

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at half-past eight o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Friday, 2nd August, 1889.

Deepening of entrance to Princess Royal Harbor, and Purchase of a Dredge—Message (No. 4): Telegram from Secretary of State re Constitution Bill—Municipal Institutions Act, 1876, Amendment Bill: first reading—Re-appropriation Bill: second reading—Railways Act Amendment Bill: further consideration in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

DEEPENING OF PRINCESS ROYAL HARBOR AND PURCHASE OF A DREDGE.

MR. DE HAMEL: Sir, in rising to move the motion standing in the name of Sir Thomas Campbell, I desire to point out to the House that there need be no anxiety in the mind of members as to the financial aspect of the question—I mean as to the question of ways and means, in the event of the House agreeing to the motion; for the motion does not bind the House nor the Government to the absolute expenditure of any public money at the present moment. The House if it passes this resolution will merely affirm a principle, and that a principle in regard to which there can scarcely be any divergence of opinion,—the desirability of the Government immediately considering the question of the deepening the entrance to Princess Royal Harbor. How this is to be done is left simply and solely to the Government; it is a question solely for their consideration. We are, however, informed that the South Australian Government or the South Australian port authorities have a dredger now for sale which

it would be worth while for this Government to make some inquiries about with a view to its purchase. The Government is merely asked to make inquiries as to the selling price of this dredge, its present condition, its capabilities, so as to ascertain how suitable it may be for the purpose in view. If the answers to these inquiries are satisfactory, it might be the duty of the Government to see if they cannot purchase it, and to place upon the Estimates a sum sufficient for that purpose,—if the House came to the conclusion that it would be desirable for the Government to purchase it. This is not the first time that this question has been before the House; I have looked up the minutes on the subject, and I find that on the 29th of November, 1888, the then member for Albany, Sir Thomas Campbell, asked the Director of Public Works whether he could inform the House to what extent the soundings recently taken at the entrance to Princess Royal Harbor indicated a shoaling of the water in that locality; what steps he considered it necessary to take for making the harbor accessible to all vessels in any state of the tide, and what intention the Government had in regard to proceeding in the matter? The Director of Public Works replied as follows: "The soundings lately taken seem to give indications of shoaling at the entrance, more especially on the North side. To open a deep channel, 300ft. wide, would require dredging to the extent of about 89,000 cubic yards, which is estimated to cost £15,000, exclusive of the original outlay on the steam dredge. The Government has no funds at present to do anything in the matter, but I consider the dredging should be taken in hand at the earliest opportunity." That was the reply given by the Government on that occasion. Now, sir, I consider that this question of deepening and dredging the entrance to this harbor is a work of really national concern, and as such is a work that should be undertaken by the Government and paid for out of the public purse. But I cannot close my eyes to the fact that the estimated amount of the cost of this work is set down at £15,000.

MR. MARMION: £30,000. The dredge would cost £15,000, and the work of dredging another £15,000.

MR. DE HAMEL: I am now referring to the estimate given by the Director of Public Works as to the cost of dredging. He said it would cost £15,000 to do the necessary dredging; yet it has been published to the world by the W.A. Land Company that their estimate of the cost of dredging required is only £4,000. That is a considerably smaller sum than the Director's estimate; and it seems to me that the W.A. Land Company would not pledge their word to an amount for which they would not be prepared to do the work themselves. If so, it appears to me that the Government might arrange with the company to do the whole of this dredging, and thus save a sum of £11,000. I think that by the time the dredging is done—I hope so, at least—there will be established, with the concurrence of this House, a Harbor Trust Board for Albany; and I am sure we should then be only too glad to take over this dredge and pay the Government a certain amount of rent, by way of interest on the purchase money, for the use of it. The principle of the desirability of deepening the entrance to the harbor having been admitted by the Government, it is unnecessary for me to enter into any arguments in support of it. It is admitted by the Director of Public Works that the work of dredging the entrance is a work that should be taken in hand at the earliest opportunity; therefore I need not labor the point here. I will, therefore, simply move the resolution as it appears on the paper: "That in the opinion of this House the question of deepening the entrance to Princess Royal Harbor should receive the immediate consideration of the Government, with a view, if necessary, to entering upon negotiations with the South Australian port authorities for the purchase of an efficient dredge, such as the latter are alleged now to have on sale at a greatly reduced price."

