideas suggested or put forward by the Trades and Labour Council, and this represents the numerous working classes of this colony. I think that is a good idea to carry out, as far as is possibly consistent with our needs, and so long as we do not do too much damage to the revenue, and thus prevent our carrying out many necessary and useful works, we may well take the step in the direction indicated. I notice particularly three or four different items are mentioned. These items alone will make a difference of about £30,000 at least. Of course this is a very large sum, and it must be borne in mind that £30,000 reduction in the revenue means an amount equal to the interest on nearly a million of money at 3½ per cent., and when we calculate the possibilities of an amount like that, if judiciously expended, doubts may arise in the minds of some as to whether the working man would not receive more benefit by this £30,000 being utilised in paying interest on a large amount of capital, expended in providing him with work. These are questions too deep to go into at this stage of the proceedings, but they will have to be dealt with fully when the Tariff Bill comes on for consideration. The Government have been bold enough to deal with the Ecclesiastical Grant.

Mr. SIMPSON: Hear, hear.

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: Some hon. gentleman says, "Hear, hear."

Mr. SIMPSON: They have a majority of the House with them.

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: No, not a majority of the people. They have never succeeded in obtaining a majority—always a minority. The good faith of the people, the good sense of the people, is against them, and in favour of the Ecclesiastical Grant. I do not blame the Government in endeavouring to do away with these petty worries that are constantly being raised, this being one of them. There are already certain gentlemen in this House who attack the Government upon every possible occasion, and when the question of this Grant has been brought forward. They have never succeeded in their attacks; they never will succeed for years to come. I think the Government are to be congratulated upon advocating the payment of a large sum to the various Churches who have been in receipt of this Grant. I do not care whether it is in one or two instalments, but I do hope the payment, whether one or two, will be as large and liberal as this country can possibly afford to make. If it be as it is suggested, spread over two instalments, then I hope that each instalment will be as large as if it were only to be one instalment. If the Government will do that, I am sure it will meet with general approbation. I do not care what hon. members who have spoken may say, or what may be said in the future, the more liberal the Government is to the Churches, the more will they be congratulated by the bulk of the people of this colony, who largely appreciate the efforts of the Churches to carry the light of the Gospel throughout the length and breadth of this land. I think, however large the Grant may be, the people generally will regret that it could not be made larger. While on this point (and I only just refer to it, not caring to deal with an argumentative question), I am pleased the Government have not referred to the Education Question, because I do not see any necessity for any reference to it, and the bulk of the people, I believe, would rather see the question left untouched.

HON. MEMBERS: No, no.

THE HON. W. E. MARMION: Some hon. members say, "No, no." Well, they have their own opinions, and I have mine, and when the time arrives to express an opinion on this subject, those hon. members will have an opportunity of doing so. I am very pleased to

find the Government have not thought proper to deal with this question in a manner that I know hon. members on the other side of the House hoped they would deal with it. An increase in telegraphic communication is referred to. I hope this work will be carried out quickly. I think some of the surplus monies could be spent advantageously in that direction. While on this question, I may refer to the telephonic communication. I am pleased to find, that the suggestion made some time ago, that the terms for telephonic communication as between Perth and Fremantle should be raised, is not to be acted upon. I am glad the Government have changed their opinion on that subject. I think there has been great laxity on this question of telephonic communication as between Perth and Fremantle. Why do the Government endeavour to force the great amount of work that is now being done between these two places through one or two lines? Is there any reason why there should not be half a dozen lines, if needed, or a dozen, if the business demands it? It would really be only the first cost of laying these lines, and that would not be very great. The staff would not need to be largely increased; and when we consider the comfort and convenience of the people who pay for this privilege, I say there is no excuse whatever for the Government not placing more lines between Perth and Fremantle. I do not wish in any way to find fault with the staff. They are as civil and obliging as it is possible for them to be, but they have not the means of carrying on the work. I hope the Government will provide them the means, and then they will do the work satisfactorily. Reference is made to the low price of our staple products, and more especially to the low price of wool. The price of wool shows the state of the pastoral industry in this colony, at the present time. It is only those hon. members of this House who have to do with pastoral interests who know the position of things. It is only those who have felt the shoe pinch who know how hard it is to carry on stations, more especially in the North-Western parts of the colony at the present time. They are being carried on by somebody, but at a loss to everybody. I do not know any direction in which the Government might assist this great industry, which was the support of this colony before the discovery

