

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 5th July, 1899.

Papers presented—Question: Supreme Court, Site of New Building—Question: Dredge "Premier"—Question: Coolgardie Exhibition, Mineral and Agricultural Courts—Return: Midland Railway Contracts, etc.—Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Return: York-Greenhill's Railway Construction, Upkeep and Revenue—Address-in-Reply; fourth day of debate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Report of Surveyor General for 1898; 2, Report of Conservator of Forests, 1898; 3, Report on Gaols and Prisoners, 1898; 4, Report of Education Department, 1898; 5, Report of Commission on Penal System; 6, By-laws of Boards of Health of Coolgardie, Field's Find, Gullewa, Lennonville, Red Hill, Woodarra, and Yalgoo; 7, Regulations under Fishery Act, Homesteads Act, Insect Pests Amendment Act, Stock Diseases Act, Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, Land Act; 8, By-laws made of Roads Boards of Cottesloe, North-East Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Dundas, and Yalgoo; 9, By-laws for Cemeteries at Coolgardie, Fremantle, Kanowna, Kalgoorlie, and Karrakatta.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—SUPREME COURT: SITE OF NEW BUILDINGS.

HON. F. M. STONE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What site has been fixed for the new Supreme Court; 2, When it is intended to start the building of the same; 3, If the site and plans have been approved by the Judges and the Barristers' Board; 4, If not, will the Government submit the same for such approval?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell) replied: 1, There is a generally expressed opinion that the present site should be selected, but the matter has not been definitely determined, and it might be desirable to seek the assistance of a Committee of both Houses of Parliament to decide the

question; 2, The Government expect to provide on this year's Estimates for the work. 3, Plans have been approved by the Judges, and there is no objection to their being submitted to the Barristers' Board, should the Board so desire.

QUESTION—DREDGE "PREMIER."

HON. R. S. HAYNES asked the Colonial Secretary—1, Who is the master of the dredge Premier appointed to succeed the late Captain Jamieson; 2, What is the date of his appointment; 3, What are his qualifications.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell) replied:—1, Mr. Robert Knox, dredge master and engineer, previously engineer only; 2, 3rd April, 1889; 3, served apprenticeship with Simons & Co., dredge builders, Clyde, Scotland. Engaged on dredges in South Australia for Government for about a year. Eight years in Adelaide Steamship Company, the latter portion as chief engineer in s.s. "Victorian." Six years on dredge "Premier" as chief engineer. Holds first-class marine engineer's certificate of competency.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I want to know who is the master of the dredge?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The engineer is in charge of the vessel.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The engineer in charge of the vessel! Does the hon. member understand the question? Who is the master?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Robert Knox, who was formerly engineer, is now master and engineer.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: A good man, too.

QUESTION—COOLGARDIE EXHIBITION, MINERAL AND AGRICULTURAL COURTS.

HON. F. T. CROWDER (for Hon. C. A. PIESSE) asked the Colonial Secretary—Whether the Government intend taking steps to have the contents of the mineral and agricultural courts, as shown at the Coolgardie Exhibition, removed to Perth for exhibition.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell) replied that the question was being considered by the Commissioners appointed to arrange exhibits for the Paris Exhibition.

RETURN—MIDLAND RAILWAY CONTRACTS, ETC.

HON. R. S. HAYNES moved:—

That a return be laid upon the table of the House showing—1. The contract between the Midland Railway Company and the Government; 2. All contracts for advances or otherwise between the company and the Government; 3. The amount for which the Government are responsible on any such contract as guarantee; 4. The name of the person or persons liable to pay judgments recovered in the colony against the company; 5. The fund or funds available in the colony to pay such judgments or claims.

He said he intended later to deal at some length with this matter, for the protection of the public and the Government. It was only right that some guarantee should be given, and that the public should have some knowledge of who was the responsible person in connection with the Midland Railway Company. At the present time, he believed, there were several unsatisfied judgments against the Midland Railway Company, payment of which could not be obtained, and there were several actions pending against the company, but it was impossible to find out who was the responsible person to serve. If, at the present time, an accident occurred on the railway and a person was injured, it was not possible to find out who was liable, and if it was possible to find out the person to serve, there were no funds for the payment of damages. If any goods were lost in transit, the owner of the goods could not recover any claims against the company. In actions which had been brought against the company, people had either been non-suited or the wrong person or persons had been sued. He asked for the return because the Midland Company's Railway was the only communication between Perth and Geraldton, and it was absolutely necessary that the public should have some guarantee put up by the company in case damages were given against the company. He moved the motion with a view hereafter to the appointment of a Commission of both Houses of Parliament to inquire into the working of the company, and the nature of the contracts in existence, also to ascertain what steps should be taken to protect the public against such a company which was running a railway and carrying people

without being in any way answerable for damages.

Question put and passed.

BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the HON. R. S. HAYNES, and read a first time.

RETURN—YORK-GREENHILLS RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, UPKEEP AND REVENUE.

HON. R. S. HAYNES moved:—

That a return be laid upon the table of the House, showing—1. The actual cost of construction of the York-Greenhills Railway, including rolling stock; 2. The cost of upkeep and working for the last six months; 3. The revenue raised therefrom.

He said it was necessary to have this information, in view of discussing later on the question of the construction of agricultural railways.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

FOURTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from last sitting.

HON. A. P. MATHESON (North-East Province): I think the members of the House who have applied themselves to the Governor's Speech have gone astray in treating the programme of the Government seriously. I do not believe these proposals were ever framed in a serious spirit, for the whole document smacks more or less of a programme which might have been produced by the Sultan of Mocha, who was prepared to promise his subjects any particular thing they liked to ask for. That is not an exaggerated view to take of the position, because it must be within the memory of all of us that a few days after His Excellency's Speech had been read, and we all imagined we had the proposals of the Government before us, a most astounding and radical change took place in their programme, and we were suddenly informed in the columns of the *West Australian* that the Premier intended to introduce a Bill this session for the redistribution of seats and the rearrangement of electoral districts; and within two days of that, we heard of the amendment by a caucus to the effect that women's electoral rights were to be freely granted. Most important measures, which, without doubt, had been carefully

deliberated upon and settled at any rate a week before His Excellency's Speech, were suddenly taken into the programme of the Government. It is perfectly clear that the Government are prepared, and were prepared at that time, to promise anything they were asked for, provided they could make a decent return for themselves, and everybody could be thoroughly satisfied. But even under those circumstances some good may arise out of the position. It seems likely, and here the comic stage again arises, that in another place the Government will have a majority to carry on the business of the State, and it is difficult to understand how they can fulfil all the various promises they make in the Speech, and introduce the most desirable Bills which they have promised to bring in. Dealing with the various paragraphs as they arise, I notice that members so far have taken great exception to the statement that the financial condition of the colony is sound, and that its material interests are progressing satisfactorily. They seem to base their objections on the fact that 12 months ago we commenced the financial year with a deficit, and that the deficit during the first few months of the financial year was increased. That, of course, is absolutely the fact, but I do not think the financial condition of the colony can be considered to be in such a very precarious position as members would wish us to believe, when we find that the expenditure since January has each month been well within the revenue. The actual figures as published in the newspapers show that the revenue was a little over one million for the first five months of the year, and the expenditure £958,000. It is all very well to say that because we have an overdraft and exceeded our means a year ago, and have been unable to pay that money back up to the present, we are in a bad financial position; but I do not think anyone would really be of that opinion in regard to his own business if he managed to finance himself and to reduce his expenditure within his income, and if it were in his power, as it is in the power of the Government, to continue to keep expenditure well within revenue. Assuming the Government mean to do that, they are well justified in saying the financial position of the colony is sound; and as to its material interests, one hears

from all parts of the country that they are improving at the present moment. There can be no earthly doubt about it, and I give members a case in point. I know that in a town on the goldfields, large suites of offices that had been empty for the last eighteen months have now been let.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: To ladies?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No, not to ladies, but to gentlemen, as far as I know, and I understand that numbers of other rooms could also be let. Here in Perth we know that trade is improving every day. Members may laugh, but if they go into any drapers', furniture or hardware shops they will find that on every side business is increasing and improving, and under those circumstances the Government are fairly justified in saying that the material interests of the colony have improved and are improving at the present moment, whatever they may have been in the past. In dealing with paragraph 4, the Government very properly congratulate themselves on having established certain public batteries; but when we read immediately underneath that they propose to establish further public batteries, though they are very much in debt, I really think they should be prepared to consider where the money is to come from. There is no doubt, as I said at the commencement of my remarks, that the Government have promised to do everything any person asks for, with a view of presenting a most favourable appearance to the country. Unless the revenue increases to such an extent that the Government can see a considerable margin of profit over their normal expenditure, this outlay ought not to be incurred.

HON. D. MCKAY: It is increasing daily.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No; their revenue is increasing daily, but unless they can see an absolute substantial balance, I do not think they should go in for increased public works which would have to be paid for out of revenue. In section 9 we again have a confirmation of my view that the Governor's Speech has to be treated as a comic composition. We have the Government congratulating themselves on various public works, some of which have been blown away through

the absence of bolts to a jetty. Another jetty, as far as I can ascertain, has been erected in a place that was never intended for its erection, owing to a mistake of the contractor; and the Bunbury breakwater has been erected in such a way that the jetty it was intended to protect, is exposed to the north and north-westerly storms during the winter. I took the opportunity when recently in Bunbury to examine the harbour works carefully, and was amazed to find that this breakwater, about which the Government take so much credit, simply protects the jetty from the force of the south-western swell during the summer, leaving the jetty, as I said before, entirely exposed to the full force of the northerly and north-westerly gales which devastate the harbour during the winter. Under those circumstances, one would have imagined that if the Government intended to increase the shipping accommodation, they would have adopted a proposal for extending the breakwater and leaving the jetty alone. But, instead of that, one finds that they merely propose to extend the breakwater a thousand feet, which is a mere bagatelle, and will not protect the jetty in the least degree from the north and north-westerly gales, and they propose to spend further money in increasing the berthing space on the jetty itself. To place before the Parliament of this country a proposal to increase that breakwater a thousand feet is simply playing with members. The Director of Public Works must be thoroughly posted up in this matter, or else he is not fit to be in his position, and he must know that, if the breakwater is to be extended, it must be extended more than a thousand feet. That breakwater will certainly have to be extended two thousand feet, if at all, and probably even more: and, as far as I can judge, not being an expert in these matters, the proper or natural course to adopt would be to make provision for berthing the boats at the back of the breakwater, and not at the jetty at all.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It would spoil the fishing.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Not in the least. Under those circumstances the jetty would be left available for fishing, and other recreative pursuits suitable to Bunbury, and business would be conducted under shelter, that being the

object of the breakwater. A breakwater which does not provide shelter is, to my mind, an extravagant joke, and that is the position of the Bunbury breakwater.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Government are considering that question.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It is a great pity the Government should come down with a speech, containing their programme cut and dry, and then that we should be told by a member, who apparently is in their confidence, that they are considering the question.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The speech is long enough without that.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It is an absurd thing to expect us to discuss the programme of the Government, and then inform us that they intend to amend their proposals. Amendments generally come from the Opposition.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I am prepared to adopt all your proposals.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It gives me satisfaction to hear it. It only accentuates the fact upon which I have laid considerable stress, that this Governor's Speech is an elaborate joke. It is not intended as a serious question at all, and the hon. member confirms my view. The interjection could not have come from a more satisfactory source than from the hon. member.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: You might tell us how you could moor a ship alongside a breakwater.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Exactly the same situation will arise at Fremantle, and it is on that account I felt justified in making the suggestion I did.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The conditions are utterly different.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The circumstances are the same, although the conditions may be different. I have had conversations with people at Fremantle, and they tell me that while Fremantle harbour is in many respects an extremely admirable harbour, and would be more so if the basin of the harbour was made a little wider, the *sine qua non* is that berthing accommodation must be made alongside the north side of the harbour, so that ships will not be exposed to the north winds and gales breaking on the jetty. That is the opinion of people who are very well competent to express an opinion. I should not be at all surprised

if the opinions expressed by the representatives of the P. and O., Orient, and the North German Lloyd companies are the same.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : The works these people recommend are inside the neck of land.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : The alterations are inside the neck of land, but the gales breaking there are so great that it would be an extremely unsuitable place for a vessel to lie alongside. Hon. members may think I am wrong, but if they like to refer to experts they will find that my views are shared by all naval men who go in there. Now we come to paragraph 10, and here we find again the Government congratulating themselves, this time on the York to Greenhills railway. I do not think it is necessary for me to comment on that railway at all in speaking to-night, because an hon. member to-day tabled a notice of a question which will probably be answered, and we shall then ascertain the result of that public work ; but, judging from all accounts, the result has been that which only a Government in a comic opera could afford to congratulate themselves upon. Paragraph 11 raises a most important question which the members of this House have, I fancy, always failed to consider sufficiently. At the end of the paragraph hon. members will notice these significant words : " notwithstanding all the provision that has been made, the water supply for the locomotives on the railway from Northam, via Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, to Menzies continues to give cause for the greatest anxiety." Hon. members will remember that when the Coolgardie water scheme was being discussed I took occasion to point out that the cost of hauling water over the then existing lines was more than would have paid half the interest on the entire loan which was being floated for the water works. I pointed out in addition that as soon as the Government took over the railway to Menzies the cost would be enhanced, and that it would cost the Government in water for the railways such a large amount that the Coolgardie water scheme was thoroughly well justified. I had intended to call for a return showing the cost of the transport of water on this line, but I presume we shall have before us shortly the report of the Railway Department, which will show that cost ; therefore

it is unnecessary for me to call for the return. But I should like hon. members to look this matter up when the report is before us, and to bear in mind that the last two or three seasons have not been nearly as bad, in regard to the shortness of water, as the previous seasons were before the railway went through. It is quite within the bounds of probability that in any given year the Railway Department, with the existing arrangements, may be left absolutely short of water.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : That was always one of the main reasons for the scheme.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : It was one of the reasons, but that reason has been ignored by members who were opposed to the scheme, and I intend, while this water scheme is incomplete, to rub this into hon. members.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : The scheme was agreed to on that account.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : If the hon. member will refer to the debates he will find that the question of supplying railways with water was pooh-poohed. Even in the last debate on the subject any suggestion of the sort was set on one side ; in fact the possible accuracy of the figures was questioned. In paragraph 13 we find the Government again congratulating themselves on an extravagant expenditure. The public offices at Geraldton have been completed. These offices comprise an enormous building, with two huge courts capable of accomodating the entire legal business of the colony—courts that are far larger and far more commodious than the courts furnished to the metropolis. The cost of the building exceeded the estimate by £3559. These are the figures : the estimate was £9000 and the cost £12,559, and we are given to understand, by one hon. member who hails from Geraldton, that there is no furniture in the building. Then again there is a hospital at Geraldton ; it is not mentioned in the Speech, but the building is another extravagant piece of work, and an entire wing is absolutely empty and cannot be put to any use.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE : Absolutely unfurnished.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : The last information I had on the subject was that it was intended to turn the wing into a padded cell. Substantial additions, we also learn, have been made to the