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion just moved by the hon. member for Plantagenet. I think it was three years ago since I first addressed myself to this subject at a public meeting at Albany. I told my then constituents that the question of deepening and dredging the harbor was a most important question, in view of the greatly increasing tonnage of the steamers then building, and coming

into Albany. The House will recollect also that not only was that answer given by the Director of Public Works to which reference has been made by the hon. member for Plantagenet, but that this House has pledged itself by a resolution which I moved, and which the House agreed to, that in any future loan raised by the colony this question of the purchase of an ocean-going steam dredge shall be taken into consideration. This desirability of obtaining a dredge was agreed to principally because of the acknowledged necessity for deepening the entrance to Princess Royal Harbor, and also for other dredging required along the coast. The right policy for us to pursue when we have a magnificent harbor like that we possess at King George's Sound is to take care of it, and to see that it does not lose its good name. When we find it becoming blocked as it is now—there is not the slightest doubt about that—simply for the want of dredging, it is folly on our part not to do all we can to put it right, and to get as much revenue as we possibly can from it. There is some dispute, I believe, as to the exact extent of the silting and the available depth of water at present at one point over which steamers have to pass to enter the harbor; but so far as I can ascertain it is as low as 24ft. at low tide; and, as some members know, the Orient steamers when heavily laden as they generally are going Home, and some of the French steamers also, draw as much as 26ft. Consequently these steamers cannot come in. I was informed a short time ago by a gentleman who is agent for the French steamers that if they were only assured that they could safely come into Albany at all states of the tide they would make arrangements for calling there. I am told also that the new lines of steamers, which are being arranged for by Messrs. Dalgety, Blackwood, & Co., would call there if they were assured that they would find no difficulty in entering at all times, and the steps now proposed for dredging the entrance were carried out; but that until they are satisfied that they can come in at all states of the tide without bumping, they will not be able to do so. All this of course means a considerable loss to revenue. Members would be surprised at the large amount of money that these steamers spend when

they come in, and the large amount of revenue that the Government of the colony would get if all these steamers were to come in, as they would do if they were assured that there was no danger of grounding. I was informed the other day by a gentleman in business at Albany that the mere fact of a steamer coming in at night, instead of in the daytime, makes an appreciable difference in the cash receipts of the storekeepers there. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the passengers and the officers of these large steamers do spend an immense amount of money in the place; and if we could only ensure their always calling, the result to the revenue would be very considerable, to say nothing of keeping up the reputation of the place. We shall probably be informed by the Government that they have no money.

MR. A. FORREST: That's an old cry.

SIR T. COCKBURN - CAMPBELL: I know it is. It makes no difference. If the Government really wish this work to be carried out they will be able to find the means; there is not the slightest doubt about that. The position is this: so far as I can make out from what I have been told, and especially by a gentleman who was here recently, they have now in South Australia a steam dredge exactly of the kind that we require for dredging the entrance to this harbor, and for other work, such as deepening the entrance of the Swan, and doing what is wanted at Carnarvon and other Northern ports; and I am told that we could get this dredge from the South Australian harbor authorities for about £14,000, whereas if we had to buy that dredge new it would cost us £40,000 or £50,000; and the question is whether it is not desirable in the present state of things that the colony should make this very advantageous bargain that is now offered to it. That is really all that the House is now asked to consider.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): I was always under the impression until the last hon. member rose that this House was an assembly of practical men; but when we find members asking for impossibilities I am constrained to conclude that we are not all practical men. The hon. baronet who seconded this motion says he knows they will be told that the Government have

