

a thing or two; but I feel sure he has not the ear of the Premier. I hope members will follow the course I have adopted, and warn the Government how they intend to deal with these railways; so that after the Government have heard such expression of opinion from the House, I hope they will not insist on bringing forward these particular works.

On the motion of Hon. F. WHITCOMBE, the debate was adjourned until the next sitting day.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House adjourned at 5:35 until the next Tuesday afternoon.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 27th June, 1899.

Elections (2): Swearing-in - Resignation of a Member (Geraldton) - Papers presented - Petition: Closure of Right-of-way, East Perth - Address-in-Reply: Notice of Amendment Question: Diamond Mining, Reward for Discovery - Question: Embezzlement (Customs) at Albany - Question: Federation, the Premier's Promise - Sessional Orders Motion: Leave of Absence to the Speaker - Papers granted: Federation, Proceedings at Conference of Premiers - Return granted: Federation Delegates' Expenses, etc. - Return granted: Public Batteries, particulars - Address-in-Reply: Second Day of debate - Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

ELECTIONS (2): SWEARING-IN.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER announced that during the recess the member for the Gascoyne (Mr. Hubble) and the member for York (Mr. Monger) had resigned their seats; and that, upon new writs issued, they had been re-elected for the same constituencies in each case.

MR. HUBBLE, introduced by the Premier, then took the oath and signed the roll.

MR. MONGER, introduced by the Premier, also took the oath and signed the roll.

RESIGNATION OF A MEMBER (GERALDTON).

The DEPUTY SPEAKER announced that the member for Geraldton (Mr. T. G. Simpson) had resigned his seat on that day; and that, so soon as the seat was declared vacant, a writ for a new election would be issued.

On the motion of the PREMIER, seconded by MR. LEAKE, the seat for Geraldton was declared vacant.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Report of the Ivanhoe Venture Lease Commission; 2, Correspondence with the Coolgardie Municipal Council re Re-arrangement of Electoral Districts.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: 1, Regulations under Mineral Lands Act; 2, Regulations under Mining on Private Property Act; 3, Regulations under Mining on Private Property Act, by the Hampton Plains Estate Limited; 4, Regulations under Goldfields Act.

By the ATTORNEY-GENERAL: 1, Bankruptcy Rules, 1898; 2, Supreme Court Rules, 1899.

Ordered to lie on the table.

PETITION—CLOSURE OF RIGHT-OF-WAY, EAST PERTH.

MR. JAMES presented a petition from Messrs. Coombe, Wood, and Company, Limited, timber merchants, East Perth, praying for inquiry into injury suffered in consequence of the closing of a right-of-way on land adjoining the East Perth railway station.

Petition received, read, and ordered to be printed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY—NOTICE OF AMENDMENT.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): I beg to give notice of my intention to move, as an amendment to the Address-in-Reply, that the following be an additional paragraph:—

We regret that your Excellency's Ministers have given no assurance of their determination to submit the Commonwealth Bill to the vote of the electors.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member need not give notice now. He can submit that amendment when he speaks on the Address-in-Reply.

MR. LEAKE: It is the fairer way to give notice now.

QUESTION—DIAMOND MINING, REWARD FOR DISCOVERY.

MR. KINGSMILL asked the Minister of Mines:—1. On what date the regulation under "The Mineral Lands Act, 1892," giving the area of Reward Claims for the discovery of payable diamonds at twenty acres, was gazetted? 2. On what date the reward claim of 320 acres for the discovery of payable diamonds was granted to Mr. Spiro Achimovitch? 3. By whom the reward claim in question was granted? 4. What evidence as to the payability of the diamonds upon the said area was taken before the granting of the reward claim?

THE MINISTER of MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) replied:—1, 4th November, 1898; 2, I was made aware for the first time after notice of these questions was given that a reward claim of 320 acres had been granted, and have wired to the Warden of the Pilbarra goldfield instructing him to inform me upon what date this was done, but have not yet received his reply; 3, By Warden Ostlund; 4, Inspection and inquiry by the Warden.

QUESTION—EMBEZZLEMENT (CUSTOMS) AT ALBANY.

MR. HASSELL asked the Attorney General what steps were taken in the case of T. Brown, late clerk in the Customs, Albany, who, it was alleged, embezzled a sum of about one hundred pounds.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather) replied that the person mentioned had been dismissed from the service.

QUESTION—FEDERATION, THE PREMIER'S PROMISE.

MR. JAMES asked the Premier whether, in view of the result of the referendum in New South Wales, he would take steps to fulfil his promise made at the Premiers' Conference; and, if so, what steps he would take in this direction.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) replied:—I am always prepared to keep my promises, or to give some good reasons for being unable to do so. Federation has not been made a political party question in any part of Australia, and it would, in my opinion, be very unfortunate if it were attempted to be made so in this colony. So soon as the Commonwealth Bill, as amended at the Conference of Premiers held in Melbourne in February last, has been accepted by all the other colonies of Australia, I will be prepared to introduce an Enabling Bill submitting the Commonwealth Bill, as amended, for the consideration of Parliament, with a view to its submission to the vote of the people at the time and in the manner that Parliament may then decide upon.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why say "all the colonies"?