Printing Office, and I ask hon. members what on earth was the good of making these substantial additions to the Printing Office if we are to have circulated—when the Government want to distribute the Commonwealth Bill—such a document as that which was sent round, with Boan Brothers' advertisements on the back of it. It would be interesting to know if that was the production of the Government Printing Office.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The imprint is on it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not know whether it is the customary thing, but there is no imprimatur on the document, and I do not know that it is a legal document, but here is Boan Brothers' advertisement for chemises on the back. I must certainly say that if that is the work turned out in the improved Government Printing Office, then the sooner the office is swept away, the better. Now I come to paragraph 14, and this really is almost the acme of absurdity. Here we have the Government congratulating themselves on having driven from 700 feet to 2,400 feet, in length of drives, for the purpose of securing an abundance of water at Fremantle. Hon. members will be surprised to learn that abundance has been the entrance to the ocean, and I need hardly point out that the ocean water is not potable; therefore the expenditure was not only inadvisable but useless. In paragraph 15 we find the Government congratulating themselves on the smelting works which have been erected by a private company at Owen's Anchorage. The Government say "Smelting works have been erected by a private company at Owen's Anchorage and are now working. These workings are very extensive and complete, and supply a great want." As far as I remember, the last I heard about the company's works was that the company were importing silver ore from South Australia to smelt. It would be interesting to learn whether the Government intend to come to Parliament for a bonus of £5,000 for this company. A certain bonus was held out to the company as one inducement for the construction of these smelting works, and these works were, we understood, going to fill a great public want by smelting the silver ores which we have here. There are 1080 acres of lead mines at

Northampton and eight silver leases at Northampton; also other leases carrying copper ore which was to be used as flux; and the Government promised to give this company £5,000, but as far as I can learn from enquiries not an atom of silver or copper ore has ever been smelted from this country. The operations of the company have been confined to introducing ore from South Australia, which they need not have done, because they asked that this ore should be landed free of duty. If these smelting works had been operating on local ore, they would have been of immense advantage to the country. The Government say they have assisted the company in every possible way, but the Government must have done so without knowing that the great bulk of the ore which was being treated was brought from South Australia.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: It seems very funny, but the other day the company could not take 50 tons of ore which I offered them.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Now I reach paragraph 17, and we find contained therein the proposals of the Government to extend the railway from Menzies to Leonora, from Coolgardie to Norseman, and from Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale. A great deal has been said about the financial position of the Government, and the impossibility of carrying out these works. I think the Government are extremely to blame in not setting out in the Address from the Governor the source from which they expect to derive the money for carrying out these works. If the Government intend to borrow the money for the construction of these works, and, if they see a way to borrowing the money, I think we certainly ought to have been told. I believe these works are eminently necessary for the development of the country, and I go further, and say I believe the people who live in the districts to be served by the railways are prepared to assist in every possible way in the construction of these lines. I believe the people are perfectly prepared, if a contractor can be found to build the lines, and who will agree to be left in possession of the lines for some year or two, with a right to charge a higher schedule of rates than those on the Government lines, the residents of the districts will be willing to pay those higher

rates, so that the lines may be constructed at the lowest possible cost to the country, and so that the contractor may recoup himself out of the trade of the district. The residents of the districts are prepared to facilitate the construction of these railways in that way.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: For how long are they prepared to pay these extra rates?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That will, of course, be a matter of arrangement, but in connection with the Coolgardie railway, the contractor was left in possession of the line, I think, for about 18 months, during which time we are led to believe he made a large amount of money out of the rates which he was entitled to charge. I believe the inhabitants of those parts of the country where it is proposed to construct the lines think this course should be adopted in regard to the proposed railways, and the cost to the country would therefore be extremely small. There is no doubt that all these lines will pay, and the only question that arises in my mind as to the construction is, whether the capital can be raised with which to build them. It is generally supposed that the Government will not have the facilities in the London market to raise a loan; therefore hon. members will be justified in considering that it was almost a farce to insert these proposed railways in the programme. But if what I suggest proves to be the case, I do not see really why the lines should not be constructed. Now we arrive at paragraph 19, and we find there the most ample provision for all the most democratic legislation that the most democratic Government in Australia could propose. I only wonder what the feelings of the usual supporters of the Government will be when they find the Bills introduced. Either the Bills will belie their title or the Government will alienate their supporters. All these Bills are most excellent Bills no doubt, with one exception, and that is the Rural Lands Improvement Bill which I read in conjunction with the suggestion in Clause 21, "And that the Lands Department be further authorised to clear and prepare for cultivation lands in localities specially suitable for root products."

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: You are wrong.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. gentleman says I am wrong, but that was the only logical conclusion to arrive at. When we find lower down in the Speech that the Government intend to improve rural lands, I was naturally inclined to believe that both these matters referred to one another. We are promised an Electoral Bill, and I do not know exactly what this Bill means, whether it is electoral reform or not, there is nothing to lead one to know what the Government intend to do.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is an opportunity for the hon. member to speculate.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: There is nothing to show what the idea of the Government is. I now come to another matter, and it is in accordance with the views which I expressed when I first entered this House, and which were then sat upon by Mr. Wittenoom and others. I refer to free education being provided in the schools of the colony, and if the Governor's speech had not contained anything but that, it would be worthy the greatest consideration at our hands. I remember that I made the suggestion in reference to free education when I first entered this House, and a supporter of the Government asked me whether I also wished to provide cheap pinafores for the children. I shall be pleased to hear that hon. member when the Bill comes on for consideration in this House, and I shall watch for his remarks on the measure. I think that my comments on that previous occasion have been thoroughly justified by the progress of events. I now reach paragraph 21, and there I find a proposal on which I think I can throw a little light. Some hon. members at an earlier stage asked why the Northam-Goomalling railway had been placed out of sight instead of being inserted with the other proposed railways, but the reason is obvious.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: It was the most important.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No, not because it was the most important, but if hon. members will look at paragraph 17 they will see that the railways which are mentioned there—the goldfields railways—it is said will prove remunerative, but it was impossible to insert the Northam-Goomalling railway under that category.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : Why ?

HON. A. P. MATHESON : Therefore the Government have put this railway along with land improvement, which also, we have reason to believe, will not prove profitable. I should strongly object to any proposal on the part of the Government to clear land for the purpose of growing root crops. If the land is worth clearing at all it will be cleared by the people who buy it. Judging from what we have heard about Governments in the other colonies clearing land, if the Government here once embark on the system of clearing land and selling it on 20 years instalments—which is the practice—then the intending settlers will exhaust the capacity of the soil, roll up their swags, and go to another place, leaving the balance of the bills unmet. That has been the experience in the other colonies, and it will be the experience of this colony if the Government clear lands and then sell them. The next subject the Government have touched upon is the question of the re-arrangement of the electoral districts, and that question, as I have already pointed out, is amended by the Governor's Speech which was not laid before the House, but which appeared in the *West Australian*. I was very much surprised indeed to listen yesterday evening to the remarks of Mr. R. S. Haynes on this question, and the oceans of abuse he poured out upon the unfortunate people who are compelled to live on the goldfields, simply because they have only lived here for a few years. There was another objection which Mr. R. S. Haynes raised to the people who live on the goldfields and that was that they lived in canvas humpies or tin houses. Of course these huts in which the people live compare unfavourably with the marble palace in which the hon. member probably lives at South Perth. Because a man lives in a hut and has been only a few years in this colony, he should not be depreciated and called a vagabond in the way in which Mr. Haynes thought fit to speak last night. I was more surprised, seeing the remarks came from Mr. R. S. Haynes, because he was speaking of people who, to a large extent, have come from the colony from which the hon. member came. Not long ago Mr. R. S. Haynes was in exactly the same position as the men on the gold-

fields. He had been only a few years in this colony, and it would have been a matter of surprise to me if the hon. member had not resented most bitterly then any attempt to deprive him of his rights because he had not been born in this colony. This is the contention which he raised last night, and which was raised in perhaps a more moderate degree by another member, Mr. Piesse, when speaking to the same subject. I should like hon. members to understand that Western Australia is the whole of the colony of Western Australia. Western Australia is not, and never will be, confined to the small plot of agricultural land lying alongside the sea. The people of Western Australia will never be confined to the people who were born in this colony. Under the existing Electoral Act, any man who has lived here for twelve months becomes entitled to a vote and is really a West Australian. And because Mr. R. S. Haynes has lived twelve or fifteen years in this colony he should not take objection to other people who have lived in this colony for only a year and who, according to the Constitution, are entitled to a vote.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : The people can have a vote now; there is nothing to stop them.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : That is perfectly true, there is nothing to stop them getting a vote except the present intricacies of the Electoral Act which, I understand, is going to be altered. Mr. R. S. Haynes and other gentleman contend that because people do not live on the coast they should not have a right to vote.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : Mr. R. S. Haynes is not here to defend himself.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : It is a pity, but hon. gentlemen know that I am quoting what Mr. Haynes said.

HON. D. MCKAY : Mr. Haynes said that a man who had been here twelve months should not have the same rights as those who had been here for years.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : Exactly, the hon. member said that the people on the fields should not have the same rights as those who have been here for a number of years, and that is exactly what I have been saying. But anyone who has been here a year has as much right to a vote as a man who has been here for twelve or

fifteen years. I am glad the hon. member (Mr. R. S. Haynes) is now here. I was saying that a man on the goldfields is entitled to as much consideration as a man who has been here for a long number of years.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : If he behaves himself.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : Of course, if he behaves himself.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : We do not give persons in Fremantle Gaol a vote.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : The hon. gentleman cannot compare the prisoners in Fremantle Gaol with the people who live on the goldfields, and if he will give the matter a moment's consideration, he will say so himself.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : I say, if they behave themselves.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : The hon. gentleman should not compare the people on the goldfields with the prisoners in Fremantle Gaol. The people on the fields are as respectable as those in any other part of the colony.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : How about the attack on the Premier?

HON. A. P. MATHESON : I was not in the colony at the time, but as far as I can recollect from what I read, the attack on the Premier was conducted by his own secretary with an umbrella.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : The free and independent citizens of Kalgoorlie.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : That was what was conveyed to me by the accounts in the public press, and I only quote from the public press.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : You should quote from the public press then.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : The hon. member must have been reading the *Sunday Times*.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : What section of the press?

HON. A. P. MATHESON : I cannot tell you.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : I should think not.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : I class all the press together, I do not draw any distinction.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : You do not mind going a little astray.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : In paragraph 24 the Government advocate a naval station at Albany. That is a matter

which really has emanated from myself, because I said on a previous occasion that sooner or later Albany would become a huge naval station, and I am heartily in accord with the remarks in the Speech, and the attempt of the Government to bring my suggestions about.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : You are rapidly converting this nation into a great and wise one.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : If the deliberations of this assembly resulted in taking my advice, which it has never done yet, the position of this colony would be a much better one to-day, and I will prove that later on by reference to *Hansard*. And now I come to the question of federation which I have reserved to the last. I must say that I was relieved to find that in spite of the outpourings of the people opposed to federation, the only objection the Government of this colony can find to federation is the financial position in which we shall be left.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : Which you have changed three times.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : The hon. gentleman says I have changed my views three times, but I can assure him he is wrong. He is simply going on what he has seen in the press. I have been misrepresented in the press more than anybody; and, in order that my attitude may be quite certain, I wish to say I am responsible for the figures which I have given, and I intend to stick to them.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : They are all wrong.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : The hon. member has to prove it. Everybody opposed to federation has said they are wrong; but these are my figures, and I shall be pleased if hon. members will show where they are wrong.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE : Show that they are right.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : I say they are.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE : Prove it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : I say they are right, and it is for members to prove they are wrong.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE : You must prove your own case.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : To turn to the subject of federation, there is no doubt if we wish to look at it seriously,

as I trust hon. members do, that the financial point is the most vital one of the whole, and I do not think any question has been more misrepresented than the financial position in which this colony will find itself if we federate. First of all, it appears to be assumed that, because the Federal Government are entitled to spend as much as a quarter of the customs and excise on the expenses of the Commonwealth, they are bound to do so. This is the position that has been taken up by the *Morning Herald*, and I think I may speak without fear of contradiction when I say it has also been taken up by the *West Australian*.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Why do you not quote from it? That is always your difficulty.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I have prepared myself to meet that interjection by the hon. member, and I will do so by quoting from the *West Australian*. This is what it says:—

It will be noticed that permission is given to us to maintain certain duties, over and above all that the Commonwealth chooses to levy. In this way we shall contribute out of all proportion to our numbers, our development, and our powers.