of gold, although the question deserves consideration at the hands of the Government. If anything can be done it does not matter what shape the assistance takes, so long as the Government tries to assist the industry and alleviate the suffering existing among our pastoral population. They are at present suffering. They need every means of assistance that can be devised by the Government, in every direction possible, either in the remission of rents, or the reduction of rents, or even something more lasting or of a more beneficial character. I feel sure if the Government brought forward a Bill to grant some help in this direction, the good feeling, and the good sense of hon. members and their knowledge of the difficulties that this great class are suffering from at the present time, will lead them to vote for it, and so assist the Government to assist those who are now suffering from the gravest possible difficulties. Now, sir, I come to the point upon which no doubt hon. members expect me to make some remarks—the projected removal of the Government Railway Workshops from Fremantle to the Midland Junction. I have the assurance of the Hon. the Premier that this question will be brought forward at a later stage of the session by the Government, and that steps will be taken to test the feeling of the House upon it. I am, therefore, relieved from the necessity of doing anything that I might otherwise have had to do in this particular direction, namely, to have moved an amendment, or anything of the kind in the interests of the colony generally, and the constituency, particularly, that I have had the honour to represent for so many years. I do not look upon this as the stage of the proceedings when I shall give the reasons which should prevent the Government from making what I consider will be the greatest possible blunder. I will when the time arrives endeavour to show that it will be to the advantage of this colony that the Workshops, though possibly it is necessary to remove them from their present site, should not be removed to any great distance from the port of Fremantle. The main reason is that it would be madness to do so, if it is possible—even by the expenditure of a large sum of money, either to purchase or prepare, or level, or whatever is necessary to be done—to acquire a piece of land (even with a large expenditure of money) within Fremantle or a few miles distant from

Fremantle. It would be unwise, it would be injudicious to remove the shops 22 miles inland. I will defy hon. members to find any case in any of the Australian colonies, and I defy the Government, or their professional adviser, to produce one instance in which any Australian workshops have been removed more than a few miles from the seaboard. I know more than one instance where enormous sums of money were paid for sites close to the seaboard. There are other sites in this colony as good as that at Midland Junction, though I know it has many advantages in its favour. I see a large sum of money was paid for that land, but there are pieces of land that have more advantages which can be bought for small sums of money. The case of New South Wales will be brought before hon. members at the proper time. I know the question of vested interests is one upon which hon. members are fond of sneering, and at which they are fond of poking fun. If I may refer to vested interests, I say it is wrong on the part of the Government, if it can possibly be avoided, where the interests of the country are not injured but benefited, to do a violent injury to the thousands of people who are living at Fremantle—people who have grown up amid the vested interests there. It will be an act of cruelty, as well as an impolitic act, to remove the workshops unless there are very substantial reasons for so doing, and I feel sure hon. members will, unless it is shown there are strong reasons,—more than an expenditure of pounds, shillings and pence, yea, more than the expenditure of thousands of pounds, shillings and pence—will hesitate before supporting the Government in making even one great mistake during the long time they have occupied those benches. I shall, when the time arrives, and the Government—my friends with whom I was associated so long—know perfectly well that I am fully in earnest, and that no stone will be left unturned by me to hinder them from removing the Workshops from Fremantle. I say there are other places that can be purchased for very little, and which can easily be made suitable by the expenditure of small sums of money. If this were done it would entail nothing like the injury to the country, and the expense would only be felt in the first instance; whilst the interest on the money would be more than saved in ten years by the difference in the cost of haulage of the goods required in the construction and repairs of en-

gines, waggons and carriages; as even the very timber which comes by the coast would have to be hauled 22 miles to the Midland Junction, for the erection of carriages. It will be shown at the proper time that the interest represents a certain amount per annum, which will be more than saved in a short period, and which would be otherwise lost by the haulage of many thousand of tons of goods and material per annum. It is not merely a question of haulage in the present, but for the next 50 years, and during that time it will be an annually recurring expense, and an increasing quantity. During all time the Government will be suffering through the blunder they are now about to make, and I ask hon. members who have not spoken on the subject to refrain from committing themselves in either direction, and to remember the Government have not made this a party question, and members are consequently allowed to use their discretion without fear or favor. Upon this one point I would ask them to vote honestly, and as they deem best in the interest of the colony. I ask them to consider the colony, and also the constituency I have the honor to represent—a constituency than which there is only one larger; comprising as it does, one eighth of the whole population of this country. I say it has a right to be considered. Without attempting to push Fremantle down the throats of hon. members, I hope they will consider it right to preserve the interests that exist at the present time, the interests that have been looked upon as their own for so long a time. I say I hope hon. members will hesitate before supporting the Government in this matter. In endeavouring to make this removal, they are making a mistake, they are committing an error, which they will only regret once and that during the whole period of their lifetime, I will not say any more upon this question until the proper time arrives. I see the Government intend to deal with Sanitation and the Water Supply for various towns, more especially, I presume, as regards the City of Perth. I am very pleased the Government are undertaking this work at a time when the Treasury is overflowing. I think this a very opportune time to deal with this question, and while dealing with Perth, it will be well to look a little further down the river—to Fremantle. I think the hon. the Premier, some little time ago, almost promised that the people should have the water supply handed over to them. It was a kind Providence that

