

altering alleged state of things." No reply has yet been received to this cable.

QUESTION—DRY DOCK AT FREMANTLE, CONSTRUCTION.

MR. F. WILSON asked the Minister for Works, Whether it was the intention of the Government to commence the construction of a Dry Dock at Fremantle at an early date. If not, would private enterprise be permitted to undertake the work?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied :—The bulk of the funds originally voted for this purpose having been reappropriated, the Government intended to reinstate them in the next Loan Bill.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

THIRD DAY OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the motion for adoption of the Address-in-reply.

MR. J. EWING (South-West Mining): I do not think I should have risen to make any speech on the Address-in-reply had not innuendos been cast by members on the other side of the House as to the position which I occupy in my seat on the cross Opposition bench. I do not at this stage intend to offer any explanation beyond that contained in the few words that I shall have the honour of addressing to this House. But I will say, in passing, that I, as a member returned by a very large and very important constituency, refuse to take the slightest notice of newspaper innuendos or of any innuendos thrown from the other side of the House, challenging my position here. I say, farther, that I am prepared to take the responsibility of my actions, and to let others deal with me in the future if I cannot do right. So far as the policy of the Government is concerned, it is practically the policy which I advocated at the general elections.

A MEMBER: Walk over to this side, then.

MR. EWING: No; I will do nothing of the kind at the present time. So far as the policy is concerned, I will say that there is very little in it. I assure you that had the Ministry taken the speeches I delivered and the ideas I put forward during my election campaign, they would

have had a more progressive and more democratic programme to place before this House. Although it meets with my approval as far as it goes, it does not, in my opinion, go far enough. I am prepared to go a good deal farther, and I am very much surprised that the Government have not thought it necessary to go very much farther, in the direction of social legislation. I have the honour to represent a constituency of working men, and I think that very much is required in the way of social legislation, and that much more might be introduced. But my great objection to the policy of the Government is that it is not a progressive policy. If it were a progressive policy, I would be prepared to throw in my lot on the other side of the House; but I say, when there are works of great national importance in regard to which the country is awaiting developments, I, as the member for a district which demands a work that perhaps has had the misfortune to be brought too frequently under the notice of the public—no doubt hon. members know all about it—want to be satisfied as to how this work is going to be carried out. We are told that the financial position of the State is very bad at the present time, that for many years to come it will be practically impossible for the Government to carry out any works of magnitude.

A MEMBER: No.

MR. EWING: Whether this is so or not—and I trust with the interjector that it is not true—it has been pretty frequently stated. So far as I can see, there is not in the immediate future any chance of this work being carried out. We are told that the indebtedness of the State is something like £17,000,000, and that this represents £94 per head. That, of course, is right: it will be so when all the works authorised by the late Parliament have been taken in hand and duly carried out. Now, I take this stand, that if I, as a member of this honourable Chamber, can bring before it data proving that any work of national importance can be carried out, and will pay interest and sinking fund, and, over and above that, revenue, then I say that it is quite competent and right that this House should consider the advisability of immediately taking in hand that work

and carrying it out. This will, of course, increase the indebtedness per head; but I will say this before I go any further—and whatever else I may lack, I have the courage of my opinions, and anything I have said during my election campaign I am prepared to say on the floor of this House—I will say this, that I am in favour, absolutely and entirely, of the whole of the railway system and the whole of the public works in this State being kept in the hands of the Government if it is possible. If it is found impossible, then I say the members of this Chamber have to consider, and to consider at once, how these works are going to be carried out. If, I say, the Premier will tell me, when he replies to the speeches which have been given in this House on the Address-in-reply, how soon the Government are prepared to take in hand works of this character, we shall know where we are. But if he says that the Government are not prepared to take them in hand, and that the country for the next four or five years must stand still, that we must have stagnation in the State, I for one am not prepared to stand on the floor of this House and agree to a policy of that kind. I can assure you that rather than this should occur, I am prepared to advocate private enterprise. Now as for the newspapers of this State, I take very little notice of them, because as a public man I am perfectly satisfied to be criticised in every possible way, and if I do wrong I am prepared to take the responsibility of my action. I think I should be worse than a coward if I feared to give expression to what I have expressed as a public man. If, as I said before, the necessity for the conservation of the public funds of this State renders it absolutely impossible to carry out public works, then we must go in for private enterprise. I will ask hon. members not for a moment to misunderstand me when I say that I do not advocate private enterprise in any shape or form which will be detrimental to the interests of the State. The private enterprise that I advocate does not include the land-grant railway: it does not mean giving away the patrimony of the people as has hitherto been done. That is a most pernicious system, and would not have my support for a single instant. I believe there are plenty of private people who are willing to put