SESSIONAL ORDERS.

BUSINESS DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the PREMIER, resolved that the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.30 p.m. if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On further motion by the PREMIER, resolved that on Tuesdays and Thursdays Government business shall take precedence of all motions and orders of the day.

STANDING COMMITTEES.

On motions by the PREMIER, Committees for the session were appointed as follow:—

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Burt, and Mr. Harper; with leave to sit during any adjournment, and with authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any Committee

appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Piesse, and Mr. Harper; to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing Returns and Papers presented in pursuance of Motions made by Members, and all Papers laid upon the Table, whether in answer to Addresses or otherwise.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Burt, Mr. Harper, Mr. Leake, and Mr. Illingworth; with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council.

REFRESHMENT ROOMS COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wood, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Higham; with leave to sit during any adjournment, and during the recess.

MOTION—LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO THE SPEAKER.

On the motion of the PREMIER, leave of absence for two months was granted to Sir J. G. Lee Steere, the Speaker, on the ground of urgent private business.

PAPERS—FEDERATION, PROCEEDINGS AT CONFERENCE OF PREMIERS.

MR. GEORGE moved:—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a full copy of the minutes and proceedings of the late conference held by the Premiers in connection with the proposed federation of the colonies.

He said the proposal would commend itself to members on both sides of the House, for they were naturally anxious to know what did take place at the Conference of Premiers, and to know on what authority the Premier took—and, saying this with all respect, the Premier did take things on himself—the very important step which the Premier did take in connection with the Commonwealth Bill. As all members were desirous that the people should be thoroughly informed on the Commonwealth Bill and all that led up to it, there should be no reluctance on the part of the Premier to produce all the information he could that would throw light on the subject.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. GEORGE: The question of federation was, perhaps, the most important that had come before the people of Western Australia, or possibly before any portion of the English-speaking race during this century; and in order that the electors might know on what they were to vote, and also know what had led to the question being submitted to the people, he asked hon. members to pass the motion.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) said he would have much pleasure in complying with the request of the member for the Murray, to the full extent that he was able; but no minutes of the Premiers' Conference were kept.

MR. GEORGE: What! Secret?

THE PREMIER: No minutes were kept of what members said, that Conference being held with closed doors; but the results of the deliberations were compiled and issued, showing how each proposal made by the Premier of New South Wales was dealt with. Those results would be placed on the table of the House at the next sitting.

Question put and passed.

RETURN—FEDERATION DELEGATES' EXPENSES, ETC.

MR. GEORGE moved:

That there be laid on the table of the House a return, showing—(a) the names of the representatives of Western Australia at each Federal Convention; (b) the actual cash paid to each representative; (c) the actual attendances at each Convention of each representative.

Honourable members would give him credit for not wishing to make any particular personal application of the motion at the present time; but it was desirable that light should be thrown on the proceedings of the Federal Convention, and also, if possible, on that secret Convention of Premiers which the right hon. gentleman had just spoken about. It would be well for this House and for the people of the colony to know who had represented them at the Convention, what those representatives did, how much they received—though one need not suppose any representative made a "pot of money" out of the charges for expenses—and altogether it was desirable to have these particulars, which the public had a right to know.

A MEMBER: Did the mover want a refund?

MR. GEORGE: A refund was not what he was moving for, though he must say that, if he were Treasurer of the colony at the present time, a refund from this source would be very beneficial to the public finances. The question of federation was of such great importance, that it was desirable the people should have the opportunity of saying whether the representatives who had attended the Convention were as fully seized with the importance of the federation question at that time as they appeared to be at the present time. It was desirable to have full light thrown on their proceedings as representatives.

Question put and passed.

RETURN—PUBLIC BATTERIES, PARTICULARS.

MR. WALLACE moved:

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return, showing—(1) the expenditure on all public batteries to 31st May, 1899, the expenditure on each battery to be given in detail; (2) the number of tons of ore crushed; (3) the cost of treatment per ton at each battery; (4) the number of stamps at each battery.

In moving for this return, he was confident that the policy of erecting public batteries had the indorsement of every hon. member who was aware of the benefits which had resulted from that policy up to the present time. He was aware that the department which had charge of public batteries had been erecting and carrying them on under great difficulties in some cases; and his desire, in submitting this motion, was to assist the Government in the direction of curtailing the expense of the upkeep of batteries. He knew that in some districts the cost of crushing was probably larger than the people using the batteries could conveniently pay, and perhaps higher than was really necessary. He was aware of the difficulty of obtaining a competent supervisor of batteries, so as to keep them continually under observation; but the Government might consider a suggestion that in some cases these public batteries could be placed under the management of competent persons who were willing to form a board, and undertake to run a local battery in the interests of people depend-

ing on it. This would probably reduce the cost of supervision, and also reduce the cost of crushing, thereby giving to the people in a locality the benefit of a public battery at less cost than was now found necessary. The Government had disclaimed any intention to make a profit out of public batteries, while at the same time they did not wish to run batteries at a loss; but he ventured to say that when this return was placed before hon. members, it would show that some public batteries were being run at such a profit as would be likely to induce a private company to take up the scheme and work the battery, if such company could be sure of getting the same rate for crushing. The Government should consider those districts in which the stone was of low grade, and should assist such districts by providing cheaper management in the way he had suggested, thus bringing about a cheaper rate of crushing. He believed the motion would be supported by several members who recognised the wisdom of taking the control of these batteries from the department, and transferring the control to boards in the several districts where that could be done conveniently, so as to ensure greater cheapness, and also ensure a continuance of the facility for crushing those low-grade ores on which this colony must depend very largely in the future.

