

in the colony at one and the same time.

**THE PREMIER:** There have been a good many resolutions in favour of the measure from the goldfields.

**MR. VOSPER:** I congratulate the Government on the cleverness of their move, which is one of the smartest things they have done for a long time past. With a goldfields member, that move makes it an open question whether he ought to vote in favour of woman's franchise, and thereby keep in touch with his principles, or to conserve the interests of the goldfields to some extent. I observe that the Government are busy on the goldfields taking a census of all the ladies eligible for votes. At Kanowna on Monday last a sergeant of police was going round on this work, and greatly alarming the female inhabitants. Will the Government undertake to take a census of the men eligible to vote, but who at the present moment are disfranchised?

**THE PREMIER:** They can all get on the roll if they like.

**MR. VOSPER:** They can all get on the roll if they like?

**THE PREMIER:** How can we go in for a redistribution of seats and women's franchise, unless we know how many women are eligible to vote?

**MR. VOSPER:** I congratulate the Premier on the dodge to avoid dividing the constituencies so as to give due weight to the goldfields vote. It would be useful, in dealing with the question of electoral reform, to have some information as to the number of disfranchised men, as well as to the number of disfranchised women. I do not propose to occupy the attention of the House any longer by comments on the Governor's Speech. If the Government are sincere in the measures of reform they propose for our consideration, and really mean to introduce Bills which will have the effect of removing abuses, they are to be heartily congratulated, and I am sure a large measure of support will be accorded them from this side of the House. But if there is any attempt to give us the shadow and not the substance—a mere simulacrum of reform and not the reality—it will be our duty to oppose the Government. But I regret the Government have not seen fit to give some clear idea of what they actually

mean, because the Governor's Speech leaves the House as much in the dark as it was before the Speech was printed.

**MR. GEORGE (Murray):** I move the adjournment of the debate.

[Motion not seconded. A pause ensued.]

**MR. GEORGE:** If the motion is not seconded I shall have to go on. I am prepared to go on for hours, if necessary.

[A further pause ensued.]

**MR. LEAKE:** Let him finish, and you can present the Address to-morrow.

**THE PREMIER:** I think we had better adjourn.

Motion for adjournment seconded, put, and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m. until the next day.

### Legislative Council,

Thursday, 6th July, 1899.

Paper presented—Question: Circuit Court Judge, to ApPOINT—Return granted: Stipendiary Magistrates, Particulars—Papers granted: Coolgardie School Board, Appointment—Address-in-Reply: Fifth Day of Debate, conclusion—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the **COLONIAL SECRETARY:** Report of Registrar of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks, 1898.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### QUESTION—CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE, TO APPOINT.

**HON. A. G. JENKINS** asked the Colonial Secretary, If it is the intention of the Government to make provision for a Circuit Court Judge, during the present session of Parliament.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell) replied: The matter is being considered. I may add that I believe it will receive early consideration.

#### RETURN—STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES, PARTICULARS.

On the motion of the Hon. F. WHITCOMBE, resolved that a return be laid on the table, showing:—1. The number and names of all stipendiary magistrates in the service of the colony. 2. The dates of their respective appointments to the stations or offices now held by them.

#### PAPERS—COOLGARDIE SCHOOL BOARD, APPOINTMENT.

On the motion of the Hon. A. G. JENKINS, resolved that all correspondence in connection with the appointment of the Coolgardie School Board, together with the names upon whose recommendations the appointments were made, be laid on the table of the House.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### FIFTH DAY OF DEBATE—CONCLUSION.

Debate resumed on motion for adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's opening Speech.

HON. A. G. JENKINS (North-East): It is a sort of satisfaction, if we can believe the opening paragraph of the Speech, to know that the financial position of the colony is again sound. For myself, I can see no good reason why a colony having the resources this one has, should be in any other than a sound position financially, and with the opportunities for more direct taxation than at present exist, I can see no reason why the Treasurer should have any difficulty in meeting the current year's expenditure. I think it is a matter for regret that the Government have not given us more definite information with regard to the placing of the Commonwealth Bill before the people of this colony. I think the Premier, in pursuance of his promise made at the recent Premier's Conference, should have stated in a more direct manner on what date it was proposed to place the Bill before the people, because I am quite in accord with the remarks of Mr. Matheson, and I am sure all those who do favour the Bill are of the same

opinion—that it is not the desire of federalists to unduly press the matter forward. It is not their desire that this Bill should, so to speak, be hurried before the people; but what we do say is that some definite information should be given to the House as to when the Federal Enabling Bill is to be introduced. The Premier stated at the Conference that he would introduce the Enabling Bill directly after the Commonwealth Bill had been agreed to by New South Wales. The people of New South Wales have agreed to the Bill, but the Premier now adds the words in the Governor's Speech, "and Queensland." We do not know when Queensland will agree to the Bill; we do not know that Queensland ever will agree to it, but we say that, in pursuance of the Premier's promise, the Bill should be submitted to Parliament at an early date—not at too early a date—but within some fairly reasonable time. Federation being a national question, affecting all sections and all classes of the community, I maintain it should be decided by the people and the people alone. The people should say whether they are willing or not to accept the Commonwealth Bill. I am extremely sorry to hear members of this House who represent only a section, and a very small section, of the community, get up and say they will absolutely prevent the Commonwealth Bill going to the people of the colony. If we were a representative House, and if we were representative of all classes and conditions of men there might be some excuse for it.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: We do represent all classes.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: This House only represents a small section of the community.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You wanted that interruption, and you got it.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: If the arguments, of the gentlemen who are against the Bill, are good, or if the arguments of those who are in favour of the Bill, are good, these people will have an opportunity of submitting their arguments to the people. The people to whom we have given the right to vote ought to have the right to express an opinion on such a burning question as federation. The electors have their interests in the colony just the same as hon. gentlemen in this House have, and it is not likely that the electors

are going to throw away their interests to satisfy any burning desire to defeat the Government. I would like to say, while I am speaking on this question, that I was extremely sorry to read the remarks made by Mr. R. S. Haynes—I had not an opportunity of hearing them—and I cannot think he was quite serious in the remarks he made. I think he did not intend them to have a general application.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I do not know what I am reported in the newspapers as having said, but what I did say, I adhere to.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I am sorry to hear it.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: What was the remark?

HON. A. G. JENKINS: The hon. member referred to the goldfields people as a vagabond mob.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I did nothing of the sort.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: That is what you are reported to have said.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Perhaps the wish was father to the thought.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: A gentleman, occupying the position which the hon. member does, should never have made the remarks which are attributed to him.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I did not say the people on the goldfields were a vagabond mob. I said that insults were levelled at all people interested in the welfare of the colony by the press on the goldfields, and these insults were received with applause by a vagabond mob, and I repeat it.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I am entirely in accord with the proposals of the Government to erect further batteries on the fields. I think the working of the batteries erected so far has not resulted in a loss to the community, and I am of opinion that if a return were called for, this statement would be borne out. The great advantage they are to the working miner, to the prospector and the man who has a small show on the fields, will justify the Government in erecting additional batteries, provided there is money available for them. In regard to the railway system, I do not think any gentleman will deny that there should be an extension, provided the money can be obtained. Both at Leonora and at Norseman the mines are developing splendidly, and the population is growing.

A MEMBER: Is it?

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I am informed on the best authority that it is growing in both those places. The people who reside in these districts deserve railway communication at the earliest possible moment it can be given. As to the legislation promised in the future, the proposals made must be very satisfactory, if the Government will only show an earnest desire to carry them out. With reference to the tax on dividends, I hope it will not be limited to gold-mining companies, for I see no good reason why other companies which have such large dividends as 15, 17½ or 35 per cent. should not also be included.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Which company is it that pays 17½ per cent?

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I believe it is a bank, but I have forgotten the name.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is on the original capital, and not on the amount at which the shares have changed hands.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: You do not pay a dividend on the increased amount, but only on the original capital. You do not get much more than 17½ per cent. from these large mining shares at the present time; and in fact not five per cent. on the present capital value. With reference to the Electoral Act, I hope we shall at least have a more liberal measure than the one now existing, and that provision will be made for some system of transfer of votes, and for shorter residence qualification. At present a man has to reside twelve months in the colony before he can get a vote, and in my opinion a six-months residence should be sufficient.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What is the difference between this colony and Victoria?

HON. A. G. JENKINS: We have a large population daily entering the colony, presumably to stay here.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: What is the qualification in Victoria?

HON. A. G. JENKINS: There are more settled conditions in Victoria than here.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I think the residence qualification is six months in Victoria.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It was six months, but now it is three. A person has to reside twelve months in the colony

and to be three months in the particular district for which he votes.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Men live many months in districts and have not votes.

A MEMBER: That is their own fault.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: No; such is not the case, as they are roving about from one place to another, and they cannot get on the roll. A man may be five months in Perth, and then go to the goldfields and reside five months, and yet he will have no vote. In the other colonies there is a system of issuing electoral rights, and I see no good reason why a man in this colony should not have an electoral right, which would facilitate voting, and would enable a man to more readily register his vote.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: They can only vote in their own constituencies.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I am only in favour of issuing electoral rights.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It makes very little difference.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: It saves a lot of time on polling day. For instance, on this question of federation a man with an electoral right can vote anywhere. At present I presume that if a person in the other colonies has an electoral right, and happens to be outside the district he was previously in, he can vote in the district where he at present resides.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: He cannot do that in Victoria, but can only vote in the place for which he has a right.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: That is so, but there is no reason why we should follow Victoria in everything.

A MEMBER: That is what you are doing.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: No, I am not; but the law in Victoria might well be copied in many respects in this colony. I think the proposal in relation to conciliation boards will meet with the approval of the House, but I hope that in framing the measure members will see some provision made whereby awards may be duly enforced. So far the Acts framed in two of the colonies at least have been simply a farce, owing to the awards made not being properly enforced.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Can you give us any idea how to enforce them?