provided the Fremantle water supply. It did not cost much in construction, but was almost like the case of Moses when he struck the rock. There is an enormous supply available at very little expense. The Government could well afford to hand it over to the township; indeed they would not feel it. I hope this will be one of the questions considered when the subjects of Water Supply and Sanitation are brought before the House. I come now to the question of the railways of the colony. There is no doubt much reason for congratulation that the railways of this colony are leaving a large surplus over and above what is termed their working expenses and interest on cost of construction. I would remind hon. members and the Government that a great deal of that revenue is being derived from the Northam and Southern Cross Railway. I was one of those who advocated, both on the platform at Fremantle and from my place in the Government, the charging of increased rates, because it was what was termed a 'goldfields' line. It is a question for the Government now, however, to consider whether the time has not arrived for some reduction of those rates. I think the time has come when some slight reductions should be made, and if the Government lose no time in making those reductions it would be a benefit not only to the people of the goldfields, but to the people generally. One word further as to the railway accounts and the system that has been in vogue. It is said the railways are paying not only working expenses, but interest on the used capital in their construction. If this is the case it is one of the strongest arguments possible for the reduction of charges, because if the railways that have only just been constructed through new country, are paying interest on the cost of construction, there is a screw loose somewhere, and the people are paying too much for the carriage of goods on those railways. But there is another point that may explain the fact of a portion of the profit being derived from the railways, and it is this: that during the last several years the railways of our colony have been almost wholly supported out of loan money. Nearly the whole of the expenditure on them has been made out of loan monies, and all the new rolling stock has been supplied out of loan money. Every little deviation that has had to be made at various points; every little addition that has been

made, has all been done out of loan, and has come under one item or another of the various loan schedules; therefore, that which represents the upkeep of these railways is not actually what they have cost. When the expenditure of loan money ceases, and when these lines have to account for actual charges—for every penny expended upon them in their upkeep—the balance-sheet will not appear in so rosy a light. I would like to be assured that this is not so, because this is not the first time I have expressed this opinion in this Chamber. There are many items in connection with expenditure on the railways that should be charged to railway revenue, which are charged to loan funds. I am not finding fault, because it could not be avoided under previously existing circumstances. We must not suppose that because railways actually cost so much now to keep up, they are always going to cost the same, for they will cost a great deal more. Some hon. member referred to the question of increasing the speed upon our railways, and no doubt, this is very desirable, particularly between Perth and Fremantle. The slow rate of travelling is simply ridiculous, and there is no reason why the journey should not be made between the two places within half-an-hour. I have alluded to the charges upon the Southern Cross line. I now allude to the charges between the centres of population. I think any railway showing the same signs of being reproductive—paying working expenses and interest on the cost of construction—should be able to allow a reduction in the charges particularly in the cost of a first-class ticket. The matter of accommodation might also be very largely improved. I hope these things will be taken into consideration by the Department and that they will do their best to meet them. I think it is desirable, as I said, to increase the speed between Perth and Fremantle. One other thing I would say and I am not laying blame upon the Department, and it is that between Perth and Fremantle, though we have railways with carriages and trucks running there have been no less than four or six carts carrying cargo between these two places. I cannot understand how it is possible for these carts to pay, unless there is something wrong in the management of the railway system. I am aware these carts give facilities by receiving at one end and delivering at the other, not afforded by the railway; but I firmly believe if a proper system were

introduced, there would be an end at all events to these heavy carts carrying heavy loads upon the road between the City and Port, which costs hundreds of pounds to keep in repair, and which would otherwise last for years, if it were not for the extraordinarily heavy loads going upon it. I think something should be done, and further facilities be given to the public at a cheaper cost than can be done by these carts. Some hon. members say they are very useful. So they are, but I am firmly of opinion that if the railway system were fairly worked there would be no necessity for these carts. I am afraid I have dealt with this matter at too great a length and have been tiresome. It is difficult when one starts with a great question to break fresh ground. I daresay I have said a great deal you have heard before. I only hope that our deliberations will result in its being one of those sessions which will contribute to the future success of this colony.

MR. JAMES: I beg to move the debate be adjourned until to-morrow.

Motion put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.12 p.m. until 4 p.m. next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 2nd July, 1895.

Importation of Fruit into ports north of Champion Bay—Post and Telegraph accommodation at Bamboo Creek—Operations in connection with Midland Railway Loan Act, 1893—Irrregularity in despatch of Mails for Geraldton—Address-in-Reply: Adjourned debate—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4 p.m.
PRAYERS.

IMPORTATION OF FRUIT NORTH OF CHAMPION BAY.

MR. KEEP, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, whether it was the intention of the Government to amend the existing regulations regulating the importation of apples, pears, quinces, &c., into ports north of Champion Bay.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that no representations had recently been made to the Government on the subject. It was not advisable, so far as the Government was informed, to alter the Regulations.

POST AND TELEGRAPH ACCOMMODATION AT BAMBOO CREEK.

MR. KEEP, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier,—

1. If he were aware that the business of the Post and Telegraph Department at Bamboo Creek was at present being transacted and carried on in the back room of an Hotel.

2. Was it proposed to erect a Post and Telegraph Office and Quarters at Bamboo Creek, at an early date.

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

1. Yes; there is no other place available.
2. Yes; as soon as possible.

MIDLAND RAILWAY LOAN ACT, 1893.

MR. LEFROY, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier,—

1. What amount of land had been sold by the Midland Railway Company since the passing of "The Midland Railway Loan Act, 1893," and what sum had been received by the Government on account of same.

2. What amount arising from rents had been lodged with the Government.