MR. MITCHELL seconded the motion.
Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SECOND DAY OF DEBATE.

The adoption of the Address-in-Reply having been moved by Mr. MORGANS at the previous sitting,

MR. HIGHAM (Fremantle) said: I have much pleasure in rising to second the Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, and in doing so will re-echo the expression in that paragraph which states that the financial position of the colony is sound, and its material interests are progressing. We have had during the last twelve months an extremely trying time, in which the policy of retrenchment practised by the Government and on the part of the population generally has led to a considerable amount of distress, and it is with great relief we feel at the present

moment that a financial disaster has been averted. I also have to express my gratification at the remarks in the second paragraph in reference to federation, and I do congratulate the Administration on the caution they are displaying in bringing this matter before the people. There can be no question—to use the words of the Speech itself—that federation is far less favourable to Western Australia than to any of the other colonies. There can also be no question that the Commonwealth Bill does not properly safeguard the financial interests of this colony; and this contention has been admitted on all sides, by all the Premiers, by the actuaries employed to make calculations, and by the concession which a committee of the Convention recommended should be given to this colony in consideration of an estimated loss of £250,000 per annum during five years. It is admitted by Mr. Solomon, of South Australia, who said at the Convention that everyone recognised that if there was one colony in the group which the other colonies should specially desire to see in the federation, with the selfish desire of promoting a trading connection, that colony was Western Australia. It is also admitted by that ardent federationist, the member for East Perth (Mr. James), who, as usual, is not in his seat at this moment; and I would like to quote from his published speeches a few extracts which bear on the point in question. Mr. James, at the Convention, said:—

It is vital to the future development of Western Australia that for five or ten years she shall collect such duties, under a system of protection, as will assist as far as possible the agricultural industry.

Further on he said:—

If such a concession is not made, Western Australia will stand out.

Again, he said:—

We wish power to levy duties, having for their object the settlement of people on the land.

That argument which he there applies to the land, applies not only to the development of agriculture, but applies also to viticulture, to the pastoral industry, and to the various manufacturing industries of this colony. It is absurd to say that Western Australia, with an acreage under cultivation which the Commissioner of

Crown Lands estimates at possibly 400,000 acres at the present time, but which, in the latest published statistics, is shown to be only 170,000 acres, can possibly compete with other colonies which have land under cultivation amounting in the whole to 8,000,000 acres. I would like to point out that, if we federate with the other colonies under these unequal conditions, the effect on the agricultural industry of this colony will be that, although we have been striving to build it up during recent years, yet it will be sacrificed under federation, and will revert to that old condition, when the farmer simply existed on his land, living on kangaroo or a bit of pork when he could get it, and dragging out a miserable existence as a settler. As far as the farming industry is concerned, I am satisfied we have plenty of advocates in this House; therefore, I am not going to speak at length in regard to it, but wish to speak on behalf of those maligned or much-ignored people who are engaged in the industrial pursuits of this colony. It has been said, by advocates of federation, that there are no industries in this colony outside of the gold-mining and the timber industries. But that contention cannot be maintained, for when the industrial statistics of 1897 came out, those advocates found there were some 500 industrial establishments in the colony, employing some 10,000 people, representing an investment of over two millions of money in land, buildings, and machinery, and having a total yearly output valued at about three millions sterling. It must also not be forgotten that these figures do not include many of the smaller industrial establishments; and it should be remembered, too, that during the eighteen months which have elapsed since those figures were compiled, our industries have increased by leaps and bounds; so that instead of there being 500 industrial establishments in this colony, I am certain there are over 750 at the present time, that instead of 10,000 employees I am sure there must be about 15,000, and that the money invested in land, buildings, and machinery must have increased in a like proportion. I am willing to admit that these figures include those persons who are engaged in the forest and timber industry;