no money; yet he says the Government can find the money if it likes. Members know the financial position of the colony as well as the Government do; and I must say it appears to me that those who are making this proposition are putting the cart before the horse. If they would first show where the money is to come from, I could understand their putting forward such a resolution. If the House was engaged in discussing a loan, or we had a large surplus balance available, nothing would be more proper than this proposition, and I, myself, would give it my most cordial support, knowing as I do that I should have with me nearly every member of the House as to the desirability of obtaining a steam dredge, not only for use at Albany, but at other ports along our coast. That is a question that has been discussed in this House already, and it was agreed years ago that when the colony was in a position to purchase such a vessel it ought to be done. We all admit it would be a most advantageous thing for the colony if we had a sea-going dredge. The only question is that of ways and means. In the present position of affairs this proposal seems to me like an attempt to build what is called a castle in the air. What is the good of the House again affirming the desirability of the colony possessing a sea-going dredge when it is acknowledged on all hands? If those who bring forward this proposition will at the same time indicate where the money is to come from, I shall be very pleased to give it my support. My hon. friend the Director of Public Works will tell you what it would cost to purchase this dredge, and make it effective for our purposes, and to bring it over and to work it,—some £30,000 or £40,000, I believe. It cannot be argued for a moment that this is an item that ought to be charged to current revenue; therefore, it appears to me an impracticable motion at the present moment. I am not now going to make a financial statement as to the position of the colony; it will be my duty to do so probably a few months hence; but I may tell members this,—we shall have all our work cut out for us to provide ways and means. I do not think I need say any more. This question of a sea-going dredge has been discussed before, and it has been agreed that it may well be con-

sidered when we come to apportion our next loan; but to press the motion now is it seems to me, as I said before, simply putting the cart before the horse: and for the House to discuss such a motion as this at the present moment is simply a waste of time. It is, really.

MR. PARKER: I am sorry to hear the remarks that have just fallen from the Colonial Secretary. I cannot but think that it is a matter of great importance that we should do all we can to preserve the reputation of what is almost our only really good harbor, — the harbor at which those who visit Australia touch Australian soil for the first time, and where they last touch Australian soil on leaving it. I think it is very desirable that they should not receive an unfavorable impression of this important harbor. We all know that in consequence of the larger draught of water which the mail steamers now require, a portion of the entrance to this harbor wants deepening to ensure their coming in with safety. [The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Question.] The hon. gentleman says "Question." I understand many of these steamers draw 26ft. of water, while it is known that there is a pinnacle of sand, or something over which these steamers have to pass in entering the inner harbor, over which there is only 24ft. of water, or less than 24ft. at low tide. Consequently it is obvious, even to a non-nautical mind, that it would be impossible to take a vessel drawing 26ft. over a bank where there is only 24ft. of water. I may be wrong; but such is my impression. If I am in error, perhaps the hon. gentleman at the head of the Works Department will inform us how it can be done.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): I never said it could be done.

MR. PARKER: Of course I don't pretend to know anything about these matters; but it struck me that a steamer drawing 26ft. would require more than 24ft. to be able to float. I may be mistaken: if I am, then I will admit that there is nothing in my argument. I only know this: that some of these steamers will not enter the harbor, and the reason they give for it is that the water is not deep enough in some places. I know it must be a great loss to the revenue if

these steamers do not call at Albany, or do not enter the harbor. I also know it creates a very bad impression upon people who travel by these steamers when they find they cannot land at Albany, and have a look at the place. I know we could hardly get a worse advertisement for the colony. I think it would be a most unfortunate thing, and give a very bad name to our only good harbor, if these steamers refused to call there at all, because they could not rely upon being able to enter. It is no use to say that they can enter; I have a telegram here which I only received yesterday from Mr. Blackwood, of the firm of Dalgety, Blackwood, and Co., Limited, who, I believe, are largely interested in some of these large mail steamers, as agents. I will read what Mr. Blackwood says: "Albany, July 30th. Have to-day, with Captain Butcher and Pilot Thompson, examined entrance to inner harbor, and verify, at eastern end as indicated in Parry's last soundings (of which copy given me by Wright) that at low water, dead calm, there exists a considerable patch with less cover than 24 feet. I consider whole matter of dredging demands immediate and gravest consideration at the hands of the Government. I suggest, if Government cannot or will not buy dredge, that a Royal Commission be at once appointed to take evidence and draw up recommendation. If nothing be done, I shall warn owners and insurance companies in which I am interested of the great risk the bottoms run in entering the inner harbor at Albany. A. R. BLACKWOOD." It will be seen from what Mr. Blackwood says that it is extremely desirable that some immediate action be taken in this matter. I think it is a duty we owe to Albany, and not only to Albany but to the colony at large, and also to the neighboring colonies, that this, the first and last port of call of the mail steamers, should be kept in proper order, and that there should be no difficulty in the way of these steamers coming into the harbor at all times. The Colonial Secretary says we are putting the cart before the horse in putting forward this resolution, and that no good result can possibly come out of it. But I think if members will read the resolution they will see that it is a