Then there follows a little gap which refers to a matter that does not affect the question.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is your idea of it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The paper says:—

By doing so we shall have to pay an additional and special contribution to the Federal Government.

Such is not the case, and I am prepared to refer members to the Bill, which I have here for the purpose. All the Federal Government are entitled to do is to charge the cost of collection of the various portions of revenue, and the expenses of conducting the various departments they take over, the amount charged against a State being at the rate of expenditure at which the departments are being conducted at the time the Commonwealth is inaugurated. That is specific. Clause 89 says that the Commonwealth shall debit to each State

(b.) The proportion of the State, according to the number of its people, in the other expenditure of the Commonwealth.

So, under those circumstances, the amount of extraneous expenditure which has to be provided by any one State is limited by the number of its people, and not by its Customs duties at all, which the *West Australian* would lead us to suppose. I do not think Mr. Hackett can be prepared to say that was not the meaning of the article I read. It said distinctly that owing to the fact that we were at liberty to put on additional Customs duties the Commonwealth would take one quarter of these duties from us. These are its words: "We shall have to pay an additional and special contribution to the Federal Government." We shall not have to do so, because the amount of our contribution to the Federal Government is limited in the first instance to the expenditure of the departments as at present; and any excess of that will be charged at so much per head, and the larger the revenue the larger will be the return that will come to us.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: There is a mistake, as usual. You never quote the *West Australian* correctly.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: This is copied out by my clerk, who would not intentionally make an error, and I fancy I can produce the cutting.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Never mind, you are cutting sufficiently.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Yes, here it is. If any hon. member will care to look at it, it lies there on the table, so they can judge whether I have quoted the *West Australian* accurately or not.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I say you have mistaken the whole point, as you mostly do.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: If the points of the *West Australian* are so written that they are not within the grasp of the ordinary intellect, I think it a pity that copies are disseminated amongst the people of this colony, because the intellect of Western Australia is not brighter than that of other countries.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Only wilfully obtuse.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No one, as far as I can judge, ever dreams of looking at the Commonwealth Bill. It is sufficient for any person one meets in the street to say that the Commonwealth will do this or is going to do that, and the

individual spoken to will go away and be satisfied that what is stated is absolutely a fact. People believe what they see in a newspaper, and they could not in this case follow a more fallacious guide than the newspapers published in Perth. In every point on which it is possible to misrepresent the Bill, the two daily newspapers in Perth have misrepresented it. I say so advisedly, and I hope I shall be in a position to prove it before I have finished.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You are always trying to do so.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I think I shall satisfy hon. members, if I cannot satisfy Mr. Hackett. One of the fallacies to be dealt with, and I believe it prevails in the minds of several gentlemen near me in the House, is that the powers of the local Parliament will be almost swept away by the Federal Government.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I never heard anyone say so.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member is very fortunate. I have not only heard it expressed, but heard it violently combatted.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Up your way they will say anything.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I cannot help that. It is generally believed that the powers of the local Parliament will be almost swept away, but, if members will refer to the point, they will see that such is not the case; and, indeed, when the Enabling Bill was being discussed here in 1897, I think Mr. Hackett pointed out (but I have not marked the paragraph), that of the number of Bills introduced in one session in this Parliament, there were only three or four that would come within the scope of the Federal Parliament. The position, in that respect, remains unaltered to-day. The Federal Parliament will not interfere, to any appreciable extent, with the operations of the local Parliament. The local Parliament will continue to meet and deliberate, and register the laws on all matters dealing with the colony, except those few which are reserved for the discussion of the Federal Government; and, as I say, the hon. member pointed out, when the Enabling Bill was being discussed, that of the number of Bills passed in the particular session under review, there were only two

or three which would have been subjects properly within the scope of the Federal Government.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The powers were immensely added to afterwards. What you refer to was prior to these three Conventions.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I have not the original Bill before me, but I was looking only to-day at the number of reservations. There are 39 reservations in this Bill in favour of the Federal Government, to the best of my belief.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Here is the original.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Perhaps the hon. member could inform me how many subjects were reserved.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: There were many subjects in addition to those you refer to.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The clauses are 37, 38, and 39. There are two more topics in the new Bill than in the last, and it is impossible to say which those two were, for I have not been into the question.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: There were a considerable number in the other clauses.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Not giving additional powers.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Giving additional powers.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That may be so, but I do not think it would materially affect legislation. Then there is another point about which a very great deal of misapprehension exists, and that is regarding the action of the Inter-State Commission. The words of a member in another place are a very good example of one of the ordinary fallacies that prevail on the subject. He was speaking the other night on the question of federation, and made use of these words:

They could not carry a ton of ore from the goldfields one mile at a less rate than ore was carried in the other colonies.

That is not a fact. The Bill says nothing to that effect, yet this was said by a gentleman who was criticising my accuracy very strongly. Nobody can be quite accurate in dealing with these questions, because they are so intricate; but here you have an example of a gentleman who would pride himself on his accuracy, and my inaccuracy, absolutely falling into an error as to the powers of the Parliament.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What have we to do with what was said by a gentleman in another place?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I am only explaining some of the fallacies which exist in regard to the Bill. Mr. Hackett objects to having fallacies pointed out. The particular fallacy to which I have referred is generally entertained, and it requires to be corrected. Probably all members have a copy of the Act, and if they will turn to Clause 103 they will find what is said about rates. The clause says:

Nothing in this Constitution shall render unlawful any rate for the carriage of goods upon a railway the property of a State if the rate is deemed by the Inter-State Commission to be necessary for the development of the territory of the State, and if the rate applies equally to goods within the State, and to goods passing into the State from other States.

Take an arbitrary case. It is thought that if in Victoria they had a rate of one penny per ton on coal, which is a mere arbitrary figure, we should also be compelled to have a rate of a penny per ton in West Australia, but that is an absolute fallacy. The Inter-State Commission can fix the rate in this colony quite independently of any mineral rate, or any other rate in any other colony, the only effect of this proviso being that if a mineral, say coal, were to come into this colony from New South Wales, it would have to be carried at the same rate as our own coal. That is the extent to which the Inter-State Commission can interfere with railway rates.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That means that we cannot protect anything in our own colony.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: What the hon. gentleman says is correct. We cannot put preferential rates on goods in our own colony, and it is for us to see how far that is going to hurt us. I do not want to misrepresent the thing in the slightest degree. There are gentlemen outside this House who are under the impression, and have stated so in public, that we should have to go to the Federal Government to obtain their permission if we wanted to build railways; but there is nothing whatever in the Bill itself to that effect. It is an invention of the brain of that gentleman of whom I spoke,

and of other gentlemen who care to repeat the assertion.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I asked that gentleman about the statement, and he made a very reasonable explanation. Had you got someone to make the charge in another place, it could have been answered, but you make it here where it cannot be answered.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I refrain from mentioning any gentleman, but speak of gentlemen at large. The hon. member may know whom I mean, and for certain reasons, with which I do not wish to trouble the House, I think he probably does. At any rate, the fact remains that this statement has been made on a public platform, and it is not accurate. It is necessary to correct it, and I may go further and say the statement is one which the Press refuses to correct when the opportunity is afforded them of doing so. Nobody knows that better than Mr. Hackett.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You would not take any notice of that gentleman's explanation, and you have not even asked for it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: There is another point upon which newspapers, and even private individuals, are repeatedly leading the colony astray, and it is this, that in dealing with the financial question they repeatedly quote from the proceedings of the various conventions; they quote remarks of undoubted authorities upon financial questions, and entirely omit to point out that for the greater part those remarks were based upon a financial scheme entirely different to that provided by the present Bill. The financial scheme provided by the Bill then under discussion was one whereby the surplus, after providing for all the expenses of the Commonwealth, was to be distributed upon a *per capita* basis.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: No, no.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member may say "No, no," but I verified that view by reading through the report of the debate.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Give us the dates when the provision you refer to was made?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I shall be very pleased to furnish Mr. Hackett with the dates, but it would take too

long to quote from the *Hansard* debates this evening.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : The *per capita* idea was exploded long before those statements were made.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : I can only refer members to *Hansard*, from which they can satisfy themselves.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : You yourself can refer to *Hansard*.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : I have not an opportunity of referring to *Hansard*, but members can satisfy themselves or not, as they think fit.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : They require more to satisfy them than you do.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : Such may possibly be the case, and that is a point I am not prepared to argue, but printing and English are sufficient to satisfy me as a rule.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : Not dates.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : The present scheme entirely reverses the position.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : No, it does not. Why do you keep repeating that ?

HON. A. P. MATHESON : Because it is my opinion. I do not quite gather what the hon. member contradicts. Does he say our contribution of the expense is not on a *per capita* basis ?

HON. J. W. HACKETT : On the reverse.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : He maintains they are not on a *per capita* basis, but I refer the hon. member to the Bill.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : You know very well.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : You are misunderstanding one another.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : The clause says : —

The proportion of the State, according to the number of its people.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : Go on ; I will not interrupt you again.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : It will be a good thing if you do not, for I shall get on quicker. The hon. member has collapsed (retired). A great deal of objection to this colony going into the Federal Union has arisen from the fact that there is no distinct provision for a railway between here and the other colonies, and it has been pointed out in addition that, if a clause existed which rendered it compulsory for any State to allow a necessary railway to be built, the danger that might exist at present would not have

existed. I want to refer members to the proceedings that took place here in August, 1897, when we were debating the original Enabling Bill. I moved on that occasion an amendment which would have exactly met the point. A clause of the Bill defines the powers of the Federal Parliament with respect to railway construction or extension in any State with the consent of that State. I moved that the following words be inserted at the end of paragraph 34, Clause 52 :

Or without the consent of any state when, in the opinion of Parliament, it is desirable for the welfare of the Commonwealth that any railway should be constructed or extended.

I pointed out at the time the absolute necessity of such a clause, if the Federal Government were to have any power whatever ; but the matter was taken up by the Minister of Mines, who said it would be futile to attempt to carry the amendment, and hon. members, as usual, voted against me. Part of the trouble which now arises in connection with the Commonwealth Bill would have been avoided if we had been allowed to debate the different clauses freely when the Bill was before us. We were told that it was absolutely unnecessary and undesirable to direct our attention to anything but the main principles of the Bill. That was what Mr. Wittenoom said, and I took exception to his statement at the time. I said :

He could not agree with the Minister of Mines that it was desirable that loopholes should be left open for all sorts of suggestions. It seemed to him that the Government proposed to do what they had proposed to do several months ago when the delegates went to Adelaide. They went there without any idea whatever as to what they were going to propose or to discuss. They were simply prepared to shape their views, as far as the public could judge, on the views of other people.

I venture to submit to the House that this is exactly what happened, and the result is the position in which we find ourselves to-day. The other colonies are all on the point of adopting the Federal Constitution, which must inevitably be the Federal Constitution of Australia, but which I freely admit is in many respects not the best constitution we could have obtained, and the question which will have to come before the electors is whether they are prepared to take it as it is. If any reasonable opportunity had

been given for debating the Bill and dealing with the points, this colony would not have been in its present position. In regard to the question of the finances of the colony, my figures have been extensively criticised, and I want to explain to members how these figures were arrived at. First of all I want to make one thing absolutely clear. It is impossible to say that any figures are right, or that any figures are wrong. All you can possibly do is to take a complete set of figures for any part you like, and having done so, you can see how they will work out if you follow the lines of the Commonwealth Bill. Members will understand what I mean by that. For the purpose of my exposition of the position the colony may be in (because that is all it amounts to, for you cannot get anything more accurate than that), I have taken the current year ending 31st December, 1898. Through the Federal League I have been able to have these figures circulated, and they have been distributed amongst members, so that members can follow them. The total revenue to the 31st December, 1898, was £2,604,943. From that you deduct for the Federal Government, Postal Department, etc., gross receipts, £204,037, and also the total amount of the Customs which were collected in that year, namely, £924,883. That means that you have to deduct £1,128,920 from the total revenue, leaving a balance in the hands of the Treasurer of the Western Australian Government of £1,476,023. That would remain in the hands of the Treasurer in any case. The Customs receipts have been dealt with separately. They amounted to £924,883, as I have already explained, and, if you are going to treat the question fairly, you will have to make a diminution for the loss of the intercolonial duties, which I have estimated at a quarter of the total, the sum being £231,221. I will explain immediately how I arrive at that figure, because naturally this is one of the most debatable of the figures of the whole calculation. You have to add to that deduction the cost of collection £33,171, which makes a total deduction of £264,392, and leaves the Customs Revenue which the Federal Government may reasonably expect to collect on this basis of £660,491, £165,123, and