and some speakers say that those people really embrace the bulk of the industrial population of the colony. But when you look at the figures placed before us in that report, you will find that in 1897, out of about 9,689 people engaged in industrial pursuits, only 2,807 were in the timber industry. I am willing to admit that, at the present moment, instead of 2,807 people being engaged in that industry, there are probably over 6,000; but the fact remains that, out of 9,689 people employed in 1897 in industrial pursuits, only 2,807 were employed in the forest and timber industry. We have to look at what the position of these people will be, if we accept federation as proposed in the Commonwealth Bill; and in doing so we have to take into consideration the terms which have been offered in the Bill to Western Australia. In speaking of the Bill, I do not propose to deal at length with the question of defence, for I fail to see that Western Australia has anything to gain in respect of defence by joining the federation. I do not think anyone can seriously contemplate the possibility of united Australia maintaining an army and navy sufficiently large to safeguard the extensive coast-line of this continent; or, if this were attempted, I know it would mean financial ruin to the whole of the colonies. So I will pass over that matter, and come to the question of the concessions offered to Western Australia, for making up for the loss of revenue which, under federation, will be inevitable. Suppose, in the first instance, that after the institution of the Federal Parliament, we have two years' grace within which the uniform tariff must be established; then I think most of us realise that these two years may easily be contracted to three or six months at the outside. It is a very easy matter to bring in a Tariff Bill; and though two or three months may elapse before it is actually passed, still, from the very moment it is brought in, that tariff becomes the law of the land. So I do not think much of the two years' concession which has been offered. After that, we are supposed to have a concession for five years on a sliding scale. I presume every member here has read the Bill; but it is just as well to repeat now that the sole concession made to Western Australia is that embodied in Clause 95, which pro-

vides that Western Australia shall have a right to

Impose duties of customs on goods passing into that State, and not originally imported from beyond the limits of the Commonwealth; and such duties shall be collected by the Commonwealth.

Anyone who has studied the general tariffs of Australia, who realises what colonies are likely to constitute United Australia, and who knows their fiscal policies, must perceive not only that the tariff of United Australia is bound to be strongly protectionist as against the outside world, but that, in respect of many products of which the manufacture has been firmly established in the other colonies, it is bound to be absolutely prohibitive as against the outside world. Therefore, when Western Australia is obliged to adopt this uniform tariff like the other colonies, the taxation in this colony from customs revenue will be increased by 25 per cent. or 30 per cent.; and no Government in this colony will then be able to withstand the clamour and agitation which will arise here. It is useless to discuss this question from the point of view of free-trade *versus* protection, because everyone must realise that the policy of federated Australia must be a protective policy.

A MEMBER: No; protection against the world.

MR. HIGHAM: Undoubtedly, protection against the world and intercolonia free-trade. I maintain that when the dual taxation resulting from this concession that has been offered to Western Australia has to be imposed, all industries affected by such duties must suffer—not only our farming industries, but our manufacturing industries also, which, though small, will become great if properly looked after. I maintain that those industries existing at the present time in the colony, and many more which will be started in the future if assured of a fair chance, will in such a case be absolutely sacrificed in favour of federation. We have also to look at it from another point of view; for although during the first five years three-fourths of our customs revenue collected by the Commonwealth will, according to the Bill, be returned to this colony, the other one-fourth being retained for the Commonwealth expenses; still, we have no guarantee as to what proportion

of our customs revenue will be returned to us after the expiration of that period of five years. Anyone looking at Clause 94 will find that, after five years from the imposition of uniform duties the Commonwealth Parliament

May provide, on such basis as it deems fair, for the monthly payment to the several States of all surplus revenue of the Commonwealth.

It will be observed, not on a basis of three-fourths, but "on such basis as it deems fair." Considering that in the Federal Parliament we shall have comparatively few representatives, I do not know that we shall then have much power to enforce our claims. In Clause 91 hon. members will find that, notwithstanding the many bounties which Victorian producers now enjoy, we in Western Australia will be deprived of any chance of giving bounties to our own producers, except with the consent of the Federal Parliament. There is one exception, certainly, and that is with regard to mining for gold and silver, but that privilege has not been extended so as to permit of giving bounties for mining for coal, and so encouraging that desirable local industry. It is also well to remember that, should we federate with other colonies, we will be deprived of one large source of supply which we now possess. I refer to New Zealand, which does not get due credit for the large quantities of supplies which she sends to this colony, because they are mainly sent to us through Victoria and are shipped from Victoria in bond. These goods have no chance to get into Victoria, as they are transhipped to this colony; and fully 80 per cent. of our imported oats—80 out of 100 bags of oats that come to this colony—come from New Zealand, not to speak of large quantities of butter, bacon, and cheese which, under the uniform tariff, will be shut out of this market. Hon. members familiar with the import trade will know that the New Zealand market prices are frequently 15, 20, and 25 per cent. lower than those in Victoria.

A MEMBER: Then better wait till New Zealand joins.

MR. HIGHAM: Possibly so. I claim that the removal of these duties will cripple nearly all our industries.

MR. VOSPER: That will be a good thing for New Zealand, I suppose.

MR. HIGHAM: No; because the New Zealand goods come to us under our pre-

sent tariff. It is a very different thing to be forced to take Victorian supplies under the uniform tariff, and to lose the New Zealand supplies.

MR. JAMES: If New Zealand cannot supply us now, she will not be able to supply us then.

MR. HIGHAM: No; but if you study the Victorian tariff, you will find that heavy taxes are imposed on all the items I have mentioned. Of oats especially we get a very large quantity from New Zealand; and the duty on oats in Victoria is, I think, over 6d. or 8d. a bushel, and under the uniform tariff we should have to pay a similar tax, instead of the 4d. we now pay under our tariff. I maintain that, with a uniform tariff, a large number of the factories now working in this colony, and employing a considerable number of hands, would be compelled to close, and the people employed in them would be diverted to those colonies where there would be a greater likelihood of their obtaining work.