very reasonable resolution and a very proper one, under the circumstances. It is not asking the Government to pledge themselves to buy this dredge; it simply asks the Government to give the subject its immediate consideration, with the view, if necessary, of entering into negotiations with the South Australian port authorities for the purchase of an efficient dredge, such as they are alleged to have now on sale at a greatly reduced price. All we ask the Government to do is to make inquiries—[The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is all done; we have all the particulars.] I presume the Government, if they think it desirable to purchase this dredge could have it under offer to them for a sufficient time to enable them to take a vote of the House before concluding the purchase. I do not think it would be fair to charge it to Albany; there are other ports which require dredging quite as much as Albany. All that could fairly be charged to Albany would be the actual cost of the work done at that port with it. We are told that the dredging at Albany alone would cost £15,000; but all the Government need trouble themselves about at present is the purchase money, which we are told would be about £15,000. I cannot but think with the hon. baronet that if the Government really took that proper interest in the progress and welfare of the colony that a Government ought to do, there would be no difficulty in finding this money. Does anyone mean to tell me that a Government with a revenue of £400,000 a year could not get £15,000 for an object of this kind? If it was for some fad of the Government they would soon find the money. It is perfectly ridiculous to say that we could not get the money for this work, if the Government wished to get it; it is utter nonsense. Surely the Banks would be willing to trust the Government with £15,000? I think it ought not to go forth to the world that the Government of the colony think they would be unable to raise as much as would purchase this dredge; such a statement coming from the mouthpiece of the Government in this House cannot but have a most damaging effect, a most damning effect, upon the credit of the colony. How can we go into the London money market for a loan of half a mil-

lion—as we hope to do ere long, I hope—when it is said by the leader of the Government that there is no chance of our getting any money in the colony to purchase this dredge, and that it is simply putting the “cart before the horse” to pass a resolution like this when there is no money to carry it out? I think it is a most damaging statement to go forth to the world. As for the hon. member for Fremantle, we know he has a strong objection to anything for the port of Albany that will tend to improve that port. We know there is no difficulty in the way of vessels entering Fremantle at all times,—there is plenty of room for them to come in at any rate. But here at Albany, where we have a grand harbor which any colony may be proud of, but which requires a little dredging, we are told—that is what the Government virtually tell us—we must let the harbor silt up for we cannot afford to buy a dredge to deepen it. All I can say is, I am very sorry to hear it.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): We have just listened to a very impassioned address, one which in its eloquence is only equalled by the hon. member's evident ignorance of the subject he has been talking about. I am afraid I cannot congratulate the colony upon the approaching change in its Constitution if what we have just listened to from the hon. member opposite is a fair sample of what we may expect when we enter upon a ministerial form of Government. The hon. member has accused the head of the Government bench with having made certain statements which he never did make,—

MR. PARKER: Pardon me; the Colonial Secretary said everything I have attributed to him.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): I cannot agree with the hon. member. Neither the Colonial Secretary nor the Government have ever said that the dredging of the mouth of this harbor at Albany is not a work that ought not to be undertaken; on the contrary, the Government fully realises the desirability of doing this work; I have, myself, said so, in the reply which I made to the question asked me last year, and which the hon. member for Plantagenet read to the House a few

minutes ago. The Government consider it—I know I consider it—one of the most necessary works possible; but, what is the use of talking of things that ought to be done when we are not in a position to do them, and when there are other things of equal importance with this work that must remain undone until we have the means to carry them out. As to this question of the harbor at Albany, I will say this: the people of Albany themselves have done a great deal to ruin the credit of their harbor, by making statements which are really not the fact. As to the depth of water, the datum taken for the soundings over the bar is fixed at 2ft. below the Bramwell rock,—