the West Australian Government will take the balance, namely, three-fourths, amounting to £495,368.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: If there is not enough, they can take more than the quarter, can they not?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: They cannot take more than a quarter from the Customs. If they require more they have to put on another tax, such as a land tax, an income tax, or any other tax suitable throughout the country.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: A dividend tax.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Or a dividend tax, or any tax they like, but they cannot take more than one-fourth of the Customs for ten years from the Constitution of the Commonwealth, or thereafter as long as the Parliament does not alter it. That is the Braddon clause. Now the Federal accounts in Western Australia will stand like this: They have to credit, as I have shown already, a quarter of the Customs, namely £165,123, and they have to credit Revenue, Post Offices, etc., £204,036. Then you have set out what it costs to run the various departments in this colony, and, as I have pointed out to you, the departments need not be paid for at any greater cost than that existing in the first place. We have already deducted the cost of collecting the Customs and Excise. Then you have the cost of the Post Offices, etc., £267,108. The cost of defence on the basis of a number of years is £23,859. Quarantine I have estimated at £1,000; Lights and Beacons I estimate at £3,500. It is impossible to get accurate figures in regard to Lights and Beacons, because the cost of these things is mixed up with other figures, but I am satisfied that £3,500 will be a fair amount. I have taken the figures from the Estimates, and hon. members can obtain the various items.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The West Australian Estimates?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Then we have the Mint, that cost in the year I am taking £8,015; this year the Mint cost a good deal more; but I am taking one set of figures, I have to stick to those figures. Then there are Admiralty Surveys, £1,471, and I have estimated the cost of the Federal Government outside of these departments at 3s. per head.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: How do you arrive at that figure?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I arrive at it in this way. All the authorities in the other colonies have set the cost of the Federal Government, outside of the existing departments, down at 1s. 6d. per head. I endeavoured to find out how they made that figure up, and I find that the only thing that was left out was the interest on the loan that would have to be raised to purchase the various public buildings, and improve the Federal State, and various other contingencies. To provide for that I doubled the £300,000, and I think hon. members will admit that that is a liberal provision to make. My amount is 1s. 6d. more than the amount which has been arrived at by people who have studied the question more than I have, but I wanted to be on the right side and to safeguard myself.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How is that calculated on our population?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: We only pay so much pro rata of the population. We have to take the total population of Australia, and the total cost of the Federal Government is divided amongst the States, and the amount is split at so much per head. This is one of the points on which we gain so enormously in regard to Federation. We have a small population and we get all the privileges that the other states get with their large populations.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Which is the very objection urged in New South Wales against the acceptance of federation.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member is perfectly correct. Now I come back to the figures in reference to the Federal Revenue of Western Australia. The revenue would amount to £369,159, and the expenditure to £330,172, which will leave a balance to be returned to the Western Australian Government of £38,987. This is the point on which anti-federalists and the newspapers the *Morning Herald* and the *West Australian*—say I am wrong, but I refer hon. gentlemen to the Bill and to the figures, which can be verified from the Government returns.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: By your own calculation you are £250,000 short.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I thought the hon. member would have understood

from the figures which I have placed before him. There will be a loss from the intercolonial customs, and the amount spent by the Federal Government in the colony for the purpose of conducting the existing departments. The result is that the Western Australian Government revenue is left at £2,010,378. The first objection raised to that is this: people say the Treasurer cannot possibly carry on the business of the State on that amount, and we are told that extra taxes will have to be imposed for the purpose of carrying on the Government. People who submit that proposition are oblivious of the fact that at the present moment the Government are working, and have been working for the last six months, on the basis of exactly that revenue. Our expenditure has not exceeded £2,000,000 per annum; that is an absolute fact.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Do you want it to remain at that.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: There is nothing on which the Government are more to be congratulated than that the lavish waste of two years ago has been stopped.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What about public works?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The public works are sufficient for the colony.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: For ever?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Not for ever, but there will be an ample margin for necessary public works being carried out on a proper scale. The falling revenue has undoubtedly led to very much greater care being exercised in the expenditure of late.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We are using greater care now without joining the Federal Parliament.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Yes, we are doing it now, and I say the people who object to our joining the Federation because they say we shall not have enough income are absolutely oblivious of the fact that we are now satisfied with an income of £2,000,000 per annum, and, in these circumstances, if you take these figures as a reasonable estimate of what you may expect under Federation, there is no necessity whatever for anybody to ask what new taxes are going to be imposed, as the existing sources of revenue will be ample. I want to explain how I arrive at the one quarter of the Customs

revenue as being the amount we may reasonably expect to lose through inter-colonial free trade. There again I have taken the absolute figures accessible to any member. If any hon. member wishes to turn the figures up, he will find them in the Customs Report for last year, and he will find there certain articles, spirits, tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, opium, pepper, electro-plate, snuff, spice, coffee, beer, ginger, raisins, dates, currants, cocoanuts, and sparkling wines, which are all of them undoubtedly imported from abroad.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Not raisins.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: All imported raisins, I should say, come from abroad.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: From South Australia.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The quality of raisins imported from Mildura would not satisfy the persons who import them here.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Oh, yes.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Well, raisins are only a minor matter.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: There are a lot of other things.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not think so. In dealing with these articles spirits are put down at the capital value of £104,344. Spirits pay duty to the amount of £204,983; that is nearly double the capital value. The value of tobacco is £98,435, and the duty £132,100, which is again largely in excess of the total value, and is so on through the whole list. I have taken a number of these articles which I certainly believe were undoubtedly of foreign extraction, and their capital value amounts to £454,536, and these articles pay duty to the amount of £62,950. To arrive at the proportion of customs duty paid on the balance I naturally deducted the capital value and the duty from the total capital value and duty set out in the return. The total imports are valued at £5,241,965, and the total duty at £924,883, so I deducted the capital value £794,971 from the gross sum, and that left me with dutiable articles imported into the colony of £4,446,994 paying duty to the amount of £450,417. That works out about 10½ per cent on the average, and you can only strike an average in this sort of calculation. The total colonial imports set out amount to £2,276,965. At this point I want to say

that when I interviewed the Collector of Customs on the question of colonial imports, he pointed out that the returns of the goods imported into the colony were very unreliable, as a very much larger quantity of goods were imported from Europe, and transhipped to this colony from Melbourne and Sydney, than are ever put into the return. People who clear goods at the customs will not take the trouble to ascertain the country from which these goods come, and the goods are put down as imported from Melbourne or Sydney as the case may be. This £2,276,965 is in excess of the importations from other colonies. Taking the average duty at 10½ per cent, it will be found that it works out at £230,542. I hope hon. members will thoroughly understand that I do not for an instant say that these are the actual figures that will be received by the Federal Government. I merely say they show what the Federal Government would have received if the Federal Government had been in operation and collecting our revenues last year. There is one other point on which a great deal of misunderstanding prevails; people think that the supporters of federation are anxious that the Federal Enabling Bill shall be placed before the people of the colony before they have been sufficiently educated on the question of federation. Speaking for myself, I can only say I have never heard a supporter of federation who was animated by any desire of that sort. What we desire is that Parliament shall pass an Enabling Bill this session. The Enabling Bill will obviously provide that the Commonwealth Bill—and the two Bills are perfectly distinct—shall be put before the people at some later date for their approval or refusal.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Make it five years.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is a matter to deal with when we consider the Enabling Bill. I notice that people—and it is done even on the Press—mix up the Enabling Bill with the Commonwealth Bill. What we wish to come before Parliament immediately is, as I say, the Enabling Bill, enabling the Government of the colony to put the Commonwealth Bill before the electors as soon as the time that is set out in that Enabling Bill arrives. That time will

obviously form the subject of debate. That is all we wish. We desire that the matter shall be threshed out in Parliament, and that an Enabling Bill shall be passed which shall exactly define the position. Our reason is that if, through any cause, this Parliament were to be dissolved prior to the passing of that Enabling Bill, it would be essential to call Parliament together again at a later date to pass the Enabling Bill before the Commonwealth Bill could be submitted to the people. We want a Bill passed as soon as possible in order that there may be no doubt in the minds of the people that the Commonwealth Bill will be eventually submitted to them, and this is a point upon which I regret to say the majority of the electors of the colony have been left in doubt up to the present moment.

At 6.18 p.m. the PRESIDENT left the Chair.

At 7.30 p.m. the PRESIDENT resumed the Chair.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I desire to say a few words on the Address-in-Reply, and to express my views in regard to one or two important matters contained in the Governor's Speech, and in so doing I propose to be as brief as possible. So far as the Address itself is concerned, it is a very lengthy one and contains some important matters, and a long record of works that have been carried out by the Works Department of this colony. Some of these works are useful, and will be of benefit to the country, and other works will be the reverse. In reference to the first paragraph of the Speech, I agree with what is therein set forth as to the position of the colony. I think the position of the colony is thoroughly sound, but I cannot say that I think the affairs of the colony are entirely satisfactory, and I do not think I should consider them so until our expenditure comes within our income, and we have not yet arrived at that happy period. One of the most important matters mentioned in the Speech is the subject of federation, which is one of those questions that has been agitating the colonies—particularly the other colonies—for some considerable time. The paragraph in question advo-

cates delay in submitting the Federal Enabling Bill to the people of the colony. With that view I certainly agree; at the same time I think the Bill should be submitted to the people for them to say "yes" or "no." But, in saying that, I think there ought to be no undue haste in the submission of the Bill. Before an important measure like this is submitted to the people it should be fully discussed in Parliament, and the people outside should be educated upon the question as much as possible. Federation is one of those matters if once entered into we cannot get out of; we are tied practically for ever to the Federal Parliament, whether for weal or woe for this colony. To-night we had a very able address, in my opinion, from Mr. Matheson, and I am sure we all appreciated the trouble he went to in explaining the position he took up in regard to Federation, and the figures he submitted to us. Whether we agree with those figures, or not, is a matter for our personal opinion, but we appreciate the trouble and labour which Mr. Matheson has been put to in placing the figures and matters before the House. I think speeches like Mr. Matheson's, and those who take the opposite view, are modes of educating, not only the people of the colony, but this House, in arriving at a wise decision on the question. I may say I was somewhat surprised at the date on which the Government propose to submit this important question to the people. The paragraph in the Governor's Speech says: "The Commonwealth Bill, as amended at the conference of Premiers held in Melbourne, in February last, has been forwarded to every elector in the colony, and so soon as it has been accepted by all the other colonies of Australia will be submitted for your consideration. Ministers are of opinion that the Bill, as now framed, is far less favourable to Western Australia than to any of the other colonies, and this is freely admitted by all the leaders of the movement in the other colonies, and by all who have given the financial clauses any close consideration." That seems to me to be putting the subject off for too great a distance. It looks to me as if, at the present time, three of the colonies of Australia will federate, and Queensland and Tasmania have a chance of joining,

although one of these colonies may stand out. I think the people of this colony should consider this matter, but a paragraph such as that in the Governor's Speech might put off the submission of the Bill to the people for ever, and I do not think that should be so. I am of opinion that a Bill, to refer the question to the people, might be passed this session, provided that the Enabling Bill gave a fair and reasonable opportunity, and plenty of time, for the people to see what they are voting on. I suppose there would be no objection to a lengthy period being mentioned in the Enabling Bill, in which to submit this important measure to the people, but if there is any technical difficulty in submitting the measure in that form, then I prefer the Enabling Bill being deferred for some time. I do not think, at the present juncture—and I say it with all due deference—that the majority of members of Parliament, and the people of the colony at large, sufficiently understand this important question. The Speech says that the Commonwealth Bill has been circulated to every elector. I presume the documents circulated were similar to those which Mr. Matheson showed us to-night, with Boan Bros. advertisement on the back. I got two or three of those sent to me—certainly I had a copy of the Bill before—but, when a document is sent out like this one was, those who receive it look on it as an advertisement, and throw it into the waste-paper basket. When an important measure like this has to be submitted to the electors, it should be submitted in a more dignified manner, so that the attention of the electors is drawn to what they are expected to read. It is suggested that the Federal Enabling Bill should be placed before the people, when the other colonies have agreed to it, and I am surprised, especially when I find that at the meeting of Premiers in Melbourne, in February last, it was agreed by all the Premiers, including Sir John Forrest, that after the Bill had been approved of by New South Wales, it should be submitted by the Governments of the various colonies for the approval of the electors. That seems somewhat inconsistent with the statement in the Speech, which sets forth clearly that the Enabling Bill shall not be submitted at once. If the Premier considers that he made a mistake,

and that he overlooked important provisions of the Bill, which would affect the welfare of the colony, he is justified, on the grounds of expediency, and in the best interests of this colony, to back down a bit. But it seems inconsistent, reading the agreement entered into at the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne, that such a paragraph as that contained in the Speech should have been submitted to Parliament. It has been said that if we do not join in the federation at once we shall not be admitted on such favourable terms as appear in the Bill. I think that is purely a matter of opinion, and I think the probabilities are that this colony will be admitted upon just as good terms at a later period, and if worse terms are offered us, no doubt we shall be able to agree to those terms. All of us believe in federation, and, hope that it will come about some day; still, we should not at this juncture be carried away by sentiment, and federation is really one of those questions upon which sentiment can be readily worked up. But we must look at the business aspect of the question, and from a business point of view we might delay the submission of this question for a considerable time, so that the whole of the people of the colony can ascertain what the effects of joining the federation will mean to us, and when the electors have to say "yes" or "no," they will be able to give an answer, which ever way it goes, that will be to the true interests of this colony. And if we join the federation at a period when the colonists have somewhat understood the Enabling Bill, then the people will have joined with their eyes open, and after thinking the matter over; whereas, at the present time the matter may be rushed. One of the most pleasing paragraphs in the Speech is No. 3, dealing with the gold-mining industry. There is no doubt the yield for the past 12 months, as the paragraph says, has been beyond our most sanguine expectations. It is also pleasing to know that our prospects are such, that in the future even the big yield of the present time will be greatly increased. It is hard to know from the outlook to-day what the possibilities of the gold output will be, considering that the goldfields were only discovered a few years ago and the output of gold has reached the top