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Not at present. Perhaps if the hon. member will

read the New Zealand Act he will see there is an excellent provision, and with due amendment doubtless it can be made to meet the state of affairs in this colony.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Leave it to the Parliamentary draughtsman.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I also think the Government would be well advised to introduce—I do not see it here—some amendment of the Licensing Law, or, at any rate, drastic legislation to put down the curse of sly grog selling which is so prevalent in the colony. Owing to the decision of the Supreme Court—whether it is right or wrong it is not my duty to say—sly grog selling is absolutely a curse.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It is the same law as they have all over Australia.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: It may be differently interpreted.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: No.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: It is not the same law, because the control of sly grog-selling there is under a separate excise department, controlled by the Government. Here the whole burden of proof is thrown on the informer, and unless that informer's evidence is absolutely corroborated in every slight particular, there is no conviction.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: No; there must be corroboration of some material particular.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: In the course of my experience there have been a great number of cases, and not a conviction.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: There must be corroboration of the fact, but not of the person.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: The liquor law should be amended and this sly grog-selling put down, and I hope it will be done. I notice with great satisfaction that the Government intend to introduce a Redistribution of Seats Bill, which I am sure will allay a lot of ill-feeling that has existed in the past among residents of the goldfields. It is only due to them to grant better representation.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: They have not got it yet.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I hope they will get it, and when they do they will act far more in accord with the other people of the colony than they have done in the past. You now see a gentleman representing only seventy electors, and others representing five thousand.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Look at the quality of the seventy.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I think the five thousand have some cause of complaint.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: You stated some time ago that they were nomads, wandering all over the place.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I repeat that the five thousand should have more representation than the seventy. Then I am also pleased to know that the Government are going to take an early opportunity of considering the question of a circuit judge, for it is nothing more nor less than a scandal that litigants should be compelled to travel five or six hundred miles whenever they have an important case, and waste hundreds and hundreds of pounds in getting witnesses to this city, when the same thing could be done for one-tenth of the money. The present Act has now been in existence for two years, and I think the same answer has before been given with regard to this question, it being said that the Government were going to early consider the matter; but so far they have not done so. I think they would be well advised to consider it early, and either make the present judges go on circuit, or else appoint another judge. If the judges have too much work, the remedy is easy. The cost of appointing a judge is not very great, and surely there are capable men in the colony who would take the position, provided the inducements offered were satisfactory. We want above all things to keep our judicial affairs above reproach, and to make law as cheap as possible; at any rate to the masses of the people. A great amount of legislation is promised, and if half of it is properly carried out, I do not think we shall be able to say the session has been wasted.

HON. W. T. LOTON (Central Province): Mr. President, the Speech under consideration has been criticised from various points of view, and fairly well, so I do not know that at this stage of the debate one would be able to introduce any particularly new view of the matter; but there are just one or two points I would like to touch upon. With reference to the congratulatory tenor of the first paragraph, I think I may say that the first portion of it is at all events

open to debate. His Excellency informs us that the financial condition of the colony is sound, and I am not prepared to cavil at the statement, or to assert that it is not correct; but at the commencement of the financial year there was a deficit on revenue account of about a quarter of a million, and so far as I can gather, there will be a considerable increase of that deficit at the end of the financial year. I was in hopes it would not be added to, but I understand there is likely to be an addition. When we bear in mind that we have not been living within our income, or managing the affairs of the colony so as to live within our income, the paragraph is open to debate. And to my mind, although the financial position of the colony is sound, it might have been sounder had the deficit been decreased instead of increased during the financial year. With regard to the latter part of the paragraph, I am glad to see that the material interests of the colony are progressing satisfactorily. I am in entire accord with that expression. With the exception possibly of one interest, I believe that all the other interests of the colony are now in a progressive state. We have only to look for a moment to the steady increase in the out-put of gold; to look at the considerable advancement and development in the settlement of the land—the permanent settlement of the land I hope—also to look at the progress that has been made in the coal-mining industry during the past year, and generally the advancement in agriculture and viticulture—in fact all interests connected with the settlement and development of the land—the large increase in the value of one of our staple products, wool; and to look generally at the prospects of the colony, from north to south, which have been improved by the splendid rainfall which has fallen during the last month within the settled districts, and in the north-west at an earlier period of the year—all these things promise one of the most favourable seasons we have had for years, therefore the prospects of the colony, I consider, are really good. What is wanted, it appears to me, is the exercise, by “the powers that be,” of moderate caution and the practice of, I may say, economy in carrying on the different departments of the Government, and I believe in many of

the departments there is room for great economy and saving. With regard to paragraph 17, as this refers to some extent to the question of the finances of the colony, I will deal with that briefly. We are told there that the expansion of the gold-mining industry "rendered it obligatory that railways shall be extended to those centres which warrant it," and then we have an enumeration of the various railway lines which, it is said, are urgently necessary. I am not surprised at the expressions of opinion which have fallen from some hon. members at this paragraph, seeing it contains the titles of Bills which were put forward last year and checked by this House. Hon. members have expressed their surprise when the Government intimated their intention to submit a project for constructing these railways, when no intimation has been given as to where the funds are to come from. The funds can only come from one particular source—they must be borrowed. We have no surplus revenue, and at this stage of our existence I do not think it would be right, if we had any surplus revenue, to expend it upon works of that kind. I think it would be more profitably employed in other directions. Although there is no intimation where the funds are to come from, we must naturally infer, if the works are to be carried out, that the money must be borrowed. I am not going to express at this stage my opinion as to whether it is desirable to proceed with these works or not.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hear, hear.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I intend to keep myself entirely open on that particular question, because I think the proper time to deal with the proposed lines in detail is when the Bills are before the House. We then will surely have the information as to where the money is to come from.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: And the reasons.

HON. W. T. LOTON: And the reasons. With regard to the development of the goldfields in the north, the north-west, and north-east of Menzies, beyond our present railway, anyone who knows anything about the country and has travelled over it—he need not be a mining expert in any way—cannot but be surprised at the large quantity of auriferous gold-bearing country. There are miles of it which you

travel through, north, east and west, and the country is being developed very rapidly now, and to my mind it is only a question of how soon the Government can see their way to provide the money to extend the railways into these particular districts. It is only a question of time, and if it was a convenient time now, and the money could be found, I do not think there is any doubt but that the railways would prove remunerative. We shall have to bear this in mind, but it seems to me this is not one of the best times to go into the money market of the world; however, when we do, we shall have to show the money-lending public that during the past twelve months our deficit has been increased instead of reduced. That is not a very favourable position to place before the money-lending people.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Not within the last six months.

HON. T. W. LOTON: I am dealing with the twelve months. We have turned the point, have we? The Government have been made aware of the fact that it is impossible to continue the somewhat lavish expenditure that has been going on for the past few years, and have had to draw in, and not before it was time. With the exception of some new Bills which we are promised, that is practically the whole of the new policy contained in the Governor's Speech.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It is old policy.

HON. W. T. LOTON: It is a little bit old. It is intended to further extend the railways if the money is provided. With regard to the other Bills, I am glad that some attempt is to be made at social legislation, and with regard to all the Bills enumerated in the Speech, if I am in my place when they are brought forward, I shall be prepared to give them my best attention. It seems to me that really the question which has exercised the minds of most hon. members during the debate is the subject referred to in paragraph 2 of the Speech—the federation question. So far as Western Australia is concerned, this question is a particularly important and a very serious one. (HON. J. W. HACKETT: Hear, hear.) It is a subject that no hon. member, even though he has devoted considerable time to the question of the federation of the colonies, should be in any particular hurry to push forward for a decisive vote.

The subject requires very mature consideration. I do not propose at this time to trouble hon. members with a long detailed statistical account. I am very much adverse to dealing with figures minutely, unless I have a basis to start from, and at present, so far as I can see, we want that basis to found a clear calculation upon. Mr. Matheson went very fully into figures in his very able speech, and the conclusion he arrived at briefly was that in the event of Western Australia joining the other colonies under federation, and in the event of uniform duties coming into operation—thus giving free intercourse between the colonies—the decrease in revenue from the customs would be about £260,000.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: About a quarter of the revenue.

HON. W. T. LOTON: These figures were based, as far as I could obtain the information, upon the imports and duties paid on goods, the produce of the other colonies, during the past year. I am inclined to think that the estimate is not very far wide of the mark: probably I have not gone closely into the figures. I did go into the figures yesterday, roughly, for about half an hour, and the conclusion I arrived at was that we might lose probably about £300,000. If we take the figures at a quarter of a million, or a decrease in the revenue to that amount, it is argued—and has been argued very strongly—that this amount would not be a loss, but rather a saving to the people, because the people would not have to pay it. That is quite true, supposing the people got goods to that amount cheaper; but if, as Mr. Matheson said, the revenue under federation, with this decrease, would be sufficient for the colony without any extra taxation, and without extra revenue being derived, it would be a very good thing for the taxpayers, because they would be relieved to that extent, and on that account it appears to me the hon. member was satisfied that we might safely join the federation, because the cost of the federation would only be about 1s. 6d. a head.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Three shillings.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Yes, 3s.; you doubled the amount. To my mind that is not the main question. The main reason we have to consider is whether we

are fit to join the federation or not. There are several equally important points to be considered, and one point is—and it is the first point—are we prepared to reverse, so far as the Australian colonies are concerned, the hitherto fiscal policy? Are we prepared to sweep away the tariff that has existed, or any other form of tariff, that Parliament might introduce? Are we prepared to entirely sweep away the tariff between the colonies and have free-trade? And will that suit Western Australia in its present position? It is not only the amount, but the principle involved in the question; although a number of people outside of Parliament, and members of Parliament too, may be under the impression that because the revenue is only to decrease by a quarter of a million, we can very well afford to join the federation, and that we shall save by it. The opinion of many people is that if duties are swept away they will be able to live far more cheaply, but there is the other side of the question. At the present time, although we have duties between the colonies, we have a very considerable free list, and we have not only a free list with the colonies, but a free list with the outside world. And I suppose I need only repeat this principle, which most hon. members will agree with, that the federation of Australia means free ports between the colonies themselves and a protective tariff against the outside world.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Prohibitive tariff.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I do not say prohibitive tariff, but a fairly high protective tariff. I suppose if the question was asked to-day, a majority of the people would say that they are in favour of federation, because they would have the advantage of getting goods much cheaper; but they lose sight of the fact that, although they would probably get an advantage in the case of certain products, they would have to pay an increased price on a considerable number of other articles.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The revenue would increase.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Although the duties between the colonies would be swept away, we should have an increase in the customs duties against the outside world.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Do you think the Victorian tariff, on an average, is higher.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You know it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: You are wrong.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I pit you against all the financiers of the Convention, then.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I do not think that all the statisticians in Australia at the present time could foretell the result of any tariff until it was tried.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Not a soul.