MR. EWING: Do you include laundries?

MR. HIGHAM: Possibly. Moreover, I know many large warehouses in this colony which, instead of employing the large staffs they now maintain, would become small branch agencies with resident managers and insignificant stocks, removing the bulk of their stocks and most of their present employees to the eastern colonies.

MR. HOLMES: Why do they not remove them now?

MR. HIGHAM: Because they get some consideration at the present time, but under a heavy tariff they would get no consideration.

MR. OLDHAM: It would be a good thing for the local firms.

MR. HIGHAM: I am not certain that it would be a good thing for the local firms. A good deal has been said about advantages to the jarruh industry under federation; but, except in the market of South Australia, I do not believe the slightest advantage would be derived under federation by our timber mills in their exports to the eastern colonies, beyond the advantages they now enjoy. No more scantling will go from this to the other colonies, except possibly to South Australia, than goes at the present time; and, though those colonies may still take our heavy timbers for marine

work, federation cannot possibly alter the output in the slightest degree. They will take the same quantity, federation or no federation; because ours are the only timbers they can get to answer their purpose. But on the other hand, so far as our goldfields trade is concerned, in respect of which wages are a big consideration, the Richmond River timber mills in New South Wales, where there is a vast timber industry, are likely to severely compete against timber companies here.

MR. EWING: The Richmond River district exports an entirely different type of timber.

MR. HIGHAM: I admit that.

MR. EWING: Well, if it is an entirely different type of timber, how can it compete with ours?

MR. MORAN: Because we use pine and jarrah.

MR. HIGHAM: When members have done interjecting, I will endeavour to show the member for the Swan what I mean.

MR. EWING: I know a good deal about Richmond River.

MR. HIGHAM: If Oregon and Baltic timber can now compete against jarrah, while paying four times the freight of the latter to the goldfields, surely Richmond River pine, which is as good as Oregon or Baltic, will compete with jarrah, when pine is carried at the same rate as jarrah, namely, 7s. 1d. per 100 miles, instead of 28s. 4d. as at present.

MR. EWING: Richmond River pine is used for a different purpose.

MR. HIGHAM: Richmond River pine is used because it is much lighter to carry to the goldfields.

MR. EWING: Then the difference lies in the fact that pine is better suited for the work?

MR. DOHERTY: Under federation there would be no duty on Richmond pine.

MR. EWING: Protection does not alter the quality of timber.

MR. HIGHAM: With intercolonial free-trade, coupled with the fact that Western Australia would not be allowed to make differential railway rates or offer a bounty on any of our products, Richmond River pine must be carried on the same terms as jarrah; and I consider that 700 superficial feet of Richmond River pine could be carried at the same cost as 360 superficial feet of jarrah. That, of

course, is owing to the difference in weight as between the two timbers; and it will be seen that, so far as the goldfields trade is concerned, Richmond River pine would have an immense advantage.

MR. VOSPER: Pine would be cheaper.

MR. HIGHAM: It would be immensely cheaper.

MR. OLDHAM: What has this to do with federation?

MR. HIGHAM: It has a great deal to do with federation, because it is our duty to look to ourselves first.

MR. VOSPER: If Richmond pine is cheaper, it would be better for us to take it.

MR. HIGHAM: I do not say that Richmond pine is better, but that it is cheaper than jarrah.

MR. EWING: It is the same old cry, "Take what we give you, whether it is good for you or not."

MR. HIGHAM: We ought to have regard to what effect federation, with a uniform tariff, would have on our revenue, and in order to do this it is well to refer to last year's figures. The total imports of this colony last year amounted to £5,241,968; and of that sum £2,743,761 came from the other colonies. These were not all intercolonial products, but £2,285,949 represented the latter, which, under intercolonial free-trade, would pay no duty to Western Australia. There was £457,812 worth of British and foreign goods imported through the other colonies, and to make up the total imports, there were British and foreign goods imported direct to the amount of £2,398,204. It is well to realise that in the £5,241,968 worth of imports, £1,856,936 represented goods imported on the free list; and, with the exception of sugar and coal, practically nothing comes from the other colonies on the free list. The problem that faces us is simply this: If, as seems to me inevitable, goods from the other colonies have to come in here duty free, and if out of this £1,856,936 worth of free imports, only about £260,000 worth have to be deducted for duty-free goods from the other colonies, then the Treasurer of this colony will have to look for his customs revenue from £1,000,000 or £1,500,000 worth of imports.

MR. VOSPER: What would those imports produce in the way of revenue?

MR. HIGHAM: That is difficult to answer, because I cannot altogether fore-

cast what the uniform tariff is likely to be; but I am afraid that instead of getting close on £1,000,000 in customs revenue as at present, the Treasurer would realise something under £400,000.

MR. VOSPER: My impression is that under intercolonial free-trade we would get more revenue than we do now.