of the tree. The Coolgardie Exhibition seemed to me to be somewhat premature, and although the promoters of that exhibition worked hard with the best of motives, I question if that exhibition did the good that was anticipated. The colony has too small a population, and the exhibition was held too far from the centres of population to attract the crowd which would have made the exhibition a success. I think it would have been better in the interests of the colony if the exhibition had been held in Perth or Fremantle; not that more people would have visited the colony then, but more residents of the colony would have had an opportunity of seeing the exhibition. I am glad that certain of the exhibits at the exhibition are to go to the Paris Exhibition, and I think that will tend to the benefit of the colony, because an exhibition like the one to be held in Paris will be attended by thousands. Although Western Australia is prominently known all over the globe, still an exhibit like the one proposed to be sent to the Paris Exhibition will tend to do us a great deal of good and to show what our resources really are. I notice the Collie coalfields are progressing with gratifying results, but from what I can read it cannot be honestly said that at the present time the coal is a first-class coal, or equal to Newcastle coal. I understand that most of the collieries are in the hands of private individuals, and I hope the Government will let the private individuals alone. I trust that as the coal is worked deeper and further developed that it will be found equal to the Newcastle coal. Reference is made in paragraph 7 to the Helena River reservoir, which is part of the Coolgardie Water Scheme. I have ever thought that the Coolgardie Water Scheme would be one of the most disastrous speculations that the Government have ever entered into, and, judging from what I can read in the newspapers there is trouble at almost the inception of the work, and this is one of the many contingencies that may arise. Mr. Matheson drew attention to the fact that this water scheme was to supply the railways with water, and I think that is the only redeeming feature in the whole scheme; but I doubt if ever the water will reach Coolgardie. I hope it will, but with contingencies like the Mun-

daring dam trouble, I do not think it ever will.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: They have got a bottom now.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I am glad of it. I do not wish the dam any disaster at all. I am simply expressing my opinions, and I say that whether the work goes on or not, I do not want any work in the colony to turn out disastrously; therefore I wish the work every success, but I have my ideas about it. Reference is made in the Speech to the harbour works at Fremantle, and I had thought that the scheme as laid down by the Engineer-in-Chief would be sufficient to admit steamers at all times of the day and night; but it seems that the scheme was not sufficient; and I see by the paragraph that it is proposed to expend further money in improving this harbour.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is part of the original scheme.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I did not know that. I was under the impression that the proposal in the Governor's Speech was an addenda to the original scheme. I concluded from the newspapers that the Premier had gone to Fremantle and promised an extension of the harbour works, the extension being suggested by one of the agents of the large steamship companies who was visiting the place, and that the Premier had promised to commit the colony to £100,000 without consulting Parliament.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Was that in the Albany paper?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I saw it in one of the metropolitan papers. Whether the amount now proposed will be sufficient to make the Fremantle Harbour Works what we are all are desirous of seeing, as I do not wish to see disaster fall on these works any more than I do on the Coolgardie Water Scheme, still I think we ought to know, or have some idea, when the expenditure is going to cease, or how much these harbour works are going to cost. It seems to me that the Government, backed up no doubt by a majority in both Houses, are prepared to expend any amount of money upon the Fremantle Harbour, but I say you can have a thing at too great a price.

HON. D. M. MCKAY: It will be a gigantic success.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I am glad to hear the hon. member say so. I do not wish the Fremantle Harbour Works any harm. I hope they will be a great success. I come to the next paragraph in reference to Albany, which is in the province that I represent, and I find the works there for the improvement of the harbour are trumpery in the extreme, and tinkering. Here is an important harbour which is to be tinkered with by building jetties. The paragraph says: "At Albany a new approach (capable of carrying a locomotive) is being made to the present Town Jetty; the present head will be strengthened, and also lengthened about 240 feet, thus greatly facilitating the loading and unloading of vessels." The Director of Public Works to whom representations were made with reference to the harbour works at Albany, sent down three sets of plans for the consideration of the people of the town, and the people wrote back stating which scheme they suggested should be carried out, and the one which they approved of. The Director of Public Works again wrote, stating that the people could not have the plan which had been selected by the people, carried out, and the people of Albany had to take the plan suggested by the Works Department or nothing. The Albany people thought it was best to take the plan suggested or they might get nothing. This work will, to a certain extent, increase the shipping facilities which are referred to in the Speech, but in a trumpery manner. I think when money is so lavishly spent on another harbour in the colony, the harbour at Albany should have some little consideration, and works carried out commensurate with the importance of the place. But jetties are to be erected which will disfigure the port and the work is anything but satisfactory to the residents of the place. I observe that the Mint is completed, and I am afraid it will be one of our "white elephants," though I hope not. The mints in the other colonies have always been an expensive luxury; for they probably do not pay the expenditure out of the income, and if interest is charged on the cost of the establishment and the capital involved, there is really a serious loss.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: They mint at a penny or twopence an ounce, I think.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I think it is very moderate, and I do not know what it is here.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: One shilling and twopence.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I think we shall have a loss here similar to that sustained in like institutions in the other colonies. I notice from paragraph 19 that important measures will be submitted to Parliament, and I am pleased to see some of them referred to. Amongst others, measures for conciliation boards, for industrial disputes, trades unions, and public service. And there is a Bankruptcy Bill. Last year we had a Bankruptcy Bill, which I did not like, and never will like, because it was drafted—

HON. R. S. HAYNES: On bad stock.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: It was not very good stock. I have heard a complaint about the matter, and when the subject was before the House last year I suggested that there should be a new Bankruptcy Act this session.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The new Act works very well.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I have heard that it does not.

A MEMBER: It is a splendid Act for lawyers.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I have heard complaints about the Act, and now an amendment is proposed, but I do not know whether it is in reference to the present Act or the old one.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I think the object is to appoint official assignees.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: At any rate, the bankruptcy laws in the colony for many years past have been exceedingly unsatisfactory, and it would be to the advantage of the colony at large if a comprehensive Act were drafted.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: By the Parliamentary draftsman?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I do not know who is responsible for the drafting.

A MEMBER: The Bill introduced before was interfered with after the draftsman had prepared it.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I think that if a Bill were introduced, and the work consolidated, it would be for the welfare of the community. I see that a proposal is made for building railways, amongst them being a line from Menzies to

Leonora, a line from Coolgardie to Norseman, and also the Bonnie Vale line.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: And the Goomalling line.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Yes, but that is referred to in a subsequent part of the Speech. I do not see how the House can consistently vote for those lines in face of the amendment to the Address-in-Reply last session, a portion of the amendment being as follows:—

It would be unwise at the present time, directly or indirectly, to increase the indebtedness of the colony by raising further loans, or doing anything that would necessitate so doing until we have at least exhausted the present loan authorisation.

Our present authorisations are not exhausted, and the colony is not at the present juncture in a position to borrow further money. I think that if loans were placed on the London market at the present time they could not be floated satisfactorily; but, whether they could or not, we have the fact staring us in the face that we wind up the financial year with a deficit of over a quarter of a million.

HON. R. T. BURGESS: Not on this year.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It does not matter whether it is on this year or any other year.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: At any rate, that is the deficiency. I believe it is over a quarter of a million altogether, and with that deficit staring us in the face we cannot consistently, bearing in mind the amendment carried last session, support the lines in question. I am not saying anything against the lines themselves, which may be deserving of the greatest support, but what I urge is that we are not in a position to build them, and we cannot consistently vote for them until the finances of the colony are in a more satisfactory condition and our present authorisations are spent. One of the lines referred to is that from Coolgardie to Norseman, which was proposed last session. The construction of the line would be a grievous mistake, and if a line were built, it should start in the first instance from Norseman to Esperance. If the line is built as proposed, there will, as soon as it reaches Norseman, be great agitation with a view of extending it to the coast. Undoubtedly Esperance is the natural port for those goldfields, and

it will ultimately be the seaport for them. I do not know that I intend to say anything more. When these measures crop up I shall exercise my rights as a member of the House in voting on them, and I cannot consistently support any of these railways, in face of the amendment passed last session, however much I approve of them.

HON. F. T. CROWDER (South-East Province): Mr. President, the Speech with which His Excellency opened Parliament, made up, as it mostly is, of ancient history, still contains very many important and debatable questions, chief amongst them being the matter referred to in paragraph 2—federation. Before speaking on this important question, I desire to say a few words in regard to the position I have taken up in relation to the Bill. It has been openly said, both inside Parliament and outside, that, seeing that I was a delegate to the Federal Convention, my conduct is, to speak of it in the lightest way, anything but honourable, as I immediately came back and opposed the Bill as far as Western Australia is concerned. At the time this question was first mooted in the House, I had always opposed federation so far as Western Australia was concerned; but when the subject of electing delegates to the Convention came up, I stated that, although opposed to federation, I thought it would be bad policy if the Parliament of the colony did not accept the opportunity of sending delegates to the Convention in order that they might supervise the Bill that would be drawn, which, if it did not meet their present requirements, would allow them to come in when they were prepared to enter. Had there been one iota of feeling that a delegate should be forced to support the Bill, whether he found it was in the interests of Western Australia or not to do so, I for one should not have accepted the position of a delegate. This question of federation is the greatest that has ever been placed before the Western Australian Parliament, its importance consisting in the fact that we are asked to pass a Bill that would bind us for all time. If we join, and in the future find that federation destroys all the best interests of the people, and the people's property, in Western Australia, there will be no draw-

ing back from it. Therefore, it demands the most intense consideration on the part of every person in this colony. I was very pleased to hear paragraph 2 of the Governor's Speech read. I know, as we all do, that the Premier, Sir John Forrest, is an ardent federalist, desiring above all things that if possible Western Australia shall federate with the other Australian colonies, and I know how hard he has worked with this end in view, yet I always felt convinced that a time would come when Sir John, in going into the financial aspect of the case, would have to pause before he rushed the matter forward, because if there is anything in the world that he loves, it is Western Australia and the people of Western Australia. It is his desire, and has been all through—no matter what faults he may have committed, in attempting to do it—to further the interests of the colony in which he was born; and although he is twitted with breaking what people call faith, at this hour, inasmuch as he is not carrying out his promise made in Melbourne, that on the Bill being passed in New South Wales, he would submit it to Western Australia; yet I say, all the more honour to him, when he finds that circumstances have altered, and he will not rush this colony into what he considers would be its ruin.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: What circumstances have altered in the last six months?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I will tell you by and by, for you cannot have it all at once. It is not my intention this evening to weary the members of the House by going into elaborate figures and calculations. I placed them before my constituents months ago. I shall stand by those figures, for I am not in the same position as another gentleman who quotes figures, and two or three times a month puts forth fresh ones. I am, I say, prepared to stand by the figures I quote, which are altogether different from those of the gentleman to whom I allude, and in dealing with this great question, for it is indeed a great question, I ask the voters of the colony to apply to it the ordinary tests of every-day life.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: But you will not submit it to them.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Many persons in discussing this question put aside

everything except the sentimental idea. Sentiment is all very well in its place, but it will not feed people when they are poverty stricken. We would be a miserable people indeed if we had no sentiment in our composition at all. We all have a certain amount of it, and most of the acts of life are to a great extent guided by that sentimental feeling, but, as ordinary intelligent people, we do not allow sentiment to step over the bound where it would ruin us. We, in the Australian colonies, for instance, mostly have English blood in us, and we look upon England as the mother country. We all have a desire—at any rate, the business portion of the community—to deal with English merchants as far as we can, and this we do to a certain extent, but when other nations step in, and show us, as they have done of late, that they can produce an article, equally good as an English article, at half the price, where does sentiment come in? We know very well that, if we carry sentiment to the bitter end, Great Britain will not support us and our children in the long run. The population of Western Australia is divided into two classes—one consisting of those who are earnestly endeavouring to acquire all the facts they possibly can in regard to this great question, so that they may be able to give a conscientious vote, and the other consisting of those who will listen to nothing, and have no desire to know anything at all about the Bill, but are determined to vote for federation. Among the latter class, I put the inhabitants of the goldfields, as a rule. I say it with no disrespect to those inhabitants, because blood in all cases is thicker than water, and I maintain that the inhabitants of the goldfields have not been long enough in Western Australia to look upon this colony as their home. From conversation I have had with many of them, I find that the question with them in regard to federation is not whether it will benefit Western Australia, but they have an idea that it will wipe out the present Government. It seems to be an insane idea on their part that federation will give them a different Government. I maintain that in no part of the world have any Government in 30 years helped their population on the goldfields as the present Government have helped the

population on our goldfields in four or five years.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: We have given them too much.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: In fact the settled people who have borne the heat and burden of the day have to a great extent been hurt by the over-anxiousness of the present Government to give the goldfields population everything they require, the Government having, indeed, gone out of their way to chase them with money for hospitals, railways, and everything else, until a little while back, when a slump came. Simply because the Government could not go on as they started, there seems to be this intense hatred of them. The people living on the goldfields are not in the position occupied by the inhabitants in the settled parts of the colony. Mr. Matheson this evening, when speaking in regard to the clearing of land for the cultivation of roots, said his objection to it was that it meant that people would take up ground and work it for all it was worth, and after five or six years would pack up their tents and clear. I think there is a greater danger of nugget catchers on the goldfields leaving, because the man who takes up ground and cultivates it has his house, his carts, his implements, and everything else, and it is not so easy for him to leave as for the inhabitants of the goldfields to do so. So far as Western Australia is concerned, federation would simply mean the killing of all small industries, and the building up of huge monopolies, which would not be in Western Australia, but in the other colonies. It is all very well for people to say West Australia has no industries, but those who make that assertion must go about blind. Industries are springing up all over Western Australia, and to my knowledge dozens have come into existence during the last six months. These industries are flourishing, but it is utterly impossible to think for one moment that they would be able to compete with industries built up in Victoria and paid for by the people through heavy taxation and heavy bonuses. To-day the whole of the industries of Victoria are built up to such an extent that they are able to compete with the outside world, and what chances have the small industries in Western Australia to compete with them?