HON. W. T. LOTON: It would interfere with the present imports, but we do not know to what extent until we have tried it. I was going on to refer to the change of tariff. Take for instance machinery and tools: they are admitted free. The value of the imports of this class of goods for the nine months ending December last, according to the customs return, was in round numbers a little under £400,000, and if we add another one-third to that to make up the twelve months, the amount would be nearly half a million, and machinery to that amount would come in free from the Australian colonies. The goods which are now free to the outside world, if manufactured in the Australian colonies, would still be free, but if the goods were imported from the outside world, then there would be a protective duty upon them, and the people who use the machinery would have to pay the protective duty. That will be a protection to the manufactures of the colonies which have been established for a number of years, and will enable the manufacturers in the other colonies to obtain a better price for their manufactures than they are getting at the present time, while the residents of Western Australia, who use these manufactures, will have to pay a greater price for them. What are we going to do with those manufactures that come from America? There is a large amount of machinery that surely the people of Australia know perfectly well we at present cannot manufacture at anything like the prices the goods are manufactured for abroad? In Western Australia, which is not now in anything like a position even to make a commencement with these manufactures, are we to be taxed an extra 20 or 25 per cent. and pay that to the other colonies? It would be a splendid bolster-

ing up of the manufactures of the other colonies. The question is, can we afford it, and is it a sound practical policy to pursue, to assist the other colonies to the disadvantage of ourselves? Then again take edible things, farinaceous foods, chocolates, and so on; these things are now all admitted free. During the past nine months goods of this nature were imported to the amount of some £25,000 or £30,000. The people who are getting these things free now will probably under federation have to pay duty. Therefore if the people save in one way, they will have to pay in another. This is no doubt to my mind a most serious question for us to consider. Can we afford, in our present position, to join federated Australia?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: And bolster up the other colonies.

HON. W. T. LOTON: We are merely on the threshold of development: that is the position. Our practical and rapid development only dates back to the discovery of the goldfields, a little earlier than the introduction of responsible government. We are frequently told that the introduction of responsible government caused the progress of Western Australia. I always take exception to that statement because the goldfields were discovered a little earlier than the advent of responsible government. The goldfields—I have pleasure in saying so, and in paying a tribute to the people who live on the goldfields and develop them—have been the main factor in the rapid progress and development of the agricultural and pastoral industries in this colony, and for the simple reason that they have given us a market, and the best market we could have, that is, at our own door. The goldfields have been the reason and the cause of the opening up of our country by railways. We could never have attempted to carry out the extent of railway construction on the south coast, unless we had been satisfied of the permanence, to some extent, in the early days of responsible government, of our great producing areas. I do not want to go into further details on this federation question, because there is no doubt that hon. members need not be exercised in their minds as to the Enabling Bill coming before us. The question will be submitted to us for our consideration this session.



HON. R. S. HAYNES: No.

HON. W. T. LOTON: It is likely, unless the other colonies do not agree to federate, and if that is so, there will be no occasion to have the Bill considered. I have already said that I do not think there is any occasion for any haste in this matter, I deprecate that very much. A very considerable time should be given to the consideration in the first instance by Parliament, and a full time after that for consideration by the people, before a vote is taken on this subject. It is too serious a question to be dealt with hastily or to be rushed. It should, for no political purposes, be dealt with in a political way. I notice in the figures put before us the other day that it was assumed that we should save a considerable sum by the fact of the post and telegraph and telephone departments being taken over by the Federal Parliament. I wish to point out that even if we, the Australian colonies, do federate, and eventually Western Australia joins the federation, when a uniform tariff comes into operation—a uniform customs and excise tariff—which must be within two years, the Federal Parliament will have exclusive control over that branch. But with regard to the postal branch and two or three other branches, it is quite an open question as to when the Federal Parliament will take over these other departments.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Governor has to name the time.

HON. W. T. LOTON: The time has to be named, and the Federal Government may, in their wisdom, decide not to take over these departments.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Tax the newspapers.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Supposing the Federal Government do take over these departments, is it likely, or are we assured in any way, that Western Australia will get the same conveniences, or an extension of the conveniences as it requires them, from the Federal Parliament as it can from the local Parliament? If there is a considerable loss in connection with a department of this kind—I am speaking particularly of the Postal Department—and we want further increased facilities of development, is it likely that we shall be able to get them, and cast a still further burden of loss

on the Federal Government? What power would the West Australian representation have in the Federal Parliament of Australia? About 1 in 15 or 1 in 18; five votes against 70 or 75, in the popular place. There would be a splendid opportunity and probability of our getting performed in any reasonable time works likely to bring a considerable loss to the Federal Government. I hope that, when federation is entered into, there will be men in the Federal Parliament who will be prepared to carry on the government of Australia on national and broad lines. But we had a splendid instance from the Premier of New South Wales, on the occasion when he referred to the terrier and the kittens! That was a national and broad-minded spirit to place before the public! What can we expect if we are to be governed by men of that kind, in the position to which that right hon. gentleman expects to rise in the future? There may be others of a similar mind to his own.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: He is as broad-minded a politician as there is in the colony.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Members need not have gone to the federal meetings to be made aware of the fact, which was in evidence more than ever during the last two or three meetings of the delegates, that the representatives of the eastern colonies—New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia—intended to get the best they could for their own colonies. They pride themselves on it, and boast of it; and what consideration have they given, or are they prepared to give to Western Australia?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Why did not the delegates ask for it?

HON. W. T. LOTON: It is a pity you were not one of them.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: At all events, I would not have shut my mouth if I had been one of them.

HON. W. T. LOTON: It will be borne in mind that the Federal Parliament has exclusive power over the customs and excise. Clause 97 is a far-reaching one, for it says:—

The power of the Parliament to make laws with respect to trade and commerce extends to navigation and shipping and to railways the property of any State.

I do not know whether all the members who attended the federal meetings are

fully aware of the provisions and the extent of that clause.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: They spent most of their time down Bourke Street.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Bear in mind the Federal Parliament would have exclusive power, not only over customs and excise, but over navigation, shipping, and railways the property of any State. I am not prepared to put the English construction on those words clearly and definitely.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The Federal Parliament will.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I do not know where the power of the local Parliament comes in with respect to this particular clause. We have a very thin House, and I am sorry I have spoken at such length, but I will not detain members any longer. With regard to the other subjects in the Speech I shall be prepared to pay the best attention to them I can when they are put before us, and I trust that the efforts we bring to bear during this session will result in the advancement and sound prosperity of the colony. There are two or three items that I omitted to mention in regard to the tariff. At the present time sugar comes into this colony free, and of course it will be free from the eastern colonies under federation; but we had an intimation on this subject the other day, when it was proposed by the Premier of Queensland to the Premier of this colony, that we should impose an import duty of some £5 per ton, which would give the sugar-producing colony of Queensland and other colonies an opportunity of getting a better price for their product, and might make people of Western Australia pay perhaps a half-penny per pound more for sugar. Again, tea is free at the present time, but under the Federal Parliament there will be a duty on it, and I am afraid the people who imagine that federation between the colonies will cause goods to be very much cheaper, will find that they have made a mistake. Another item is oatmeal, of which during the last eight or nine months 600 tons were imported. Oatmeal would be free from the other colonies, but where is the raw product grown? A very large proportion of the oatmeal which finds its way to this colony is grown in New Zealand, and there will be a protective tariff against New Zealand, if New Zealand

does not federate, the consequence being that the people of this colony will have to pay an extra price. These are important items, and I might mention many more.

HON. A. B. KIDSON (West): The House is extremely thin, and His Excellency's Speech has been debated at considerable length, but I think I should be wanting in my duty if I were to allow the debate to come to a conclusion without expressing my views upon it. The first question I propose to deal with is that of federation, and even though we shall have an opportunity at a later stage of fully expressing our views upon it, yet I think it right that every member of the House at this stage should give his opinion, because the question is without doubt the most important which the Parliament of this colony has ever had to consider, and therefore one cannot discuss the subject too much, because its consideration has an educating effect, not only upon others, but also upon ourselves, and it behoves us to do the best we can to throw light on the question. I have taken the trouble to listen to and read innumerable speeches and letters that have been delivered and written upon the question, and after a considerable amount of thought the conclusion I have come to is, to put it mildly, that it would be suicidal on the part of this colony to enter into federation at the present time. I believe the effect of entering into federation now would be most disastrous. It would retard our agricultural industry, and throw our other industries back for a number of years, if it did not crush them; and, further than that, this colony, which requires so much close attention to its government at the present stage of its history, would not receive that attention. At the present time, when the colony is making such progress, it is necessary to have the Government situated on the spot, but under federation we should practically be governed by a body situated some 2,500 miles away, because everything of importance in connection with the carrying on of the Government of the different colonies will be concentrated in the Federal Government.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: And they would have all our best men over there.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Mr. Loton has just referred to one important clause of the Bill in connection with the