their money into large reproductive public works in this State. They are willing to do so if they are able to receive a fair and reasonable return for the money which they thus invest. In connection with private enterprise, hon. members will understand I would not for a moment give away what belongs to the people; I would see that their interests were conserved in every possible way; and in allowing the building of a railway or the carrying out of any other public work by private enterprise, I would see that there was a purchasing clause and that the Government were able to take over the work at any time it was convenient to them to do so. In this connection—I regret very much that I have to refer to it—I wish to say that I stand here as the member for the South-West Mining electorate. Hon. members will, I hope, all understand that. I trust that an opportunity will be found at an early date to alter the name, which I have no doubt is a very difficult one. I do not wish to be referred to in this House as the member for Collié, because I am no more the member for Collié than I am the member for Greenbushes or the member for Donnybrook.

A MEMBER: Say, member for the Collié railway.

MR. EWING: I shall come to that presently, and I have no doubt I shall have your support. In his speech on the Address-in-reply the member for Albany, when touching on one of the paragraphs of the Speech, expressed the opinion that the most important railway to be considered or taken in hand at this time was the Esperance railway. Of course he is entitled to his opinion, and I am entitled to mine. [MR. GARDINER: Hear, hear.] I congratulate the hon. member sincerely for the gentlemanly way in which he referred to the matter; and whatever divergencies of opinion we may have in time to come, whatever side of the House I may be on, I am perfectly satisfied that it will not make the slightest difference to me when we go outside the doors of this Chamber. Therefore I join issue here, though perhaps the present is not the time to bring data and statistics relating to this most important work before hon. members. I have no doubt that as time goes by and as these data are supplied, it will be found that in the

whole of the State of Western Australia there is no more pressing work than the building of the Collie-Goldfields railway line. I do not wish to address myself to this subject in any parochial spirit. I should think that I were unworthy to occupy a seat in this House if I did so. I look upon the question as a national question, and one which in that aspect must of course commend itself to members of this House. If I do advocate it rather more, perhaps, than hon. members who are in opposition to me think I should, they must believe—or at least I trust they will believe—that I am not advocating what would advance my own material interests, or the material interests of any section of this community. I am advocating what I truly and honestly believe is for the betterment and advancement of the whole State of Western Australia. I am perfectly satisfied to leave this matter in the hands of the Public Works Committee, which has been mentioned in the Governor's Speech. This Public Works Committee, of course, is an innovation as far as this State is concerned. I have had a very great deal of experience of Public Works Committees. Although I have never before had the honour to sit in a Legislative Chamber, I have watched very carefully the working of the Public Works Committee in New South Wales; and I will say that I should be sorry to think the Public Works Committee to be placed on the statute books of this State was going to cost as much as is the case in New South Wales. I believe that a Public Works Committee, if it is judiciously managed, is the right thing. Matters of such vital importance as the building of railways and the construction of large public works will come before this committee, and that is very desirable. I say without fear of contradiction, although no doubt I shall be contradicted, I am satisfied to leave the matter of the Collie railway in the hands of a Public Works Committee, for I am satisfied that they will, with the data provided for them, recommend the House to carry out this work. In passing I would say that I do not wish in any way to tread on the corns of hon. members who represent the goldfields. I trust we shall always be able to work hand in hand. If the goldfields members want