MR. HIGHAM: I maintain that the revenue from customs under intercolonial free-trade, even with heavy duties on some of the goods now got from Britain, would be absolutely insufficient for the financial requirements of this colony. In relation to the general revenue of our colony, there are people who look upon our railway revenue as direct taxation. To my mind the railway revenue is not direct taxation, but simply payment for services rendered to different consumers, who employ the railways either for passenger traffic or for the carriage of goods; and I do not look on it as taxation at all. So far as the goldfields are concerned, if there were no railways, and the population there were not called upon to pay this so-called taxation, they would be far worse off than they are at present. All revenue from the railways is required not only for maintenance, but for necessary improvements and extensions, and I do not think that any Treasurer could possibly look on railway revenue as a means of general maintenance for his Government. It is said that there are other possible sources of taxation which could be availed of. One suggestion is that there should be an income tax.

MR. GEORGE: Where are the incomes?

MR. HIGHAM: So far as the bulk of the people are concerned, we should have to look in vain for incomes on which they could be taxed. The Government could not look for much revenue from this source, as the incomes of the larger proportion of the people would not render them taxable. Then a land tax is suggested, and there are a few directions in which land taxation might be resorted to.

MR. GEORGE: Absentees.

MR. HIGHAM: There might be a tax on absentees. I am quite prepared at any time for a tax on unimproved land values; and a Bill that is promised may, perhaps, embody some of the conditions of land occupation many of us here desire

to see made law. The proposed dividend tax will, I think, meet with the approval of every member. But, after all, these sources of income would not compensate for the loss of customs revenue likely to arise under federation. A probate tax, I am very much afraid, would not prove more effective than an income tax, for while the Treasurer might occasionally get a windfall, the financial results would not be very great.

MR. MORGANS: Treasurers of other colonies get the windfalls. We have not accumulated wealth in Western Australia.

MR. HIGHAM: It is a very difficult matter to bring forward absolute figures as to revenue, until we have the uniform duties before us; but under the uniform tariff likely to be enacted, the customs returns of this colony must decrease not only £250,000 a year, but more likely £500,000 a year. Other means of taxation are so few that financial ruin must follow federation with a uniform tariff.

MR. VOSPER: If people paid all those taxes there would be too much revenue.

MR. HIGHAM: I believe there would. Certainly, if we have the dual system of taxation—that is the taxes we have at present, in addition to the protective tariff which will be enacted by the other colonies for the benefit of their own manufactures, the people here will be over-taxed to an unendurable degree.

MR. GEORGE: They could not stand it.

MR. HIGHAM: The inevitable result would be that this colony would be compelled to go to the Commonwealth and ask for assistance under the charity clause, which the other colonies have been so kind as to provide in the Bill in anticipation. That was very thoughtful of them, but I, for one, would not like to see the people of this colony placed in such a position as to have to avail themselves of that clause. I would like to say a few words as to the general effect of federation on the working people of this colony. Any reasonable man who looks into the question must admit that the wage-earners of Western Australia at the present moment are earning fair wages, much better wages even on a comparative basis, having regard to the cost of living, than can be enjoyed in any of

the other colonies. But under the proposed federation, many factories would be closed and warehouses removed, and those manufacturers and traders who still tried to struggle on would have to compete with the larger Victorian industries, which can be managed much more cheaply in the large centres of industrial population in that colony, where there is a greater proportion of skilled labour, and where they could take advantage of the large body of apprentices and improvers in almost every trade. In Western Australia only skilled labour could be employed; and, under all the circumstances, I maintain that our workers are bound to be considerable losers by the proposed federation. They would lose their chance of occupation in this colony, and possibly be compelled to go to the other colonies, where they would find an over-supplied labour market, and would tend to still further swell the number of the unemployed. The Melbourne *Argus* in a recent issue, after congratulating Victoria on the prospect of federation and pointing out how that colony was going to benefit, said that the factories and the working men there were sufficient to meet all the demands of the various Australian colonies. That remark is perfectly true; but the condition of living among the workmen of Victoria is at present, and has been for years past, not such as we would like to see amongst the people of Western Australia.

MR. OLDHAM: Are you sure your information is correct?

MR. HIGHAM: The quotation I have given from the *Argus* is absolutely correct. Anyone who watches industrial projects in this colony must admit that they are growing and improving month by month and year by year, and that employees are receiving very fair rates of wage. And, further, it must be realised that living at the present time for working men is very much cheaper, not only so far as food and clothing are concerned, but in the important matter of rent, than it was 12 months ago; and there is very little prospect of charges increasing on these particular items. Therefore I say that the lot of the working men in this colony is now very much better than that of similar classes in Victoria, or even in New South Wales. A great deal has been heard about senti-

ment and federation; but when we come to hard matters of fact we find that federation is a question to be discussed, not as one of sentiment, but as one of business, notwithstanding all the high-falutin sentiment we have heard, not only from the member for East Perth (Mr. James), but from many others. We have also heard a good deal of sentiment of another kind. We have heard the sentiment of Mr. Harney, who said that even if Western Australia were pauperised he would still vote for federation; and we have heard also of the Right Hon. G. H. Reid and the kittens. I can give another instance of federal sentiment, and one a little more blunt, perhaps, than those I have already cited. I will tell hon. members what a man said to me in Fremantle a few days ago, and this I give as a specimen of the sentiment permeating federation. This man said to me, "What the devil do I care for Western Australia? I am going in for federation for all I am worth. Western Australia may go down, but, if she does, Victoria will gain, and I will go back to good old Vic." That story may be a little bit emphatic, but, after all, it shows the principal sentiment permeating federation at the present time.