powers of the Federal Parliament over our railways. Surely the question of our railways is a most important one to Western Australia in the colony's present condition. Another aspect of the question is this. We are situated hundreds of miles away from South Australia, without any means of communication except by sea, and before we enter into federation, our very first object should be to see that we are connected with the eastern colonies by rail. Unless this is done we shall still be apart, and I would like to point out that we shall never have this railway connecting us with the eastern colonies unless we get the consent of South Australia, because, according to the Commonwealth Bill, no railway can be built through any State without the consent of that State, and therefore it seems that by going into federation without this railway we should be throwing ourselves entirely into the hands of South Australia. I ask members whether that is a proper position in which to place this colony. I submit it is not, and I am of opinion that on due consideration other members, who do not take that view at present, must come to the same conclusion. I do not propose to enter into details in connection with this question at any very great length, because I shall have an opportunity of going into them at a later stage, but I hope members and everybody else who will have a voice in saying whether we shall go into the federation or whether we shall not, will bear in mind that this colony should be the subject of their consideration beyond all else. Numbers of us have made this colony our home, and surely it is our duty to consider this colony before we consider the rest of Australia. That, at all events, is the view I take, and the view I shall abide by. We who have come to this colony, and have made Western Australia our home, are really fighting the battle of those who should know better than adopt the course they have taken, because there are a number of prominent men who were born in this colony who seem to be taking an extraordinary stand on the question, and, instead of placing the welfare of Western Australia in the forefront, appear to be putting it into the second place, which is entirely wrong. I now pass on to one

or two other items mentioned in His Excellency's Speech, and I should like to refer, in passing, to the Mint. I see it is proposed to make a further extension, and I hope this will not be done. I recollect that when a Bill was first introduced into the House for the purpose of providing a Mint the then leader of the House stated that the Mint would cost in all something like £15,000, but subsequently it was ascertained that the project could not be carried out under £40,000.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The increased coinage.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I do not know anything about that, but I know the House passed the Bill on the distinct understanding that the cost would be only £15,000; yet the price was increased to somewhere about £40,000, and I believe there will be considerably more cost.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is only to provide a safe place for the weighing apparatus. It appears that the delicate machines which are used for weighing sovereigns require to have an absolutely permanent foundation, and there is too much tremor in the place used at present. The proposed addition will be a very small one, and I believe it is necessary.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I understand it is proposed to make a considerable extension.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think not.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: However that may be, the difficulty now spoken of might have been thought of before, and I shall be sorry to see any extension until it is ascertained absolutely that it is a necessity. One item in His Excellency's Speech is in connection with the water supply at Fremantle, and I think the work carried out by the Government very creditable, but at the same time it would be much better if the Government would direct their attention towards providing the town with what I may call a supply of good water.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Potable water.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Yes, potable water. During the large number of years I have resided in Fremantle I have never before known the water to be so bad, and it seems a waste of money to extend the mains unless the Government are going

to provide us with a proper supply, the water at the present time being, as I say, very bad indeed. It is brackish and, to my mind, next to undrinkable. I repeat that I hope the Government will take some steps in that direction, because, if they do not, I am afraid there will be a great outcry from the town.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What remedy do you propose?

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I think the only remedy will be to bring the water down from Perth, but at the present time there may be some means of taking steps to meet the difficulty. I think they have gone down too far with the bore; but that is a matter for an engineer. Mr. Hackett asked me what remedy I would provide, but I am not an engineer, and cannot say; yet I think there must be some remedy, because I remember that before these new drives were put in the water was pretty good. I repeat that, in my opinion, they have gone too far, or that something of the kind has occurred; and surely there should be some means of removing the difficulty. I hope the Government will take the matter in hand, and set the engineer to work, and endeavour to find some means of coping with the trouble. I see the Government propose to introduce a new Bankruptcy Act for consolidating the bankruptcy laws, and I think it will be an exceedingly good thing. Mr. Crowder referred in some scathing terms to the Act introduced by myself last session of Parliament, but really I do not think he could have had much experience of the Act—fortunately for him—because my experience is that the Act has worked exceedingly well.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Hear, hear.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: It has saved a large amount of money for the debtors and creditors, and I hope that in consolidating the bankruptcy laws the Government will include the measure passed last session. I know one member mentioned that a large number of debtors were made bankrupts, but I do not consider that the fault of the Amending Act, but of the debtors. When a debtor is looked upon by creditors as a rogue they put him through the severest test possible.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: In every case I have had, the composition has gone through.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: My experience is that the Act has worked excellently and saved a large amount of money for the creditors. The cost of administering it is exceedingly small, and there is no red-tapeism or difficulty in carrying out its provisions. I see also that the Government propose to introduce a Bill dealing with Conciliation Boards, and I presume this proposal is the outcome of the recent miserable strike at Fremantle. I hope the Government will introduce a Bill somewhat on the lines of the New Zealand Act, though of course there is the difficulty which always exists in Acts dealing with Conciliation Boards, namely, how to enforce the awards. Personally I do not see how they can be enforced, and to my mind it is an absolute impossibility to frame a Bill so that it can be enforced in this connection; but perhaps the Government will try their hand at it, and the Parliamentary draftsman referred to by Mr. Haynes will endeavour to devise some means whereby such an Act may be carried out, though, I repeat, I do not see how it is to be done.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The Parliamentary draftsman is a good man.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I do not know that I said he was not.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: You inferred as much.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I did not, for I said he might be able to remedy the difficulty pointed out. The next thing to which I desire to refer is the proposed dividend tax. I am glad to see that the question of a dividend tax has at last been taken hold of by the Government, because there is an immense amount of gold, and Western Australia is getting no benefit whatever from it, whereas the proposed tax would be a means of enabling the colony to do so.

A MEMBER: They are going to tax all dividends.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I have no shares, so it will not affect me. At the present time I do not know whether the dividend tax is intended to be imposed on all companies. There seems to be some little doubt about it, and perhaps the Leader of the House can give us some information on the point. Personally I hope it is only intended to impose dividend taxes in relation to gold; but when the Bill comes before us we shall probably

be able to extend its operation a little bit further, if hon. members think it advisable. I see the Government propose also to introduce a new Electoral Bill, and I agree in a very large degree with a number of the remarks which have fallen from Mr. Jenkins, the present Electoral Act being very ineffective and capable of a large amount of amendment. It appears that the Government intend to confer votes upon women, and I am exceedingly glad to learn that such is the case; and when the Bill comes before the House I shall do all I can to further it and pass it through. I would like to take this opportunity of urging upon the Government the necessity of a new Supreme Court house. The accommodation at the present time is absolutely inadequate, and not only is it inadequate, but it is a perfect disgrace and a scandal to the community that such a place should be allowed to exist. Even at a place like Newcastle, where they have possibly one case a week, which may be a charge of drunkenness, the police court is a palace in comparison with the building which we have here for the Supreme Court. Again, at Fremantle they have two Courts—and I think it is a credit to the Government—one being a civil court and the other a criminal court, and they are most excellent, being far superior to the Supreme Court buildings here. At Geraldton they have a magnificent Court. Buildings for petty courts have been erected all through the colony, and yet the building used by the Supreme Court, which is the High Court of Justice in this Colony, is nothing less than a barn. In fact I could never understand the action of the Government in connection with this subject, because one would think that the very first thing the Government would do in connection with the courts would be to make proper provision for the Supreme Court, and then erect buildings for petty courts throughout the colony. They seem to have started at the tail instead of at the head, and to have built petty courts whilst leaving the Supreme Court buildings a disgrace and a source of constant comment by the Judges; but it seems to me that the Government do not pay any attention to what the Judges say. There is hardly a day that I go to the Court but what some remark or comment falls from the Bench

in connection with the bad accommodation for the Judges, the Bar, and the public. The present building is, I repeat, nothing more nor less than a barn, and I hope the Government will do something in connection with the matter, and that the leader of the House will be able to give us some assurance that they will put the matter in hand at a very early date.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It is under consideration.

HON. A. B. KILSON: I hope it will become an accomplished fact. I never like to hear the remark that the matter is under consideration, for it is always throwing cold water upon the thing. I hope the Government will take the matter in hand at once, and, if they do so, they will gain the thanks not only of the Judges and the members of the Bar, but also of the public.

HON. D. MCKAY (North): I do not propose to criticise His Excellency's Speech much, and shall confine my few remarks to two paragraphs, the second and twenty-second. The first of these two paragraphs deals with federation, the burning question of the day, about which there appear to be many very perplexing and conflicting views and opinions. I may say that since first the question of federation was mooted, now a good many years ago, I have been unwavering in constancy to the cause, and I still hope to see the consummation of federated Australia as a stepping stone to the greatest federation the world has ever known. Nevertheless, notwithstanding my fond dream, I am by no means prepared to sacrifice the best interests of this great colony for the sake of consummating my most cherished inclinations. I regret that I cannot follow my hon. and learned colleague in his desire to prevent the Commonwealth Bill going to the people. I hold the opinion, and I cannot depart from it, that the federal question ought to be decided by the supreme voice of the people; they have to pay the piper, and should be allowed to select the music, even though it may not be harmonious to critical ears. Yet, at the same time, I would not favour the Bill going to the people under six months, or even twelve months. The colony is very extensive, and the voters should have a full opportunity of rumi-

nating and digesting the *pro et contra* of what is going to decide the destinies of this huge colony. The twenty-second paragraph of the Speech will no doubt have material bearing on the northern province of the colony. In that connection I can only say I think there should be special legislation for the northern portion of the colony, for I cannot see but what it would be manifestly unjust to treat it on a population basis. I therefore hope that, when the question comes to be discussed, the problem will be solved in a fair and just spirit.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): I think it is the practice with all of us that we should express our views on the Governor's Speech, foreshadowing, as it does, the policy of the Government for the session. I will, therefore, briefly express what I have to say. In the first place, I only have to repeat what has been said as to the satisfactory financial condition of the colony, and I hope when the Estimates are brought forward this will be shown to be clearly the case. I come to paragraph 2, which has been the principal subject for discussion in this debate. Federation has been a burning question for a considerable length of time; all of us have read a great deal about it, and all have heard the opinions of the advocates for federation, amongst whom is Mr. Matheson, who has taken a great deal of trouble to lay before us a more honest and fair statement than any other advocate for federation who has spoken in public.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Question?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I give Mr. Matheson credit for the way in which he has spoken; notwithstanding that, I think he has failed to prove that in the opinion of anybody federation is desirable, inasmuch as he admits that it will cost the colony a considerable amount of money, and he cannot show in any practical way that the colony will derive any benefit. This is a point which must have considerable weight with every thinking man. It seems to me that if Western Australia joins the other colonies in federation we shall gain nothing, but we shall give the other colonies a great deal. What possible advantage can be gained when we are such an enormous distance from the other colonies? We shall be 2,500 miles from