None whatever. You may just as well expect a man with no capital to compete against a person who has ten thousand pounds at his back. Federation would simply mean that sooner or later the industries here would disappear; and the great question we have to ask ourselves is whether it is not better for us to feed thousands of people in this colony, than to send our money away to the other colonies, to people whose wives and families may live in ease and comfort. Any sensible man looking at it in that light will say it is better to keep the people and feed them. The most important point, and the one which I think will stop people from voting for this Bill, is the financial aspect of the case. It would be easy for me, but I do not wish to tire you, to prove up to the hilt what I am going to say. I have no hesitation in asserting that, so far as I can gather, the Government of this colony would, five years after federation, barely have sufficient revenue to pay the interest on their present loans. If that be so, in what way are we going to develop the enormous amount of country we have at the present day and the vast resources yet untouched? I think that what has made many and many a man who desires federation, as we all do, turn back from it, is the impossibility of seeing how we are going to govern Western Australia under the federal constitution. It is all very well for Mr. Matheson to publish figures to prove his case. I see from a pamphlet he has issued to-day that he thinks this colony will save one-fourth by intercolonial freetrade, but I differ from him, and in a few words I will try to make myself understood. At the present day Victoria is competing with foreign countries in supplying us with almost everything we wish, with the exception of kerosene and a few other things. Victoria to-day pays the same duty as England and America, and yet she can compete against them. Victoria, under federation, with intercolonial freetrade, would have the benefit of a duty of 30 per cent. on foreign goods. Where do we get our goods from? We get them from Victoria. In going through the whole list of things upon which taxation is raised at the present day, I find that one can pick out very few articles that will not be manufactured in the other

colonies and sent here. If that be so, where will our income from customs go to?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: You will get the goods cheaper.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: That will not give you money to develop the country.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It will.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: If I have ten shillings in my pocket, how will the Government get the benefit of that money?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Food is cheapest in the South Sea Islands.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Take two of the largest items from which the Government derive their income: spirits and wine. At the present day we pay sixteen shillings per gallon on spirits imported, and no doubt the excise duty on spirits under federation will not be eight shillings at the outside.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Why not?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Because it will not.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Why not?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Those who are supplying spirits and wines will have the duty fixed up all right. The spirit turned out in Victoria and South Australia at the present day is not equal to that in this colony. The people here are bound to buy in the cheapest market, and at the present moment we are paying something like £250,000 a year on wine, the duty being six shillings a gallon. Wine from the Australian colonies, which is quite equal to, if not better than anything we can import from abroad, will come here free under federation. The proceeds from these items at the present day are what the Government depend on for the governing and development of this colony; and if we adopt federation, I fail to see where they are going to derive more than sufficient to pay the interest on their present loans. It is said they can borrow money to develop the country, but is it likely that those who are prepared to lend money will lend it to a colony when it is proved that the colony cannot pay the interest on the money already borrowed? We must look the thing fairly and squarely in the face, and, having done so myself, I cannot possibly see how we in West

Australia—at any rate for many years to come—can enter federation. Some people say “give us a railway line,” and that sort of thing, “and then we will federate.” The transcontinental railway, as far as I am concerned, will make no difference as to whether Western Australia shall federate or not.

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

HON. F. T. CROWDER: In taking the trouble to look up the figures in connection with the matter, I find that in 1897 a Mr. Walter Griffiths made an offer to build a transcontinental railway from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie, and the manager of the South Australian railways reported upon it. The gauge was 3ft. 6in., whilst the cost of the undertaking was estimated at four millions. That line was only to go as far as Kalgoorlie; but if a transcontinental railway is to be of any use for defence purposes, it must be on a broad gauge, so that the trains can travel at a good speed, and it would have to be built from Port Augusta to Fremantle, or some other spot on the coast, which would mean an expenditure of at least something like ten millions. Moreover, the Australian colonies would have to spend another seven or eight millions of money to put their own railways on a proper gauge. A railway line from Port Augusta to Fremantle would not pay for axle grease, to say nothing of working expenses and interest.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: In New South Wales they have a wide gauge.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Queensland has a narrow gauge, has it not?

A MEMBER: Yes.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I unhesitatingly assert that Western Australia is not ripe for federation. I earnestly desire federation, but not at any price, and we have to remember in relation to this Bill that we are dealing with a subject that will not only affect ourselves and our children, but our children's children, and we are either making or ruining Western Australia. Although Western Australia is, in one sense, an old country, it practically is new, for we can only date it from the inception of responsible Government seven or eight years ago. Since that period Western Australia has made wonderful strides. It is indeed marvellous when we look around and see what we

have accomplished, and we have a perfect right to look ahead and judge that we shall make the same bounds in the future as in the past. Therefore, I say leave Western Australia alone for 10 or 20 years, and allow her to work out her own destiny, and in 20 years she will be in such a position that the other colonies will be only too glad to receive her into federation. Then we shall be in a position with our wealth to buy the rest of Australia.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: In what way have the circumstances changed since the Premier signed the agreement in Victoria?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Now I come to paragraph 4 of the Address, dealing with the establishment of public batteries. To my mind I consider the expenditure of money on these batteries a very good investment indeed. I see it is proposed to expend further money in the erection of batteries, and so long as the Government have the money let them by all means put up batteries, because I look upon the establishment of batteries in the different centres as a sort of bonus to the working miner, to open up the country. At the same time I would also hint that, wherever batteries are erected, as far as possible the management should be taken out of the hands of the Government. Where there is a roads board or a municipality, these bodies should be put in charge of the batteries. The Government cannot expect a battery to be shut up if it cannot be worked continuously. In regard to the Coolgardie Exhibition, I am sure I have no wish whatever to say anything that would deteriorate from the success of that exhibition. I only hope the holding of that exhibition will benefit, not only the goldfields, but the colony at large. I look on the exhibition in this light: that if it is going to cost three or four thousand pounds, that amount would not hurt Western Australia, but there are rumours that the Government are likely to be called upon to pay fifteen or twenty thousand pounds for the exhibition, which I think is too much, and if the Government have to pay that amount we shall be paying too much for our whistle. The Government ought not to have entered into any agreement with the exhibition authorities without the sanction of Parliament. In South Australia, when an

exhibition was thought of the Government were approached by the leading commercial men of Adelaide, and asked to find the money for the exhibition. The commercial men offered, if there was any loss over the exhibition, to make it up. That was a fair offer, and the Government accepted it. Eventually it turned out that there was no loss on the exhibition; but in our instance the inhabitants of Coolgardie asked the Government to find the money, and they said, "We will not be responsible for any loss." If the Government are to be called on to pay fifteen or twenty thousand pounds, I reckon they are going to get into hot water over it. I come now to the question of the Collie Coalfields, and I may say that I have gone into the development of these fields very carefully. Had it not been that the Bill for the construction of the railway to the Collie was thrown out some years ago, the Collie Coalfields would not have been developed to-day.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: How is that?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Because the Bill for the construction of the railway was brought in without knowing whether there was coal there or not, and the field had to be developed before the House would authorise the construction of the line. I want to dwell further, for a little while, on these Collie coalfields. This speculation or business transaction is a payable thing, and does not require to be spoon-fed at the hands of the Government; yet I regret to say that the Government of the colony are spoon-feeding the Collie coalfields at a heavy loss to the colony. When first the Collie coalfield was started, the Government charged 1½d. per train-mile per ton to carry the coal, but pressure was brought to bear on the Government, and the price was reduced to a half-penny per ton per train-mile, which means a serious loss to Western Australia. New South Wales is the home of collieries in Australia, and never from the inception have the Government of New South Wales found wagons for the use of the colliery owners; wagons have to be found by the owners themselves. At the present time the colliery owners of Newcastle own 70,000 wagons, which means a capital of three-quarters of a million of money. The coalfields of New South Wales are

within 30 miles of the seaboard, and yet the price per ton the New South Wales Government receive for the carriage of coal is far in excess of what the Collie coal proprietors pay here.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: They have big coal shoots in New South Wales, you know.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: My figures have been worked out on a railway report dated June, 1898. It is there laid down that the working expenses of the Western Australian railway lines come to 4s. 4d. per train-mile. This amount compares favourably with the working expenses of the railways of the other colonies, although it is not the lowest cost, still there is nothing to find fault with? The cost per train-mile in Victoria is 3s. 4d., in New South Wales 4s., Queensland 3s., South Australia, 3s. 6d., Tasmania 3s. 3d., New Zealand 4s. 6d., and Western Australia 4s. 4d. Taking the distance from Collie to Kalgoorlie at 500 miles, a ton of coal carried that distance at a half-penny per ton per mile would come to 20s. 8d. An engine, as a rule, only draws 20 trucks, it cannot draw more than that over the Collie line, but to give the Government the best of the calculation I have reckoned 30 trucks per train load, which means 150 tons of coal, at 20s. 8d., amounting to £155. The cost of hauling to Kalgoorlie, 500 miles, at 4s. 4d., is £108 6s. 8d., and the cost from Kalgoorlie to the Collie, say at 2s. 2d. would be £50 3s. 4d. I have taken half the cost, because an engine can draw twice as many trucks when empty. Those two amounts which I have given bring the total to £162 10s., which gives a loss, on 150 tons of coal carried, of £7 10s., this is without counting the interest on capital. It takes a week for one truck to travel from Collie fields to Kalgoorlie and back; therefore, it would take 216 trucks, carrying five tons each, to deliver 50,000 tons of coal in a year at Kalgoorlie. The capital value of 260 trucks, with interest, would amount to £23,400. I want to know why the whole of the inhabitants of this colony are being taxed to assist one industry.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Because it is in the Bunbury district.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The people are being taxed to fill the pockets of a private individual, who, at the very least, is making £1,000 a month, yet he is not

satisfied with that, and only the other day he waited on the Government to ask that an extra railway line be constructed to Bunbury, and that a jetty be erected there from which to ship the coal. I in no way blame any private individual who can get the Government to make huge concessions to him, still I blame the Government for allowing the whole colony to be taxed for the purpose of making a huge fortune for a private person. I say that the Government have gone out of their way to help this industry. We know the Government have expended thousands of pounds in developing the Collie coal-fields: they have put in private lines to the collieries, for which the companies have not been charged a penny, and I believe the Government simply get a royalty of sixpence per ton. While the companies pay the Government sixpence per ton as royalty, the Government are losing one and sixpence per ton in carrying the coal.

HON. D. McKAY: What about the indirect gain to the colony.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: There is no indirect gain.

HON. D. McKAY: There is an indirect gain in the employment of men.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: If a commercial undertaking cannot stand without assistance, then we do not want it. There is a duty of eight shillings in favour of the carriage of the local article between Fremantle and the Collie, and that should be quite sufficient encouragement for any industry. I now come to paragraph 7, dealing with the Helena River reservoir. I fully expected when this paragraph was read out to have heard some explanation given of the trouble that has been experienced up to the present time in finding a bottom to the dam. I have heard it said to-night that a bottom has now been found. Well, I think it is the third time a bottom has been found.

HON. A. D. KIDSON: This is the last one.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Considering the great trouble experienced, and the large amount of money expended on the dam, I think it was the duty of the Government to acquaint us thoroughly with the trouble which has arisen at the start. I opposed the Coolgardie water scheme, yet the majority carried the day, and I was perfectly satisfied to submit to the rule of the majority.

HON. A. B. KIDSON : Unwillingly.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : Very unwillingly, because what I said I think has come true. I regret to see any large work break down from unforeseen circumstances. From what I can gather at the present moment, from enquiries I have made, there seems to have been some neglect somewhere. The bottom of the dam should have been thoroughly tested, but the Government, or the engineer who was in charge of the work, was satisfied with one bore which was put down. The engineer in charge of the work has said that it was not his fault, that a sum of money was placed on the Estimates to find a true bottom to the dam, but that the amount was struck off the Estimates. If that is true, somebody else is to blame. I trust the news that some members have received to-night, that a bottom has at last been reached, is true; but it appears to me to be a monstrous thing to go and spend money without first making sure that a bottom could be found to the dam. Paragraph 8 deals with the Fremantle harbour works, which means that more money is to go into the sea. I do not object to the money being spent there, but I would like to know, although I cannot find out, what is going to be the ultimate end of the Fremantle harbour works.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : The work is much under the estimate now.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : We have been led to believe all along that the harbour works which have been carried out up to the present would be sufficient to enable mail steamers to come in and go out when they liked, but this is not so. There is not a skipper who comes into the port at the present time who does not point out the great danger there is in coming into the harbour. Half of the old bar still remains. Nothing is said about removing the other half of the bar, but we are told that a narrow basin is to be dredged out. This narrow basin is to be dredged out, because the bottom is only sand, but the Government know that the removal of the remaining portion of the bar will be a nasty job. If a ship strikes on this bar, it will take more money to get back the name of the colony than it took to make the harbour. Paragraph 9 deals with Bunbury, which is again to have a lot of money spent in the matter of jetties and

the extension of the Mole. I agree, to a certain extent, with what fell from Mr. Matheson to-night, as to what benefit the Mole would be to Bunbury. I do not think the expenditure of the money will give the amount of benefit which it is expected to do—in fact it is doubtful whether the Mole will be able to stand the strain put upon it. Already it has gone down once.