MR. JAMES: Australia would be one nation.

MR. HIGHAM: We all hope to see Australia become a nation, but our first duty is to Western Australia. If by joining federation at present, without some stipulation safeguarding our interests, we sacrifice Western Australia, we are failing in our first duty, not only to this colony but to Australia. Even if we stand out of federation for some little time, we will be none the less part of Australia, or none the less a part of the British Empire. Until we get fair conditions guaranteed to Western Australia, I shall use my utmost endeavours to secure that Western Australia does stand out of federation. The member for East Perth may have changed his mind since he was at the Federal Convention and maintained that until we obtained certain conditions Western Australia would stand out of federation. Everyone who has the real interests of this colony at heart must be satisfied to stand out until we get proper conditions under which to federate. Personally, I

want to see this question put to the people; I want the people to decide the question. I said so previously, and I say it again emphatically; but we should emulate the Hon. G. H. Reid, and see that our colony gets conditions satisfactory to ourselves, before the people are called upon to decide whether they will federate.

MR. JAMES: What conditions do you want?

MR. HIGHAM: We want some of those conditions you contended for in Melbourne.

MR. JAMES: Read them again.

MR. HIGHAM: You ought to remember them.

MR. JAMES: If I said them, they are worth repeating.

MR. HIGHAM: I am not going to speak further on federation, beyond repeating that I hope to see the question go to the people, but that before it does go to the vote we shall secure some special consideration to make up for the great loss which is bound to fall on this colony. For that reason I congratulate the Government on deciding to let the matter stand over for a short time before they bring it before Parliament or refer it to the country. There is not the urgency the hon. member for East Perth seems to think, for rushing this matter before the people. I would like to refer to the gold-mining industry and to the special tax which it is proposed shall be placed, not only on the gold-mining companies, but on all dividend-earning companies in the colony. That is a measure which should receive the unanimous support of the House, and it is one that, while it may not return a stupendous revenue, will bring a very substantial increase to the Treasury. I was pleased to listen to the remarks of the member for Yalgoo (Mr. Wallace) as to the working of the public batteries already established. I hope the Government may see their way to extend the system in suitable localities, so as to enable the poorer mining classes to carry on their vocation with profit to themselves and benefit to the country. As to the Exhibition at Coolgardie, I do not know that I can congratulate the Government very much. Admitting that a large number of people have visited that Exhibition, I regret that it should have been held in Coolgardie rather than in Perth.

MR. MORGANS: There would not have been such a handsome collection of minerals in Perth.

MR. HIGHAM: I regret the locality of the Exhibition, because I believe that, instead of the 70,000 people who have visited the sight at Coolgardie, 400,000 would have visited an exhibition held in Perth, because many people would have paid repeated visits. The development of the Collie coalfields is a matter for congratulation, and I hope the Government will do everything they possibly can to further develop the industry. On the other hand, the Government would not be wise to undertake all they have been asked to undertake in connection with these fields. It is well to realise that this coal, good fuel as it may be, does not promise to be good enough for export, at any rate for the present. With this coal there may possibly be a large trade done at Bunbury, but outside of that, there would be very little traffic; and if proper provision be made for enabling steamships to bunker this coal expeditiously, the Government will have done all that is necessary at present. On the railways a little more business may be done in consequence of the Collie coal trade, and I hope the Government will do everything possible to expedite the transit of the coal from the mines to different centres where it is required for consumption. I would now like to say a few words about the Coolgardie water scheme. It has been my duty and pleasure to support this scheme from its initiation, and I look forward to its completion with the utmost eagerness.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Do you think you will live to see it?

MR. HIGHAM: I expect this water scheme will do more to develop the gold-fields than anything the Government could possibly have devised. The difficulties experienced at Mundaring weir are to be regretted, but it is to be hoped the latest reports as to those difficulties having been overcome are based on sufficient grounds, and that the dam will be started at an early date. The Government are to be congratulated on the present state of the Fremantle harbour works. We have seen the largest steamships that visit Australia safely berthed there, amongst them the G.M.S. *Frederich der Grosse*, which was

berthed in the face of a north-west gale. It has been fairly well proved that Fremantle harbour can accommodate the largest vessels, and that those vessels can enter in almost any weather. There is only one unfavourable remark I can make about the harbour works, and that is that the accommodation already provided is unequal to the demand. I hope to see the extensions pushed on, and a large additional dredge, now on the way to the colony, soon brought into work, in order that delays, not only to vessels inward, but to export vessels, may not occur. The delays at present are most vexatious, and I hope to see a great deal done to obviate these during the next two months. I regret that the slip which has been built has proved so ineffective. It certainly is no credit to the Works Department that the slip should have so long remained in such a state that dredges requiring its services have been compelled to go on working in inefficient order, when a little push on the part of the department might have made the slip available for proper repairs. I hope the promise of the dock given in His Excellency's Speech is something more than a mere matter of form, because the dock is essential to the completion of Fremantle harbour, where it should be possible to effectively dock vessels instead of compelling them to go elsewhere. An illustration of the necessity for a dock was given in the case of the s.s. *La Serena*, which had to go through the Torres Straits to Sydney for repairs, whereas if there had been a dock at Fremantle, several thousands of pounds would have there been spent on this work. While I admit that a considerable number of public works have been carried out during the last year, I must point out that several works promised for Fremantle have been somewhat neglected. I refer especially to the new goods sheds that were to be provided along the wharves. If shipping, and more especially steam shipping, is to be worked economically and effectively, without unduly harassing consignees or shippers, it is essential that these sheds should be constructed with the least possible delay, and I regret that no start has been made with them up to the present time. Another small work which was promised was an overhead bridge to