the seat of government, and there is an immense extent of sterile country between the boundary of Western Australia and the other colonies, which must leave us always in an isolated condition. It has been shown that the great concession which the Federal Government will give to Western Australia will amount to nothing at all. First of all, in respect to the duties, what does that argument amount to? It amounts to really nothing. As to our representation, it has been shown by Mr. Loton that our representatives will be always in a minority, and therefore would not be able to gain a small point in the interests of the colony, especially where our interests are not identical with those of the other colonies. That is a great point too. We can never be fairly represented; and therefore it occurred to me that there is not as much unity in the other colonies as we are led to believe. Look at the strikes that have occurred in those colonies. Industries have been paralysed, and this has occurred since the introduction of universal suffrage. Are the other colonies to be an example to us in this respect? Are we not likely, under federation, to have continual differences that may lead to warfare in the end? If some of the other colonies succeed in federating, let us see how they progress before Western Australia joins. We also know that this colony is making considerable strides in the way of cultivation, and in opening up industries of many kinds which will be of the utmost importance to the future welfare of this country, and should our industries be thrown into competition with the other colonies, whose industries are fully developed, and have been spoon-fed for the past thirty years? The industries of the other colonies are over-producing; they have been in that state for years, and to throw us into competition with those colonies would certainly be discouraging to all future settlement in Western Australia. This must be evident to every man who has the welfare of the country at heart, and we should not overlook the point. I am not going into details, because I think the matter has been so fully discussed by all those who have spoken and written on the subject that it is unnecessary for me to do so, and I do not wish to weary the House by taking up more time than is necessary.

At the same time I do hope that when we have the Bill before the House, we shall not flinch from our duty, but that we shall show the country we have their interests at heart, and that we shall do what we think is most desirable for their welfare. We all admit that the great mining industry is in a satisfactory and flourishing condition. We also know, in looking at our probabilities in regard to the gold output, that there is an enormous amount of country which is still almost unexplored, and which may in the future produce mines equal to those which are in existence and are being worked; and we can only come to the conclusion that our resources in this respect are enormous, and it is scarcely possible to estimate what our future gold return will be. The Government in paragraph 4, allude to the public batteries, and I have much pleasure in stating that the policy of erecting batteries is a desirable one. But at the present time, through inefficient management, the batteries have not done what they ought to have done. I hope they will do better in the future than they have done in the past; and I also hope they will prove to be of great benefit to all the small mine owners; as it was expected they would be of assistance to that class of people when the batteries were first mooted. There are many mines held by those who have discovered them, and who are now working them, and the public batteries are a kind of bonus to the working miners. The public batteries also prevent the discoverers of properties being robbed by speculators, who buy the mines for almost nothing, and sell them for large sums of money. I cannot say much in favour of the expenditure over the Coolgardie Exhibition. I think it has been a great waste of money. Had the exhibition been held in Perth the beneficial effect on the colony would have been greater, but as the exhibition was held in such an isolated and far distant place as Coolgardie, I do not think the colony will derive the benefit that many expected it would derive. Provision has been made for the representation of the colony at the Paris Exhibition, and I think that if the minerals and specimens which were collected together at the Coolgardie exhibition are sent to the Paris exhibition, it will have a beneficial result, because I saw at the mineral court of the Coolgardie exhibition

magnificent specimens of gold which if exhibited at Paris cannot fail to do the colony good. I come now to the Collie coal fields, and I am sure it must be a source of gratification to every member in the House, and the colony generally, to know that these coal fields are likely to turn out successful and satisfactorily. We must bear in mind that there are large leases held in the Collie district, some of which are 7,000 and 8,000 acres in extent, and upon these leases very little has been done, and I think the Minister of Mines should not extend the exemptions. If these mines were all working it would be the means of throwing a large amount of coal on the market, and more than could be used. Therefore all would suffer. If these large leases were cut up and sold in the way that other mines are disposed of, I do not think that would work satisfactorily in the interests of the colony. I should like the Minister of Mines to force those who hold leases to comply with the mining conditions. The water works at Helena Vale, I extremely regret, have come upon difficulties in regard to the finding of a foundation for the dam; but at the same time I do not see how those difficulties could have been avoided. It is not very easy to tell from the surface what will be met with further down. But the obstacle has now been overcome, and I hope the progress of these works in the future will be better than in the past. With respect to the Coolgardie water scheme, I candidly admit that I wish it had never been undertaken. I say that it will be a considerable length of time before the work is completed; and if the people of Coolgardie can do without water until the works are completed, they could have done without it altogether. I think it should be gratifying to know that the harbour works at Fremantle are being carried out in such a successful way. We have now comfortable and safe anchorage for vessels of any size, and any one going to Fremantle can see as many as a dozen or twenty ships lying alongside the wharf discharging cargo with every facility which enables them to do so quickly. That is a very different state of affairs to what existed some years ago, when vessels had to discharge their cargo in Gage Roads, and in heavy weather the work could not be done. The condition

of things at the present time is very satisfactory, therefore we have every reason to be grateful to the Government for this accommodation, and I think we should give credit to those to whom credit is due in the construction of the work. I think the work has been carried out diligently and effectually, and it is due to the engineer who was in charge, and those under him, that they should receive credit for the way in which the works have been completed. Paragraph 9 says that

New jetties and stock-yards, etc., have been erected at Wyndham and Port Hedland, and have already proved of great advantage.

No doubt these are necessary works, and will be appreciated by those for whom they are constructed. Yesterday I heard some rather disparaging remarks made as to the Bunbury break-water, and I admit that sometime back, when this large expenditure was entered into, I thought it was rather a piece of extravagance. I thought the district hardly warranted the expenditure, but it was pointed out to us that it was necessary to make Bunbury a safe anchorage, and when I have visited Bunbury, I have seen vessels lying safely alongside the jetty, which must be a great advantage to the place. The stone used in the breakwater is of a very heavy and massive description, and is scarcely likely to move when once settled. Though there may have been a little disturbance during the very rough gale, when the weather was as bad as ever it is likely to be, the masonry has now settled down, and I do not think there is any probability of its again moving. I have seen men working at early hours in the morning, and it struck me that the work was certainly being carried out in a diligent and proper way. Yesterday, reference was made to the advisability of making a wharf on the inside of the break-water, and it struck me it might very well be done, and probably will be done in the future, unless the bottom is of such a hard nature that they will be unable to drive the piles. I believe that will be an obstacle. I made inquiry, and was told the bottom was so hard that dredging could not be carried out, and it appeared that it would be better to extend the present breakwater. It cannot be denied that the breakwater is of immense advantage to the place. When you take into

consideration the great resources of the neighbourhood, there being timber, tin, and coal, I think you will admit that we are only doing right in approving of works of this kind, which will make the harbour a good and safe one, and I therefore do not think we ought to regret the expense incurred. The works mentioned in Clause 12 are of a most desirable character, and I hope they will be carried out to the satisfaction of those who know more about the matter than I do, but I can see from the nature of the works that they will be of permanent benefit to the colony. In paragraph 13 we are reminded that the Public Library and the Observatory have been finished. I look upon the Observatory as a piece of extravagance, and not justified under the circumstances of the colony.

HON. F. M. STONE: It helps Wragge.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I cannot see that any great amount of benefit will be derived from it. As to the Mint, it is all but completed, and is, indeed, now ready for work; but it certainly would be desirable to have an export duty upon gold in its crude state, which would cause men who own the gold to have it coined in West Australia, and would thus help to support the Mint. I regret to hear that the supply of water at Fremantle is not fit for human consumption, or at all palatable, and it appears to me it will be hard to overcome the difficulty. In paragraph 15 reference is made to the erection of smelting works, and I consider that the need of such works has long been felt in the colony. I hope they will be productive of all the benefit we can desire. I have seen for some time past numerous truck loads of ore that have been brought from Coolgardie to be treated at those works, and I hope that the works will be found of benefit to the owners, not only of gold mines, but all other mines that exist in the colony. We have coal here by means of which our smelting can be carried out effectually, and I hope the rates charged for railage will be so reduced that the undertaking will be profitable to all concerned.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Not for the people who pay the piper.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: For years past I have seen trucks on every train coming back from the goldfields with nothing in them, and it has often occurred to me that those trucks (which