HON. A. B. KIDSON : Settled, not gone down.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : If the Government had expected the Mole to settle, they ought to have put a sum of money on the Estimates to deal with the work. All this money will be expended at Bunbury, but we shall find that what is promised for Albany will only be a promise. Albany, up to the present, has been treated in anything but a fair way by the Government. As Mr. S. J. Haynes has said, the jetty which is to be put in there will disfigure the harbour. The Government, some time ago, sent down three separate plans to Albany, so that the people could decide which set of plans they would like carried out. The people decided on a reclamation scheme, but six months afterwards the Director of Public Works said that this scheme could not be carried out, and that two of the sets of plans were simply sent down to Albany for the people to look at. I think that was an insult. The Government know that ships cannot now go alongside the jetty. The other day the "Kalgoortie" was stuck all day, and previously two ships could not get berthing accommodation. It appears that the Government, in their centralisation policy, are neglecting all other ports of the colony for the purpose of making Fremantle. Paragraph 11 deals with railways, and I may point out another matter upon which I must find fault with the Government. When the Government come down to Parliament with a bill for the construction of a railway the cost of the line should be known. What is the use of asking money for the construction of a railway line, when the Government know that the amount of money asked for will be only sufficient to do half the work, because a railway line is no good without a water supply, and I think the water supply should be calculated as a portion of the cost of the line. We shall be asked to build new railway

lines, and I am sure that if any member will take the trouble to ascertain, he will find that no provision is made in the Bills for supplying these railways with water. I now come to paragraph 15, dealing with the smelting works, and the remarks which I made in regard to the Collie coalfields apply directly to this question, which I intend to go into fully, because I contend that it is necessary that this House should be placed in possession of the whole of the facts of the case. These smelting works are owned by a private company. Of course a private company has a right to invest its capital in this colony, but a private company has no right to expect the Government to tax the people to pay dividends to its shareholders. The Speech says—"My Government have assisted the company in every possible way, feeling assured that the establishment of such work is a great advantage to the country." I have no objection to the Government assisting a company in every legitimate way, but they have no right to go further. A company should be prepared to stand on its own bottom, and compete with other institutions of the same sort. A little time ago a large deputation waited on the Premier to endeavour to get the Railway Department to carry ore from the fields to the smelting works at a farthing a ton, which means 2s. 1d. per mile for one truck of ore. That would be a loss of 2s. 3d. on each truck, as the cost per train mile, as I have already pointed out, is 4s. 4d. It is often argued that it is cheaper to bring the ore down at a farthing per mile than to haul the trucks down empty, seeing that the trucks have to carry goods to Kalgoorlie and come back empty again. Let us take for instance 200 tons of ore. To carry that amount it requires 40 wagons, which means two trains, and the cost to the Railway would be 8s. 8d. per mile. One engine will return the 40 trucks, which means 4s. 4d. per mile, so that there is absolutely a direct loss of 4s. 4d. If this concession of a farthing per mile is granted—which I trust never will be—it will mean that this Government are granting a concession to fill the pockets of one or two people in the colony. There is Mr. Vanzetti's company, the smelting works at Fremantle, and the smelting works in South Australia which

will benefit. It would be much better if the smelting works were centred on the goldfields. Seeing that attempts are being made to lower the rates on the railways, the question arises, to my mind, whether Parliament should not speak out as to the way in which the railways should be managed. Up to the present time the railways have been run on business principles, and they have been made to pay; we do not desire to see our railway system get into a financial mess. To show the state the railways in the other colonies have got into through the interference of Governments, I will quote a few figures. A return of the Victorian railways showed a deficit of £454,426 for the year ending 30th June, 1898; South Australia, for the year ending June, 1898, showed a deficit of £80,769; Queensland, for the same year, a loss of £214,420; and New South Wales, after paying interest, had a profit of £31,236. Our railways in Western Australia showed a profit for the seven years ending June, 1895, of £30,358; for the year ending June, 1896, a profit of £177,352; for the year ending 1897, a profit of £207,796; and for the year ending June, 1898, a profit of £63,139; or a total profit for four years of £479,145. I maintain that the system of railways in this colony should be run so as not to make a heavy loss, but to pay the working expenses and interest on capital. They should be so run that the whole concern shall be an asset. Nobody can tell me that the Victorian railways are an asset with a loss of £454,000 a year. If we are not careful in this colony we shall find, as things are shaping at the present moment, that our railways will degenerate as those in the other colonies have done, simply through Parliamentary interference, and it is for the people, and especially members of Parliament, to consider whether the time has not arrived for the railways in Western Australia to be put under a Commissioner. Now I come to paragraph 17, which deals with the building of fresh lines. This House has already spoken out pretty strongly on that point. If I remember aright, we stated that we were not prepared to have any fresh lines until the present loan authorisations had been disposed of. Yet the Government this year have suggested the building of exactly the same lines, and, to get over

the difficulty of reappropriation, they have not mentioned it at all. It may be very cunning, but I do not think the course of procedure is a proper one.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: You trace the master hand of the editor in that.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: When Parliament are asked to consider the building of lines, the least the Government can do is to show when, how, and where they expect to obtain money. We have authorisations already, and money has been reappropriated far in excess of what we can borrow for the next two or three years; therefore, I fail to see how the Government are going to find money to build the proposed lines. I am not speaking of the merits of some of the lines, which, for all I know, will pay; but, upon the principle laid down in the House last year, and seeing that surrounding circumstances have not altered, except for the worse, I do not intend to go back from the vote I then gave, and more especially I shall oppose the building of the line to Norseman. Some years ago, the goldfields papers advocated the building of a line from Esperance to Coolgardie, and fought very hard for it, but people in West Australia were not quite so dull as they were supposed to be. The people on the goldfields could not obtain that railway at any price, and then they adopted this course: they said "Remain quiet, and we will pull the Government's leg. We will tell them that all we require is a line from Coolgardie to Norseman, and when we once get it there we will have it the rest of the distance, for they cannot stop us." I am not saying this on hearsay, for I have seen dozens of leading articles in their papers, which I can produce, setting forth the same reason, and saying, "get it to Norseman." As far as I am concerned, they will not get it to Norseman. Regarding the Bonnie Vale line, it is, I believe, six miles in length. If gold-mining will not pay when a person has only to go six miles to a station, those engaged in it had better give it up and go in for growing wheat. I shall pass over most of the other lines. One item I notice is paragraph 23, and I hope that the rest of the Speech is more truthful than that. The paragraph says:—

I am glad to be able to inform you that H.M.S. "Penguin" is at the present time

engaged surveying the coast of this colony between the North-West Cape and Cos-sack.

I saw her through my telescope this morning in the harbour, so she is not doing anything of the sort.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: That was written a long time ago.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I have been travelling for the last two or three weeks. There is one other point I have not touched upon, and I should not do so had it not been referred to by Mr. R. S. Haynes, the member representing the Central province of the colony. It has reference to the Auditor General's report, and, in speaking on the subject, my hon. friend used language which I am sure he did not intend the House to take in its full meaning. In alluding to what was said by the Auditor General, he stated that the action of the Department was dishonourable.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Which Department?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The Railway Department.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I did not say the Railway Department.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: You did.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I did use the word "railways," but it was pointed out that works were referred to.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: You said the action of the Government was dishonourable; you may have done it in the heat of the moment.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I read from the Auditor General's report.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I want members to bear in mind that the Auditor General's report is one that Parliament should deal with thoroughly every year. The Auditor General is responsible only to Parliament. The gentleman at present holding the position is an old and valued officer of Parliament, who carries out the Audit Act up to the very hilt, and reckons that is all he has to do; but I beg to differ from him, and maintain that besides carrying out the Audit Act, it is his place, when he finds the Act is not up to the requirements of the present day, to ask Parliament to alter it, in order to make it so. Mr. R. S. Haynes referred to the statement headed "Purchasing goods from

other than contractors." The Auditor General says :—

In consequence of the objectionable practice of certain Departments purchasing from other than Government Contractors, it appears to me that thousands of pounds have been needlessly expended; indeed, I may say wasted, and, as an illustration, I now enumerate items in support of the contention as under :—

Those items are thoroughly misleading. If the Auditor-General wanted to allow Parliament to know as much as he did himself, and to be able to judge, he should first of all have shown them the cost of those items, with railway carriage added, delivered at the place where they were bought, and also the contractor's price, because contractors contract with the Government to supply them with different things delivered in Perth and Fremantle. The Auditor General lays down a hard and fast line, and says that the Government must buy from their contractors. Bricks have been supplied in Perth at 30s. a thousand. Ten thousand bricks were wanted in Cue, where they can be bought at that price, but the railway carriage of 10,000 would cost up there £4 a thousand. Would any sensible man say the Auditor General is right in sticking to the Audit Act, and asserting that bricks should be bought from contractors down here at 30s. which would ultimately cost us £4 in Cue, when we can buy them up there at 30s. ?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: That is not the case he referred to.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I have the return laid on the table, and I say that it is the case. I assert that instead of there being a loss of £5,395, as shown here, there has absolutely been a gain of about £1,800 to the Government. It is nonsensical to say that if you have half-a-dozen men working, and you want a pound of nails, you are to let those men sit down while you ring up the Government contractor to supply you with those nails. I will give you another instance. A pipe burst in the street, and the nearest plumber was sent for to mend it. Would members say that the water should have been allowed to run to waste until the Government plumber could be obtained to do the necessary repairs ? The amount to which I have referred is made up of charges incurred in cases of that kind, and I repeat that

the report is most misleading. Parliament has not the power, as it should have, of seeing what the cost of these goods would be with the railway carriage added. Now we come to this supplementary report, in which reference is made to the sale of a class "G" engine, No. 132, to the Gill-McDowell Jarrah Company, Limited; and in this regard I maintain that the Auditor General is right as to the Audit Act, and the Railway Department are right according to commonsense business principles.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: There is no objection to the Railway Department, but the Government.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I am referring to the Railway Department. The Auditor General contends that this engine was paid for out of a loan authorised by Parliament some years ago, and that when the engine was sold, the money should have been put into the Consolidated Revenue to be reappropriated. If a person in his private business did that sort of thing, he would go to gaol, and very quickly, too.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Oh, no.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: We will say that out of a million loan passed two or three years ago, a line was built between Perth and Fremantle with 40-pound rails, these rails costing £100,000, and five or six years afterwards it was found that the rails were not strong enough, and the Government wanted to put down 60-pound rails. The 60-pound rails were bought at a cost of £150,000, and the Government had no further use for the old rails, so they sold them at £50,000. If the £50,000 be placed to the Consolidated Revenue, it is bolstering up the revenue, and worse than that, it is robbing the capital of the railway. The Treasury does not know where that £50,000 is, but the Premier, finding he has so much revenue, uses that revenue.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It is not revenue, but capital.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: When Parliament meet they are supposed to reappropriate that £50,000, and how are they to do it if it has been already spent ? If the Audit Act is right the Act commands a Government department to do that for which any private individual would be sent to gaol. The Auditor General should come to Parliament and point this out.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: What defence have you to what the Auditor General says on page 274.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It is the same case.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: No; it is a different case.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: As far as I can gather, the Act itself is not up to the working requirements of the day. In regard to the goods referred to by the Auditor General, of which I spoke just now, every care is taken that the contract price is not exceeded, and in most instances the goods are purchased at a less price than they can be supplied at by the contractor. In every instance where goods are bought from people other than contractors, a voucher is attached showing the contract price, and this is signed by the Engineer-in-Chief. The voucher from the buyer is attached, indicating the price paid, and that the goods were not obtained from a contractor, and the document then goes to the General Manager of Railways, and is approved by him before going to the Auditor General.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It is a pity they did not make you Auditor General instead of Mr. Spencer.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I would have been richer than I am to-day. In calling attention to these matters, the Auditor General should have gone further, and I ask Parliament to remedy the present state of affairs; because if the Act asks a department to commit what I call a felony, that Act is not a proper one. It is a nonsensical Act that asks a man to pay out of Loan into Consolidated Revenue what really belongs to the capital of his loan. It is never done in private life, and it ought not to be done in public. I do not think I need detain the House any longer.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: You have not told us yet what are the circumstances that have altered.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I have forgotten what the question was. I will tell you outside. (General laughter.)

HON. E. McLARTY (South-West Province): Mr. President, I have much pleasure in rising to support the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. After the long speeches that have been delivered this evening I should be trespassing upon the

patience of members if I were to deal with the Speech at any length. I agree with Mr. Haynes as to the first paragraph, which states that the financial position of the colony is satisfactory, notwithstanding the fact that we have a deficit, for I think that as the revenue is increasing, and we are living within our income, that deficit will soon disappear. As to the question of federation, we have heard so much on that subject, that it is needless for members to follow in the same track, and I do not intend to speak on it this evening, except to say that, having looked into the question pretty carefully, I am thoroughly opposed to this colony joining the federal movement at the present time. Without adducing a lot of arguments, I assert that I am satisfied Western Australia is not able to stand on equal terms in competition with the other colonies. I have been reported as having said I would vote for the measure going to the people, and I shall do so at the proper time, but that time will be when the people understand what they have to vote upon.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: When will that be?