only a fair thing, if they can produce data and statistics to prove that their proposals are entitled to more attention than the proposal I bring forward, then of course the House will give them the first consideration. I would also say, as far as surveys are concerned, so long as the Government authorise the survey of the Collie-Goldfields line it matters not to me what other surveys they authorise. But I do object to the tone of the two deputations which waited on the Minister for Works, and not only asked him for the survey of a certain line for fifty miles from Coolgardie, which was to supply wood, but also inferred that they wanted the immediate construction of that line. I must congratulate the Minister on his answer, which was diplomatic, and which showed that he understood the circumstances. As regards the supply of firewood for the goldfields—perhaps I should have mentioned this before—I have on very reliable authority this piece of information, that in a very short time, some two or three years, there will be a very great scarcity of wood on the fields; and if this line is not built for fuel—

A MEMBER: Nonsense. Who is your authority?

MR. EWING: The hon. gentleman says "nonsense," but I have very good authority for this. What has struck me in the matter is the difference of opinion that exists between members from the goldfields with regard to it. Some of them will tell you that the wood will be cut out to a reasonable distance of Kalgoorlie in two years; others say, in fourteen years. Well, how is this supply to be kept going? It means that you have to build railways into the forests: you will have to denude the forests and alter the climatic conditions of the State, and I do not think these are too good now. To obviate this, I say not one mile of railway line should be put down for the cutting of the forests while this national industry of coal-mining is waiting for development. I say it is necessary and right that the coal-mining industry should be developed. Another question I should like to deal with very shortly is that of arbitration in labour disputes. In the constituency I have the honour to represent, it is a very necessary thing that arbitration should be enforced. While

complimenting the member for Subiaco on the speech he made the other day, I say that he did right when he asked the Ministry to introduce this Bill at once; and I am quite sure there will be no opposition to it in this House. It will be carried, and compulsory arbitration will be the order of the day. In the coal-mining constituency I represent to a certain extent, it is very necessary that there should be no cessation of work and that arbitration should be absolutely compulsory there.

A MEMBER: Or anywhere else.

MR. EWING: Or anywhere else. I can assure you that the trouble around us to-day is very serious. I trust it will soon be overcome, but at the same time it should be obviated in the future by compulsory arbitration, and allowing all sections of men, whether they work for the Government or not, to take advantage of the Arbitration Act. As to the apple question, so far as I am concerned I hail with delight the introduction of apples for the benefit of the community. It was only this morning that I found in my rack a letter conveying a resolution, passed by a progress committee in my constituency, asking me in every possible way to prevent or do what I could to prevent the carrying out of the policy which the Government have laid down. As far as I am concerned, I can assure you I would not for a moment entertain such a proposal. I believe the apples should come in; but the policy of caution the Government have indicated in one portion of the Speech should have been instituted in this direction. I regret very much the Government have rushed this matter. From the evening paper I notice that the regulations go through this afternoon. While being entirely in sympathy with the Government on the question, I am of opinion it would have been much better for the sake of a month, six weeks, or perhaps two months, to have a select committee of this House to go into the matter thoroughly, and report any danger that might occur from the importation of apples. I have no idea whether the codlin moth is here; I know the people require the apples; but it would have been much better if that process of caution which I see exercised on the Ministerial benches had been exercised in this particular case. However,

I trust that if the regulations are passed and the apples come in, every care will be taken to see that the codlin moth does not get here. I have been told by those who ought to know that it is almost impossible, or very difficult indeed, to see whether the codlin moth is present or not. I trust there will be nothing detrimental to the State from the course adopted; but I regret that such action has been taken so hastily, and I would have been much better pleased if a royal commission had sat, and had gone thoroughly into the matter.

MR. F. W. MOORHEAD: And report in 1906!