run here on a down grade) might be utilised with advantage by carrying material from the goldfields, if only a half or a quarter of the full rate were charged for freight, for if that course were adopted, it would prove to be a source of profit. It would help to make the railways pay a great deal better than at present, and would also be of assistance to those who own mines which contain no great amount of ore. A great deal might be done in this respect, and I repeat that I advocate a reduction of the railway rates. Paragraph 17 alludes to the gold-mining industry, and further railways; but I think we are hardly in a position to promise our support for the construction of other railways under existing circumstances. Of what use will the line from Menzies to Leonora be to us? It strikes me very forcibly West Australia will derive no benefit from it. I see there is also a proposal for the construction of a line from Coolgardie to Norseman. If you construct a line from Coolgardie to Norseman, and then one to Esperance, you will divert freight from this part of the colony, and what good will our harbour works at Fremantle be to us?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It would injure you considerably.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: It would benefit me considerably. Nothing more so; but it would do the whole of this portion of West Australia a great deal of harm. I admit, however, that I would like to have seen a line start from Esperance in justice to the people who have spent their money there. Its construction would have been a common act of justice on the part of the Government, but I think that under any circumstances it would be suicidal on the part of the Government to start the railway from Coolgardie.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Why more suicidal to construct it one side than on the other?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The construction of it one way would be the means of taking everything from the colony. The trade that comes to Esperance Bay does not affect this part of the colony.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: You say, make a railway from Esperance up to Norseman.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I would like to see that. I think that in common fairness the people ought to have it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: What is the difference between constructing the line from Norseman to Coolgardie, and constructing it from Esperance to Norseman.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The line from Coolgardie would be of no good to Esperance Bay at all, and would be a heavy tax upon the people of Norseman. With regard to postal and telegraph extension, I am sure everyone will approve of the expenditure for that purpose, for the benefit of the portions of the colony that will be served by it. I hope that when the matter of the Goomalling railway is brought before the House it will be favourably considered. Personally it will not affect us in the slightest degree; but a very large number of most desirable settlers and squatters are residing in the Goomalling district, an enormous area of land having been put under cultivation, and unless they are supplied with a railway they must give up that land, for otherwise they cannot possibly compete with those places which are already served with railways. The proposed railway will pass through a large amount of good country, and I ask members not to be hasty in considering the matter, but to give it their close attention, and if they can conscientiously support the proposal their action will be appreciated, and will result in a great deal of good. The people have taken up the land on the assumption that a railway will very soon be constructed. They have improved that land, and it will be an act of injustice if they do not get a railway. Some reference has been made to the immense increase in agricultural development, and I take this opportunity of making a few remarks upon the improved condition of the colony in that respect. Years ago it was stated that Western Australia was incapable of growing all that was required for its own consumption, and it was asked, what is the use of protecting it, but we have already proved that in this colony we are capable of producing not only what is required by ourselves, but a great deal more. We have this year grown more hay than is required, and there is a market for; and we have grown nearly as much wheat as we need, whilst West Australian flour is

being supplied at a cheaper rate than that which is imported. At the exhibition at Coolgardie a test was applied which cannot be disputed (for the baker did not know which flour he was using), and the reports were all favourable to the West Australian flour.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Bunbury flour took the first prize.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: But it was West Australian flour for all that.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: A Bunbury man gained the first prize.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I am glad to hear it.

The usual time for adjournment having arrived, the PRESIDENT asked Mr. Dempster if the remainder of his speech would be long.

MR. DEMPSTER: A few minutes.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said his own remarks would not occupy more than about half an hour, and the debate might be finished before the House adjourned.

THE PRESIDENT: Was it the wish of the House that he should now leave the Chair, or that he should remain in it until the debate was finished?

Question put, and the PRESIDENT having declared the ayes had it, the HON. F. T. CROWDER called for a division.

THE PRESIDENT: The House had power to alter its rules at any time.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Without desiring to coerce any member, or to press this matter as far as he was personally concerned, he desired the unanimous consent of the House to the adoption of the course suggested. Of course it was a departure from the rule, but, as the President had rightly observed, the House had a right to rescind that rule at any moment.

Question—that the President do not leave the Chair until the debate be concluded—put, and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes ... ..	7
Noes ... ..	6

Majority for ... ..	1
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AYES—7.	NOES—6.
The Hon. C. E. Dempster	The Hon. F. T. Crowder
The Hon. A. B. Kidson	The Hon. S. J. Haynes
The Hon. W. T. Loton	The Hon. D. McKay
The Hon. A. P. Matheson	The Hon. H. J. Saunders
The Hon. G. Knudell	The Hon. F. Whitcombe
The Hon. J. E. Richardson	The Hon. R. S. Haynes
The Hon. J. W. Hackett	
(Teller).	(Teller).

Question thus passed.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (resuming): One of the things in relation to which I was going to make a few remarks has reference to the railway station at Albany. I was simply about to say I think it desirable that the projects of the Government shall be carried out, and no doubt if a naval station were formed in that neighbourhood, the Albany people would be very glad to see it. It is unnecessary for me to touch on anything else, having already alluded to the principal subjects to which I desired to refer, and therefore I will defer anything more I have to say until the questions come before the House in future.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (in reply): I will endeavour to make my remarks as brief as possible in replying to the criticism of hon. members, and I would like to say at the outset that I have to thank members for the criticism which they have given to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor. On the whole I think it has been decidedly favourable to the Government programme, and to the Speech that has been delivered to the House. It cannot but be expected that a number of gentlemen representing different parts of the country will have divergent views, and one of the advantages is that we shall have made known to us the wants and requirements of the different districts of which the colony is composed. Without any further introduction, I propose to notice some of the criticisms that have been passed on the Speech. In regard to paragraph 1, a remark fell from Mr. Stone about reckless expenditure, and such an assertion has been made more than once in this House and another place; but whatever force it had has disappeared, and it is not applicable at any rate to the operations of the Government during the last year. It is only natural to suppose that in the rapid progress and development of this country, and the initiation of different public works, possibly some expenditure has been incurred which perhaps can scarcely be justified, and perhaps some losses have had to be endured on account of the Government introducing, as we have done, a large number of civil servants from different parts of the world for the purpose of carrying on the operations of the Government which were necessary for the development

of the country. I feel sure members will, upon careful consideration of all the circumstances of the case, be of opinion that the Government were justified in going into these great works for the purpose of opening up the country and facilitating transports from various districts, necessary for the development of the gold-mining industry. I will make no further remark upon that, but repeat that if the expression the hon. member made use of was justified in former years, it has not been justified during the year which has just now closed. The financial position of the colony has been subjected to the criticism of members, but, notwithstanding what has been said, I think the statement made in the Speech is perfectly justified. At the beginning of the year, obligations had been entered into by the Government, and services had been arranged for which could not be arrested very easily. Although we found there was a falling revenue during the closing months of last year, it was not possible to at once arrest that expenditure and bring expenses within our income; but every effort was made by the Government, and, although there may be differences of opinion as to the steps which were taken (and I am free to admit that a considerable amount of suffering and disappointment has been inflicted by the retrenchments which had to take place), I feel sure hon. members and the country generally will admit that the Government have taken proper and right steps to bring their expenditure within their income. During the first six months of this year it was impossible that this could be done, for engagements had been entered into, as I have already said, and there were amounts to be paid which had stood over for more than six months, and had not been brought to account. All these circumstances helped to increase the expenditure for the first six months, which was above the income received. I am pleased, however, to say that the expenditure has been now brought within the income, and that instead of increasing our deficit to the large extent anticipated, and mentioned by some as half-a-million, we have been able to close the year with only a very small addition to the deficit standing over in 1898. We closed 1898 with £180,000, in round figures, to the bad; but although the figures are not yet

authenticated, we may expect to close the current year with a deficit of about £260,000; this being an addition of £80,000, and I would point out that the increase of the deficit was, of course, created during the early months of the current year. Our income has been considerably above our expenditure during the last half-year, and when I mention the fact that probably for June we shall have a revenue of £260,000, or perhaps £275,000, it will be seen that we are on the up-grade with regard to our revenue, and our expenditure will as far as possible be cut down, so I think we may fairly say that the financial condition of the colony is satisfactory. I think I may say eminently satisfactory.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It is not sound.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is perfectly sound. We always listen with a very great amount of respect when Mr. Loton speaks on the question of finance, and that gentleman has said he thinks the colony is in a sound condition. Mr. Loton has had a large experience of mercantile affairs, and I think he may be accepted as an authority in this House upon that point. We are living within our means, and I think I can say there is an opportunity of undertaking works of urgent necessity in the immediate future which we could not have expected in the early months of the year that has just passed away. It behoved the Government to take every possible step to reduce the expenditure to meet the circumstances of the falling revenue. They have, in my opinion, bravely and boldly faced that condition of affairs, and when members have carefully considered the matter they will, I think, give the Government credit for having succeeded in their efforts. Paragraph 4, relating to the establishment of public batteries upon the goldfields, has been subjected to considerable criticism. I am not in a position to-night to give members any information as to whether those batteries pay or not, but I believe that some of them do, and that others do not. There is no doubt that the policy of establishing public batteries is very generally accepted by the people of this country as a right one. I believe that members of this House, as well as members of another place, consider it a step in the right direction for the purpose of encouraging the small men

to prospect and open up the gold resources of the colony. I think members are as well aware as I am that the great difficulty we have met with in relation to this matter has been the procuring of a supply of water. The failure, in many instances, of obtaining good fresh water, or even fairly good brackish water, has very much hurt development in this direction, in preventing operations from being as successful as they otherwise would have been, but steps are being taken to overcome it, and I have no doubt the operation of these public batteries in different parts of the colony will, in the main, be of benefit to the whole country. With regard to the Collie coalfields, very severe criticism has been passed on the industry by two or three members, which I think utterly undeserved. I fancy that anyone who has the interests of the colony at heart will agree that it is a most encouraging circumstance that coal has been discovered in this country in payable quantities so near the surface, and that it has been proved, by the experience of many persons who have given it every test, to be an excellent fuel. Whether we shall be able to create a large export trade or not is, I think, beside the question at the present moment, but we have there an excellent field of coal of very fair quality, though perhaps not quite equal to Newcastle coal, and it is incumbent upon the Government, if they realise their position and their responsibilities, to do their best to encourage the industry. I feel sure the Government will accept the responsibility placed upon them by the discovery of this coal, and by the fact of its being worked by an energetic gentleman, Mr. Deakin. We can all sympathise with that gentleman in his efforts to put the coal on the market at as cheap a rate as possible. I think it is a question between him and the railway authorities, to a large extent, as to how far the rates can be reduced. I have every reason to believe the General Manager and other authorities will give full consideration to his request, and will try to meet him in every possible way ; but I quite agree with Mr. Crowder that there is a point beyond which we cannot go in justice to other parts of the colony, and in a question of this sort we should, in my opinion, leave ourselves to a very large extent in the