HON. E. McLARTY: When the question has been before the country, and the people have some idea of what they are called upon to decide. At the present time five out of six of the general public of the colony have very little knowledge of the subject, and, if they were called upon to exercise their vote, they would not know what they were doing. The proper time to take a vote will be, as I say, when the people understand what they are doing. I shall not dwell upon the satisfactory result of the gold output, but I may say I shall not be surprised to hear that it has increased to any extent, and that we are not only the largest gold producers in Australia, but that we shall very soon be the largest producers in any part of the world. I will pass on to paragraph 6 of the Speech, which deals with the development of the Collie coal-fields. That development is most satisfactory, and I do not agree with the remarks made by Mr. Crowder, in regard to the action taken by the Government in this matter. The hon. member says a fortune has been made out of the industry, and that the enterprising gentleman who is working the mine he referred to is making a £1,000 a month.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: To my knowledge he was offered £50,000 only a fortnight ago, and refused it.

HON. E. McLARTY: If the hon. member had been in the same position and put his money into that coal mine in the face of the prejudice which existed against the coal all over the colony, and developed it in the way this gentleman has done—

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The Government took all the risk.

HON. E. McLARTY: I say the gentleman referred to took a good deal of risk, for there was no market, but a good deal of prejudice against the coal. The gentleman in question has done a great deal for the colony by the way in which he has brought the coal into favour, and I quite agree with the policy of the Government in helping to develop this great industry in the colony even at a small sacrifice. It is all very well now for people to say that Mr. Deakin is making a fortune, and has refused this, that, and the other. Possibly his turn has come now, and he can make money out of it, and I think he deserves to do so; for I contend that few men would have had the courage to go to the expense Mr. Deakin incurred to put the coal on the market in the successful way he has done. Mr. Stone says he is not satisfied that we have a good marketable coal, and I do not know when he will be, but we find the Government are using 600 tons a week with perfect satisfaction. They are using it for their engines, and I believe the drivers on many of the lines say they prefer it to Newcastle coal, although a little more may be required. Not only is the coal being used by the Government, but there is a demand for it outside the Government Departments altogether, and it is being used in smelting works and steamships. It has been used on several trips by a steamship running between here and Wyndham, and it has been proved to be fit for steam purposes. In the face of these facts I am perfectly satisfied that the coal is a good marketable article. I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the great development which has taken place, not only in the coal industry, but in every other industry in the colony, and I feel sure that the next twelve months will see such an advance in the prosperity of the

country as has not been witnessed before; a real substantial advance. With regard to the Bunbury harbour works, I find we have amateur engineers who can express opinions as to how the work should be done, and find fault with what has been accomplished, but it is well known that the money expended in Bunbury, up to the present time, has given most satisfactory results. It is also well known that when the breakwater was constructed the work was not completed, but only the first moiety, and that, when extended, it will give a very safe and commodious harbour for the large shipping trade that is being developed there.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Extended to what degree, a thousand feet?

HON. E. McLARTY: Possibly two or three thousand feet, but if two thousand feet will make it a good harbour, as Mr. Matheson has stated, surely an extension of one thousand feet will help the work on, and we may look forward to the time when the colony will be able to add another thousand feet. When it was proposed to erect a breakwater at Bunbury it was said that one vessel would enter and never go out again, but within the last few weeks, to my knowledge, as many as six vessels have been there waiting to be loaded, and I am informed on reliable authority that there is sufficient accommodation for at least twelve vessels in the harbour to take away the products of the country that we want to exchange for the gold of other countries. We want to send the natural products away and get their value in return. There can be no doubt the expenditure on Bunbury harbour has been fully justified and that further expenditure will also be justifiable. We have development there and a very large trade indeed. A great many men are employed, being engaged in coal mining and timber industries, and on the tin fields; and the port is the chief one from which the products of that locality must be shipped. It was argued here, when the improvement of Bunbury harbour was first mooted, that it would be better to send the timber by railway to Fremantle. Anyone who knows the price at which timber is being sold in London, must be aware that it would kill the timber industry to rail the timber. Bunbury is the natural port for the

export of timber, as well as for many other things. Only in to-day's paper I read that the revenue derived from the port of Bunbury for the past twelve months exceeded £14,000 and the trade at that port has only just begun to develop, so that I am sure that the return for the next year will exceed £20,000.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: What is the expenditure?

HON. E. McLARTY: You cannot get a return of £20,000 without spending some money.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: But it would not pay to spend £25,000 to earn £20,000.

HON. E. McLARTY: I am sure this work is of a reproductive character.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: But the expenditure may exceed the income.

HON. E. McLARTY: That no doubt has been the case on the goldfields in many instances. I may say that I am not in accord with the sentiments expressed by Mr. Stone in regard to the paragraph dealing with the railway proposals. Because this House threw out two lines last session, that is no reason why the House should refuse to pass those lines this session. The condition of the colony to-day is very different to what it was twelve months ago. The development of the fields is so great that if the railways were not justified last session, they may be now. I am not at the present time going to pledge myself to support these railways, but I shall wait until the railway bills are before the House, when we shall get full information about them. We shall then have something to guide us. We have already extended the railway from Kalgoorlie to Menzies, and let us enquire whether the expenditure on that extension was warranted, and whether the railway pays. If it does we may rest assured that a new line to Leonora will increase the revenue of that line.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A little while back the receipts from the Menzies line were £6,000 a month.

HON. E. McLARTY: That is very satisfactory. If there is anyone of these railways which should receive the attention of members it is the Leonora railway, and if good reasons can be shown, when the time comes for its consideration that the line will pay. I shall give the proposal my support. I am assured by those

capable of giving an opinion that the Leonora district is going to be a second Kalgoorlie; there are good mines there now. Bearing in mind the easy nature of the country over which the line is to be constructed, the cost to the country will not be great.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: In reference to the Bunbury harbour I may say that four vessels entered and two cleared out last year.

HON. E. McLARTY: That report is not correct. I have known six vessels to be in the harbour at one time lately. In regard to the Coolgardie-Norseman railway, I certainly shall oppose that, as I do not think it is required, and I look upon the proposal as the thin end of the wedge of a railway to Esperance. I think it would be better for the House to sanction the borrowing of a sum of money to recoup the people who have settled at Esperance, and to buy them out, rather than construct a line from Coolgardie to Esperance, as such a line would take all the trade from this part of the colony. The goldfields markets would be given away to the other colonies. I do not know anything about the Bonnie Vale line, and I cannot say whether there is any necessity for its construction or not. I shall want to know something about it before I agree to the proposal. I would ask members not to be led away by the speech made by Mr. Stone, in which he appealed to members to oppose these lines. Members should wait until the time comes, and then they will have an opportunity of considering whether it will be wise to pass the lines or not.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: You voted for the Norseman line last year.

HON. E. McLARTY: I opposed the survey of the line last year, as I considered the Government were not in a position to pay for the construction of that line. I notice among other things one great factor in the prosperity of the colony at the present time, and in the prosperity of the whole of Australia, although it has not been mentioned by any member yet. I refer to the increased price of wool. This I think will do as much to push the colony ahead as anything that could take place in the colony, and not only will it benefit this colony but the whole of Australia. In

regard to the interpretation which Mr. Matheson placed on the remarks made by Mr. R. S. Haynes in reference to the people on the goldfields, I think those remarks going abroad would have a bad effect, and cause a bad feeling to exist on the fields against the people in this part of the colony. I do not think Mr. R. S. Haynes intended exactly the construction placed on the words by Mr. Matheson. I agree with Mr. R. S. Haynes that the people on the goldfields who may vote for federation have very little to lose and can very easily clear out of the country ; but at the same time I do not agree, nor do I think it was intended to be conveyed that the people on the goldfields should not have the same right to vote as those people who were born in the colony.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : I did not say that at all.

HON. E. McLARTY : I mention this because I should not like it to go abroad that a statement was made in the House that people recently coming to the colony should not have the same rights as those people who were born here. I have little further to say. With regard to the Mint, to which exception has often been taken, I may say that if any country deserved a mint Western Australia did, as this is a great gold-producing colony, and I think the expense is justifiable. In paragraph 19 the question of a dividend tax is mentioned. I think there will be unanimity of opinion on that subject. It is quite time the country derived more benefit from the gold which is won here than it has gained in the past. I think this is an equitable way of raising money. If I remember rightly I saw the other day that one mine had made a profit of £60,000 in one month. That money is going out of the colony into the pockets of capitalists in England, and it is only fair that the country should receive some benefit. I think a dividend tax will add considerably to the revenue of the colony, and will not bear heavily on those who have to pay it. A dividend tax will have my hearty support. I was somewhat surprised to hear one member complain of the police force of the colony. That was the first time I ever heard the slightest complaint in reference to the police force. I have interests in other parts of the colony, and I may say that my idea is that the police force of the

colony are a credit to the country, and in all parts the police are doing their duty. I have heard good accounts of the police performing their duty in the far North, and therefore I was surprised to hear the complaint. As far as I know, if there is any cause for complaint, and it is brought under notice, the matter is soon rectified. The police officers should receive the credit which is due to them. I noticed that one member suggested that the people of the colony had lost faith in the Government. I cannot agree with that. I think the Government have the confidence of the people now as much as they ever had, and the Government are just as much deserving of that confidence. The result of the division in the Assembly last night proves what I say. As to the construction of new railways, if I thought that would increase the rates on the railways in other parts of the colony, I should vote against these new lines, because the charges on the railways at present are most exorbitant, although the railways are very well worked. The public are groaning under the heavy rates charged at the present time. The Railway Department seem to get at the public in every possible way. One iniquitous charge, which has lately been done away with, was a charge for shunting. A little time ago a gentleman in Perth sent me an account in reference to three trucks of chaff, and in that account there was a charge of 7s. 6d. for shunting. I do not think that was fair.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER : The Railway Department charge for loading and unloading trucks, too.

HON. E. McLARTY : As Mr. Dempster says, there is a charge for loading and unloading, and if a person sends his own men to load the trucks the department charge just the same. The stationmaster will tell you that it makes no difference. Then there is a charge for demurrage, which is an unfair one.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : That is altered, I believe.

HON. E. McLARTY : I am glad it is.

THE PRESIDENT : The hon. member is travelling a little wide of the question.

HON. E. McLARTY : I was only remarking that if the extension of railways as proposed in the Governor's Speech will increase the rate as now charged on the

railways, I am opposed to the construction of the lines.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member is right there, but he was going a little wide of the question.

HON. E. McLARTY: I am pleased to hear that the charge for demurrage has been altered. With these remarks I have pleasure in supporting the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

On the motion of the **HON. C. E. DEMPSTER**, the debate was adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.50 p.m., until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 5th July, 1899.

Papers presented—Question: Customs Facilities at Port Hedland—Address-in-Reply; General Debate, Fourth Day—Adjournment.

THE DEPUTY-SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the **COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS**: 1, By-laws of Coolgardie, Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, and Karrikatta Cemeteries; 2, By-laws of Cottesloe, North-East Coolgardie, Dundas, Kalgoorlie, and Yalgoo Roads Boards; 3, Regulations under Land Act, Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, Fishery Act, Home-steads Act, Insect Pests Amendment Act, and Stock Diseases Act.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—CUSTOMS FACILITIES AT PORT HEDLAND.

MR. KINGSMILL asked the Premier: 1. Whether there was a Customs officer at Port Hedland? 2. If so, what were

his duties? 3. Whether it was true that dutiable goods for Port Hedland had to be cleared in Cossack? 4. If so, why? 5. Whether he was aware that such procedure would entail great loss and inconvenience to and would retard the business of the inhabitants of Port Hedland and the Pilbarra goldfield?

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) replied: 1. A Customs officer was stationed there, but he was stricken with fever, and another officer is being despatched to take his place. 2. To protect the revenue. 3. Yes, or at some other warehousing port. 4. Because Port Hedland has not yet been made a warehousing port. 5. I am not aware. Before it could be made a warehousing port, expenditure on buildings would be necessary.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

GENERAL DEBATE—FOURTH DAY.

The amendment moved by Mr. Leake having been negatived on division at the last sitting, the debate was resumed on general topics in the Speech.

MR. QUINLAN (Toodyay): In rising to speak on the motion for adoption of the Address-in-Reply to his Excellency's Speech, I shall be echoing the sentiments of the House generally when I say that for length at least it was more than what was expected, and for matters of interest generally there are few items that are new to the House. I am pleased especially at the second paragraph, referring to the federation of Australia, because to my mind it is advisable that this question should be thoroughly threshed out before the country. Under the present terms offered to Western Australia, the Federation Bill is not at all suitable for this colony; therefore, I am glad of this expression in the second paragraph of the Speech, that it is proposed to await what may be termed a further investigation of this important subject. So far as Western Australia is concerned, a loss of revenue must result, a loss which has not yet been arrived at by anyone in Australia; and, therefore, I do not propose to offer to the House an opinion beyond this, that I consider we shall lose at least something more than a quarter of a million per annum. While realising the argument which has been so often raised, that this money would re-