MR. EWING: I do not intend to detain the House any longer. I am perfectly prepared to give the Ministry a fair and reasonable support, and I cannot do otherwise; but I trust that when the Premier is addressing the House he will, as far as he can, disabuse my mind of what perhaps may be erroneous—that he has a policy of stagnation, of standing still altogether, in regard to public works. I hope he will let us see that this will be a progressive Ministry, and that the industries are going to be developed, for as far as I can see it will be impossible to populate this State if there is going to be any stagnation at all. If you want to reduce the indebtedness of the State, which is considerable at the present time, you must get population, and I want to know how population is coming here if railways are not built and people settled on the land. In reference to the Collie-Goldfields line, it is not merely a local question. I took the trouble to go through the district not very long ago, and I can assure you there is perhaps the best land in the State along the route of the railway; and, if the railway is built, a very short time indeed will elapse before the Government are repaid by the populating and taking-up of this land; so you will see we are not altogether selfish in advocating this scheme for the carriage of coal. When the matter comes before the House, of course I shall be prepared to deal with it as far as I can on statistics and data; but I believe that the members from the goldfields will find it their duty, and I trust their pleasure, to afford all the support they can to the scheme. I thank you most sincerely for the kind hearing you have

given me, and I trust that in time to come I may be able to take a different stand in the House from that which I take to-night.

MR. R. D. HUTCHINSON (Geraldton): Before referring to matters contained in His Excellency's Speech, I must state that at the recent election I pledged myself to give a full support to the then Premier (Mr. Throssell), a support, that is, to the policy foreshadowed by him when making his speech at Northam. I do not intend to follow the Governor's Speech through from start to finish, any more than members who have preceded me. I do not agree with members who have said there is nothing in it. It appears to me there is one thing shown in the Speech, and that is a great deal of good generalship. Every matter mentioned is such that it may be dealt with from almost any point of view, and in connection with any of them there appears to be a good line of retreat by which the Ministry can withdraw. There is at least one matter referred to in the Speech—the metropolitan water supply. During the last session the same question came up, and on that occasion I stated I believed the scheme was deserving of the support of every member of the House. I regret to find, as I have stated, that in the way the metropolitan water supply is mentioned here we have no indication whatever as to the lines on which that supply is to be furnished. We are not told whether it is the intention of the Government to provide the funds to obtain the water supply and administer the machinery necessary for providing that supply, or whether a Bill is to be passed into law providing for a metropolitan water supply board that will have power to raise the money, themselves; so that, whatever course may be followed by the Government, we cannot, until they bring forward the measure, deal with it in any reasonable or fair manner. The one or two matters that I intend to mainly touch upon are those that have been left out of the Governor's Speech, and one is a question that not only affects the district I represent, but the whole State more or less. That is the question of the Midland Railway Company. The matter has been a great source of trouble to this State for years, and it appears to be getting a greater

curse every day it goes on. For a long time past the whole of the people, I may say, in the Victoria district, and pretty well I think in the Murchison district too, have been longing to see this matter dealt with. I do not think that on any occasion people have tried to influence the Government to give a big price for the railway. We have always recognised it would be unfair to force the Government into a position by which they would give more than the railway and lands are worth; but often have we thought that some measures might be taken that would compel this company, or the official receiver of the at one time company, to deal with the lands in the manner intended by the original contract. This has not been done. I have no hesitation in saying the contract has never been fulfilled at all, and I believe I am justified in asserting that at the present time not only is the contract not being fulfilled, but the line is becoming dangerous. I believe it will be necessary for the Government before very long to make a close inspection of that line, and see whether it is safe for people to travel over. I think it is a well-known fact to most people that for two or three years past everything has been run as finely as it could possibly be; everything possible has been done to save a shilling here or a shilling there; and in the minds of most people the rolling-stock, the railway itself, and everything connected with the matter, are in a very bad condition. I am stating this to show that we do not consider the Government should have purchased this line at any price; but, on the other hand, we think, as I said just now, that some force should be brought to bear to compel the company to carry out their original contract in connection with the matter. This contract cannot have been carried out, I think, if the Premier was correctly reported in connection with an interview a few days ago. The Premier is reported to have said, regarding a speech at Geraldton, the Government did not intend to pay any such sum as had been mentioned by the Colonial Treasurer. He said, "It is far more likely that the Government will insist on the terms of the contract being carried out." I hope the Government will insist on that, and I much regret that some mention of the matter was not made in the Speech. It is not a small matter,