hands of those who are experts in this particular work. We shall be guided by their opinion, backed up as they are by the experience of many years ; and before this House or the country interferes with railway rates, it should have very good grounds upon which to act. I believe in having a public policy on this question, and being able, to some extent at any rate, to assist industries in this way, even if in some cases it entails a loss upon the general revenue of the colony, because we may be able to make it up in other directions by the development of the country and the increase of population. I refer to another work undertaken by the Government in a portion of the colony, which deserves every consideration, and is intimately connected with the Collie coalfield. I mean the Bunbury harbour. By the expenditure of reasonable sums of money, we are making harbours to induce ships to come in and for the purpose of exporting produce of the soil. We are perfectly justified in doing this, and, indeed, we should be criminally neglecting our duty as a Parliament if we were not ready to assist in the endeavour. From Wyndham to Eucla, where there are satisfactory circumstances existing, we should try to create outlets for the benefit of the industry, trade, and commerce of this country, and I am sure members will accept that position and give effect to it as far as possible. With regard to this particular work, the Bunbury breakwater, I believe I am correct in saying, though I have not visited Bunbury very much, that the conditions are utterly different from those which prevail at Fremantle. There are the timber, coal and other industries behind that town and district, and it is desirable that we should make Bunbury a good port, if it is possible to do so. The opinion of the Engineer-in-Chief was decidedly in favour of having the harbour in the estuary, but the amount necessary for that was beyond anything the Government would ever expect to induce the Legislature to expend ; therefore the only alternative was to do the best possible by the construction of a breakwater so as to afford shelter for shipping, and this has been accomplished at a very reasonable expenditure. Mr. Matheson referred to the prevalence of the north-west wind, and I think he is wrong when he says that the breakwater

is exposed to that wind, but I believe it is exposed to the north and a little to the north-east. It would be wrong to think that, with the considerable opening existing between that point and the point on the opposite side of the coast, a perfectly smooth harbour could be secured, even if the jetty were carried three or four thousand feet further. Mr. Kidson will bear me out that during the westerly winds there is some little swell there, and you cannot have a harbour which communicates with the ocean, like most of these harbours do, without a ripple during the prevalence of a gale. The Bunbury breakwater is exposed to the whole force of the ocean, there being nothing to mitigate the power of the waves. At Fremantle it is broken up by Rottnest and the outlying rocks and islands, so that the conditions prevailing there are altogether different. The suggestion by Mr. Matheson that a pier might be constructed inside of the breakwater would be outside the question, because I believe the breakwater is not carried so high as the Fremantle breakwater, and the ships would be exposed to the wind, and, as Mr. Dempster pointed out, there would be some difficulty in getting a pile jetty constructed there. However, I need not labour that question, but the point is, was it desirable that Bunbury should be made as good a harbour as possible at a moderate expense, or should it be left in the state of nature in which it was two or three years ago? I do not think the answer will be doubtful for one moment. As I have already said, I think the expenditure incurred was perfectly justified, and if another thousand feet added to that breakwater will make a great improvement to the harbour, I hope and believe members will consent to that extension. I do not think I need speak to you about the Fremantle harbour, because it has been referred to by nearly all members in the most laudatory terms, and it is bound to exercise upon this colony a most beneficial and far-reaching influence. I hope and trust that all our expectations will be fulfilled, and that we shall see the harbour occupied at all seasons of the year. Paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 contain a record of which any Government or country might be proud, I will not take the credit of it for the Government, though of course the incep-

tion of these items was by them; but it was for this House, or at any rate the Parliament, to consent that the money should be expended for the construction of these works. The record is, I repeat, a highly creditable one, and although one member said it was like a balance sheet presented by a company or by the manager of a company, yet I think we may congratulate ourselves upon the many important or less important works which have been constructed in various parts of the colony for the purpose of developing and increasing the progress and advantage to the people living in different parts of West Australia. I am glad to notice that amongst those works the harbour of Port Hedland has become very serviceable, and that by the expenditure of a comparatively small sum of money the harbour at Broome may also be made one of the very best on our north-west coast. Those works are all necessary for the development of the country, and I trust that when called upon to spend money in this direction, members will, when all the circumstances have been placed fully before them, be most ready to support them. I am sorry to see Mr. Crowder is not here. That gentleman, in speaking of the Fremantle harbour, charged the Government with having stated what was untrue in asserting that the "Penguin" was on the North-West coast at the present time surveying. He said he saw the vessel in the harbour at Fremantle two or three days ago, but I venture to suggest that probably there are two "Penguins," and that the vessel surveying the coast referred to is one of Her Majesty's survey ships, whereas the "Penguin" at Fremantle belongs to this Government and is a small vessel used for towing purposes and for visiting Rottnest. Considerable reference has been made to the Mint, and the charges by the Mint have been called in question by Mr. R. S. Haynes. Through the kindness of the hon. the President, I obtained a copy of a little brochure that was issued by the Deputy-Master of the Mint on the date of its opening, and I will endeavour to obtain for each member a copy of this book, which I think will be very interesting and very useful. I find from it that the charges of the Mint for coinage are 1½d. per ounce under 5,000 ounces, and a penny per ounce for over 5,000 ounces. In addition

to this the assay and refining charges are 8s., up to and including 20 ounces, and £45 for 5,000 ounces, and for every additional 100 ounces or part of 100 ounces 10s. I think these prices compare favourably with the charges in the Melbourne Mint. With regard to what effect the establishment of the Mint will have on the destinies of the colony, I am not prepared to express an opinion, except that I believe it must be wholly beneficial. The prestige which the colony will obtain by having within its borders a branch of the Royal Mint, capable of coining gold of the value of three millions (and I believe a still greater amount by little extra work), must prove advantageous. As a member has observed, if any colony of the group has a right to a Mint, surely the one which is producing from its mines the largest amount of gold is entitled to have one. Doubtless the result will be satisfactory, although perhaps all the gold for some time will not pass through the Mint, or at any rate be coined into sovereigns, though it may possibly pass through for the purpose of assaying and refining, and be melted into bars or nuggets, and so be distributed to various parts of the world, wherever it may be necessary. I thought it well to refer to this matter, so as to remove any little difficulty existing in the minds of some members as to the alleged high charges which were being made for the coinage of gold in the Perth Mint. I admit there have been considerable delays in relation to the Mint, but these are all explained in the little book which I hope to get for the information of members, and there is every reason to expect the operations of the Mint to be carried on successfully. I just now explained the difficulty experienced with regard to securing a proper place for the delicate operations of weighing, which are at the present moment carried on in the room containing the machinery. Anyone who is on the premises during the time the machinery is working will notice that there is a slight tremor, and I believe it is intended to remove those operations to some little distance from where they are at present carried on. As far as the absence of perfect stillness is concerned, I believe it is to some extent accounted for by the nature of the soil, which is sand, and lends itself very readily to the transmission of force. I do not know

whether that is a good word for explaining the matter, but members who live in Perth know very well that when a cart passes along the street a house will vibrate, no matter how strongly built. That brings me to the next point to which members have addressed themselves with more or less force, I refer to the construction and extension of railways. I am pleased to see the position taken up by Mr. Loton on this point; that is, that he will not express an opinion until further information is placed before him, and the Government are able to explain all the circumstances which have induced them to place these works in the Speech, especially the new railways. As has been observed by someone in another place, it was incumbent upon the Government to introduce the proposals; and having expressed their views in a former session that these works were necessary, I do not see how it was possible for them this year, when the circumstances are more favourable, and considerable developments have taken place, to omit the proposals from the Governor's Speech. There are differences of opinion with regard to these works, and they have been expressed in the House. Some look upon them as being absolutely necessary. I think that on the whole I may accept the speech of Mr. Loton, who has visited these districts, as being favourable at any rate to the construction of the line to Leonora. From the information I have been able to gather from various sources, unquestionably there is a magnificent district. In fact it has been stated by a gentleman who has visited this colony, and has written to a paper in another colony, that there is another Kalgoorlie in the Mount Margaret goldfields district. If that be so, we shall all rejoice at the fact, and if the giving of a railway will facilitate and encourage development in that part of the colony, I am sure the Government may rely upon receiving the support of hon. members for that purpose. I will just say in connection therewith that the output of gold from the Mount Margaret goldfield in the first six months of 1898 amounted to 18,193 ounces; in the second six months 25,073 ounces, and in the first six months of 1899 it was 35,388 ounces. So you see that is nearly double the output. With regard to the Norseman line, there seems to me ground for caution and

care, not because the development of the district is not great, but because of political reasons which operate in hon. member's minds. I am happy to tell hon. members there is considerable development along the Coolgardie-Norseman line. During the first six months of 1898 the returns from the mines were 12,710 ounces, and for the second six months 19,621 ounces, or a total for the year of 32,331 ounces. For the first six months of 1899 the production was 24,508 ounces of gold from the mines. That is a considerable advance, and double what it was for the first six months of 1898. In connection with the line I may say there are some very good goldfields on the way. The railway will pass the Lady Loch Field and Burbanks, where there is great development, and at which the increase in the output has been very large indeed. Additional stampers, I am informed, will have to be erected at the Burbanks at once. Then the line passes the Londonderry, glittering productions from which I had the honour of seeing at the Exhibition, and a small sample of which I was able to bring away with me. I do not think I need trouble hon. members any further at the present moment, I only trust that by wise and liberal consideration of the measures which may be prepared from time to time we may be able to assist in the development of this country. With regard to the legislation which is proposed, hon. members have addressed themselves pretty fully to that, therefore I need not go into the matter. In regard to the dividend tax, I may tell hon. members that the Bill is not yet complete, but I think I am justified in saying that it is not the intention of the Government to confine the dividend tax to gold-mining, but to apply it to all companies operating within the colony. It is intended to carefully consider the clauses of the Bill before it is introduced, and there may be some slight alteration from what is at present intended. But I am quite sure it will meet with the general acceptance of hon. members and of those receiving benefits from the colony, because dividends are enjoyed by people who have invested their capital, and who do not work on the mines; these people are depending on others who work for them. Although I happen to be a shareholder in some companies, and may have to pay the dividend tax, I shall not object