relieve Cliff Street of the large traffic which is carried on with great risk to pedestrians, and also, I take it, with considerable risk to the Railway Department, which would be responsible for heavy damages in case of accident. I really hope this work will be taken in hand and be properly provided for during the coming year. The Government have a great problem before them in the Fremantle water supply. The bores are down in porous strata, which admit the salt water when the tides are high; and, in the interests of Fremantle and the health of the community, it is absolutely essential either that this contamination by seawater should be stopped, or that a good, safe, and drinkable supply of water should be otherwise provided.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: There has recently been an improvement.

MR. HIGHAM: There is at the present time an improvement, because there is plenty of rainwater coming down, and the flow from the catchment area which provides our water supply is much greater now than it was a few months ago; but next summer there will be the utmost difficulty and danger to the Fremantle community, unless some proper provision be made down there. In the winter months the difficulty is not so marked. So far as Fremantle is concerned generally, I think we have to congratulate ourselves on the Owens anchorage railway. It is calculated to do good, not only to Fremantle, but to the colony as a whole. It has rendered possible the erection of the smelting works in an advantageous position, and has also enabled us to cope with the difficulties in connection with the importation of live stock. I can only hope the Government will see their way to extend that line.

MR. OLDHAM: To Bunbury?

MR. HIGHAM: To Bunbury, or to some such place as Jarrahdale or the Serpentine, so as to enable the Collie coal to be brought to the port for shipment at much cheaper rates than are at present obtainable. Thirty miles' journey would be saved on each ton; and the freight on jarrah exported from those mills would also be reduced. I wish to say a few words with regard to the railway proposals, and then to conclude my remarks. The various railways proposed, with the

exception of the Goomalling-Northam line, are such as I shall be only too pleased to support. But there is one thing which we shall certainly have to consider before coming to a final decision, and that is the financial question. If the Government can provide the money for those railways, and can also adequately provide for the other works, then the railway proposals will undoubtedly receive my support. So far as the Goomalling line is concerned, as I have said, I shall require to know something more about it before supporting it. I cannot forget the unfortunate Greenhills railway. Unless it can be proved that this project is not to be a repetition of the history of the Greenhills line, I shall certainly consider it my duty to oppose it. Generally speaking, the various proposals brought forward in the Speech will receive my hearty support. The suggested legislation is highly desirable. I will only refer to one or two items at the present time. One is the Electoral Bill. I am pleased to learn that this Bill will be brought down this session—[MR. KENNY: Hear, hear]—that increased facilities for registration will be provided, and that an easy means of transfer of names of voters from one electorate to another will also be furnished.

MR. LEAKE: Will that be in the Bill?

MR. HIGHAM: And more than that. I am pleased to hear from an indirect source that we shall have an instalment of woman's suffrage.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: You have it already.

MR. HIGHAM: I am also pleased to think that at last we are about to have something in the shape of a Civil Service Bill. That is a piece of legislation that has been badly wanted for many years; and I hope it will be a measure which, while enabling the colony to command the services of the best class of civil servants, will also be satisfactory to the service as a body, which will provide that the officers will have their just rights in the positions they occupy, so that they may receive that promotion to which long service and merit entitle them. I am afraid that this principle has not always been adhered to in the past, and I hope that some suitable provision for enforcing it will be made in the new Bill.

MR. MORAN: Also for entrance to the service by examination.

MR. HIGHAM: Some provision which will ensure the employment of the best class of civil servants, and the best possible recompense to them for their services, both in the way of pay and in the way of promotion. I will now conclude. I have to thank the House for listening to me so patiently. I hope we will be able to proceed effectually with business, and to fully carry out all the proposals referred to in His Excellency's Speech.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): I move that the debate be adjourned.

THE PREMIER: On what ground do you want to adjourn?

A MEMBER: Adjourn till Tuesday.

[A pause ensued.]

THE PREMIER: Will Thursday suit you?

MR. LEAKE: I do not care to what day we adjourn.

MR. MORAN: To-morrow is a holiday, and it is hardly worth while coming back on Thursday, for one day.

THE PREMIER: Hon. members will not care to be walking about on Thursday, doing nothing. We do not start for the Coolgardie Exhibition till Friday night.

MR. MITCHELL: It will be hard on country members to adjourn in this way.

MR. LOCKE: Make it Tuesday.

Motion—that the debate be adjourned—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until half-past four o'clock on Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 12 minutes past 6 o'clock, until the next Tuesday afternoon.