to do so for the benefit of the country, and I hope persons in different parts of this colony, and in other parts of the world, obtaining dividends from operations in this colony will not object to contribute to our revenue.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Why not tax other incomes as well?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This is not an Income Tax Bill. I think I could give a satisfactory answer to the hon. member, but now is not the time to do so. I think hon. members will see many reasons why a dividend tax could not be applied to incomes of private people.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You tax the incomes of one party, but the richer party may be left out.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Rural Land Bill is not for the clearing of land, as hon. members may think: it is to impose a tax on unimproved land; that is the real object of the measure; and I do not think I am disclosing anything prematurely in telling the House that. The legislation proposed in the Bill is more or less of a very serious character, and there may be considerable difference of opinion on the subjects. I will not venture to say anything on these Bills, except perhaps the Conciliation Bill, and I am quite of the opinion that Mr. Kidson expressed; namely, that these boards should be merely permissive. That may be unsatisfactory, but to have the boards compulsory would require careful consideration on our parts before adoption. And although compulsory conciliation has been adopted in New Zealand, and may have worked with some success there, yet I think we should carefully consider the matter before adopting such a provision here. The circumstances of our colony may be different to those in New Zealand. I am not able to tell hon. members in what direction the Government propose to provide in the particular Bill mentioned. There are other Bills of a more or less important and necessary character which are rendered requisite by the development in this country, and we must expect from time to time that any Government which may be in power will have to take up questions of this sort, and will have to deal with them in the best possible way they can. I refer to paragraph 22, on which several hon. members have spoken,

and which has led me to believe that their minds are considerably exercised in that direction. I may state my personal views on this question. We cannot deal with an Electoral Bill in this colony on a purely popular basis; that is utterly and entirely out of the question, and I am sure the Government will deal with the subject in a way that is fair and right to all interests in the country. While the Government recognise population, they also recognise other interests in the country that must be considered. I think I have gone through the different paragraphs in the Speech which are most important, and to which hon. members have addressed themselves, and I may just say a few words about federation. I think I may say at the outset that Mr. Loton has pretty well expressed my views on this matter. We owe a considerable amount of thanks to Mr. Matheson, who has devoted so much time to the consideration of this question, and who has endeavoured to present to the country his ideas of the Commonwealth Bill; whether he is correct or not is not to the point. Anyone who has studied and devoted time and attention to this question is deserving of the thanks and the consideration of the public at large, because people can only be educated by hearing the different sides of the question, and by having the matter treated in all its aspects. Personally I am not inclined to accept the results at which Mr. Matheson has arrived by his study of the question, but I am pleased to say that within the last week or two the federal party, to which the hon. member belongs, are reconsidering their position, and are now coming to the conclusion that it is not desirable to hasten federation with the other colonies, but they are agreed with the persons on the other side that it is necessary to have further information than we have at the present moment, and that it is not right to hasten the decision of the people.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: What we want is the Enabling Bill.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I believe the federal party started with the idea that we ought to have immediate federation, and I am pleased to say that the federal party are now realising the importance of the question, and desire that the question should not be rushed

because of the sentiment which lies behind it; although with that sentiment I entirely agree.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: So do we all.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: And if all the circumstances are right and ripe for our joining federation, I believe every one in the colony will be willing to do so. I might say that I have been educated up to the point at which I have arrived at now by the opposite camp—the federalists themselves—and not by the anti-federalists, because the federalists have failed to make good their cause. It seems to me that they have shown very little ground on which to rest their feet. There was one matter upon which Mr. Matheson touched, and I may be excused for just referring to it here. He referred to one of the 39 articles, if I may call them so, of this Bill—the 34th clause in reference to railway construction.

Railway construction and extension in any State with the consent of that State.

The hon. member tried to get that clause altered to provide that the Commonwealth should construct a railway in any State with or without its consent. Did I gather the hon. member's meaning rightly?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Or without the consent of the State, if necessary for the Commonwealth.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the hon. member will see, on reflection that he was getting out of the frying-pan into the fire, because that would enable the Commonwealth to come into this colony and erect any line to suit their purpose without considering the conditions or requirements or needs of the inhabitants of the State.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: If the line is essential for the Commonwealth.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The clause might operate harshly. South Australia might have some objection to a line of railway in this country, but the Commonwealth could construct that line whether another State liked it or not. But to get away from the difficulty which the hon. member saw, he seemed to get into another difficulty which was more serious. I hope hon. members will remember that I am endeavouring to make my remarks as short as possible, and I cannot go into the Bill to any extent, but I would like to draw hon. members



attention to the thin thread which is running through the whole of the Bill "until the Parliament otherwise provides."

HON. A. B. KIDSON: We know all about that.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If you take those words in conjunction with the various clauses in which they occur, you will see that any State to a large extent is entirely at the mercy of the Commonwealth Parliament. That applies to this colony, isolated as we are. Mr. Matheson has referred to Clause 98 so that I need not refer to it again, but that clause and the two subsequent clauses, 99 and 100, are important. I will just read Clause 98:

The power of the Parliament to make laws with respect to trade and commerce extends to navigation and shipping, and to railways the property of the State.

I think hon. members have drawn attention to the most important clauses to which it is necessary to give our careful consideration, and as I do not want to labour the question, I shall not refer to them further. I am sure this question will receive very careful consideration, so that we shall not rush into anything which will be disastrous to the country. My remarks have been rather longer than I intended them to be, and I trust I have met the references made by hon. members as fairly and as clearly as I possibly can, although I possibly may have passed over some.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: What about the Supreme Court?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think I may safely assure the hon. member that as soon as possible, in fact, in the near future, this work will be undertaken by the Government. The Government recognise the importance and the necessity for the work, and I have no doubt in assuring the hon. member that the matter will be taken in hand.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Immediately?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Immediately; but when I say immediately, Government Departments move rather slowly.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: What about the Fremantle Water Supply?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member has spoken of that matter

which is mentioned in the Governor's Speech, and I regret exceedingly to hear that the Fremantle Water Supply is not of a good quality. But I must confess that I am not surprised at this, because I anticipated that at the time it was proposed to get the supply of water from the holes. The people of Fremantle should not object to the Nemesis that has overtaken them in refusing to co-operate with Perth in obtaining a water supply from the hills. I am with the hon. member that it is necessary that a supply of water should be provided for the town of Fremantle, but I am not in a position to state what steps should be taken in providing that supply. I think no one could but expect that in a limestone formation, where there was a possibility of sand rifts in the rocks occurring between the ocean, that the source of supply would sooner or later be contaminated with sea water. It is the inroad of the water from the ocean which is damaging the water supply. The whole circumstances struck me as being perfectly remarkable that, in a limestone formation like Fremantle, artesian water could be obtained at a shallow depth. I will endeavour to bring this matter before the notice of the Government, but I think the members for Fremantle and the people of Fremantle should move in the matter themselves.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: They have done so.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This is an important matter as regards the shipping at Fremantle, also to the people of Fremantle, therefore it should receive consideration by the Government; but I think the Fremantle people should move first, and I think the people of Fremantle ought to be able to put their hands in their own pockets, to some extent. Let me again thank hon. members for the kindly way in which they have dealt with the Address, and congratulate them for not having taken the step which they took last year.

Question—That the Address-in-Reply be adopted—put and passed.

THE PRESIDENT said he would communicate with His Excellency the Governor to see when it would be convenient for His Excellency to receive the Address-in-Reply.

## ADJOURNMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday, July 18th.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 7-27 until Tuesday, July 18th.

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 6th July, 1899.

Papers presented—Question: Federation Bill, how Distributed to Electors—Question: Indenture of Aborigines, to Inquire—Question: Penal Commission and Recommendations—Supreme Court Criminal Sittings Bill, first reading—Criminal Law Amendment Bill, first reading—Return ordered and presented: Railway Rolling Stock, Repairs—Papers ordered and presented: Diamond Mining, Reward for Discovery—Return ordered: Government Liabilities at close of Financial Year—Papers ordered: Public Battery at Norseman—Address-in-Reply; Fifth Day of debate—Adjournment.

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

## PRAYERS.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1. Report of Registrar of Patents, etc., 1898; 2. Commonwealth Bill as amended at Conference of Australian Premiers, ordered on motion of Mr. George.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: Return showing Expenditure, etc., in the working of Public Batteries, ordered on motion of Mr. Wallace.

Ordered to lie on the table.

## QUESTION—FEDERATION BILL, HOW DISTRIBUTED TO ELECTORS.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (for MR. VOSPER) asked the Premier: 1. What means had been adopted for the distribution of copies of the Federal Commonwealth Bill. 2. What proportion of the electors was known to have received copies of the Bill.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied: 1. One copy of the Bill has been already sent to each elector in the colony, and another copy, plainly setting forth that it has been issued by authority, is now again being sent. 2. A return showing the number of copies returned from each electorate, as far as at present ascertained, is attached hereto:—

## Number of Pamphlets returned from various Electorates (incomplete).

Electorate.	No. on Roll.	No. Returned.
Fremantle ...	538	153
South Fremantle ...	1,187	64
North Fremantle ...	864	133
East Fremantle ...	820	238
Yilgarn ...	471	148
Coolgardie ...	2,924	1,704
Northam ...	615	60
Yalgoo ...	210	7
North Perth ...	2,399	42
Dundas ...	571	49
Bunbury ...	627	21
Wellington ...	405	18
Geraldton ...	434	6
Plantagenet ...	386	7
Ashburton ...	57	3
Swan ...	857	6
Toodyay ...	406	7
Sussex ...	373	5
Irwin ...	100	3
North Coolgardie ...	1,306	158

Other districts not yet returned.

## QUESTION—INDENTURE OF ABORIGINES, TO INQUIRE.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (for MR. VOSPER) asked the Premier, Whether the Government intended to institute any official inquiries into the system of indenturing aborigines, and into the cruelties alleged to have been committed upon natives in the north-western portions of the colony.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied as follows:—The Government do not consider that any special inquiry is necessary, as the whole of the north-west districts have for years been settled, and the aborigines have long since become domesticated, and live regularly on the stations in the districts they belong to.

## QUESTION—PENAL COMMISSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (for MR. VOSPER) asked the Premier, Whether it was the intention of the Government to give effect to the recommendations of the Penal Commission, in the form of legislation, during the present session.