MR. PARKER: Who took it?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): Captain Archdeacon, in the first instance, and his soundings were checked afterwards. I do not think that the Bramwell rock has ever been seen uncovered; and 2ft. below that is taken as the Admiralty datum; and the lowest depth of water over the bar is 23ft. 9in. I think if you add 2ft. to that, the difference between the datum and low water, it will give 25ft. 9in. as the depth at low water. The last time I was there was during the visit of the "Austral," and on that occasion 26ft. over the bar was marked on the gauge; the "Austral" was drawing 20ft. 6in., but she would not come in because she was afraid she would not clear the bar; although when we crossed it, just before, the gauge marked 26ft. That is the result of giving the harbor a bad name. I think there has been a great deal of what is vulgarly called "fouling your own nest" among the Albany people. I fancy that like the "Austral" a great many steamers might go in there if there were proper means to enable them to come in. As to what the hon. member for Plantagenet has said, about the W.A. Land Company being prepared to undertake this dredging for £4,000, I can simply say, if that is the case, let them do it, by all means; we are perfectly willing to pay them, even if we have to go to the Banks and borrow the money, as the hon. member who leads the elected members suggests we should. For my own part I am afraid that £4,000 would only represent a very small amount of the work, after the dredger had been

bought. The Government are not so ill-informed on this subject as some hon. members give them credit for. We have all the information we require as to the cost of this dredger, and everything connected with it. The vessel itself would cost £14,000 in Adelaide; it would require lighters to get rid of the silt and stuff, and it would require other things; then there would be the wages of the working party for six months at least; and, when you come to calculate the quantity of dredging that would have to be done, I think you may fairly put the whole cost down at about £32,000. That is what I have done; that is my estimate of the cost of purchasing the dredger and the accessories, and doing all that is necessary to be done at Princess Royal Harbor; and I think it would be money thoroughly well spent. At the same time, I regret to say we are not in a position to spend it. No doubt when that Harbor Trust of which we have heard something from the hon. member for Plantagenet is established, the income and moral support which the Government will derive from that body will be a very material help to us, whenever we require a guarantee for the money, and we are in a position to raise it.

MR. KEANE: I do not think that since I have had the honor of having a seat in the House have I heard the hon. member for Sussex strike the right nail on the head as he has done this evening; the remarks which the hon. member made as to the utter incompetency of the Government under the present dying Constitution. It is painful to hear the Government leader say that they cannot borrow as much as would buy this dredge, or find the money in any other way. That is always the cry of the Government now, whenever they are asked to undertake anything that is likely to do the colony any good, if it costs any money—"It can't be done; no funds." If that is the case, I think the sooner this useless Constitution of ours is got out of the way the better it will be for the colony and everybody in it. For my part I view this proposal of the hon. member for Albany as a very important one, and one that the Government ought to do all it possibly can to carry out while there is a chance of getting this dredge for the money. Unless something is done to

this harbor we shall find these steamers giving it the go-bye, and the colony will be most seriously injured. That is the view I take of it. No doubt the hon. member for Fremantle would be very pleased to see them do it.

MR. MARMION: Nonsense; nothing of the kind.

MR. KEANE: At any rate, we have it on very good authority that the entrance to the harbor is silting; and if we have to wait for Responsible Government until we do anything to it I don't know when that will be. Responsible Government seems to me as far off as ever for many months to come. I must say I agree with the hon. member for the Vasse: it is absurd for the Government to say they are not able to obtain a few thousand pounds for a necessary work like this. Surely to goodness the colony is not in such a position that we must let the chief harbor of the colony silt up, and prevent these mail steamers calling there.

MR. MARMION: They are calling there now, and have done so for years.

MR. KEANE: I dare say the hon. member would prefer them to call at Fremantle; but he may take my word they will never call at Fremantle if they can't get in at Albany. It seems to me an extraordinary thing that a Government with a revenue of £400,000 a year, as the hon. member for Vasse has said, cannot borrow £20,000 for a necessary work like this. If such is the case, I am afraid it is only waste of time for us to try and get anything out of the present Government.

MR. MARMION: Before I rise I should like to know if there is any other hon. member who would like to have a shot at the "hon. member for Fremantle;" because, if there is, I will wait until they have all done. It appears to me that without any reason whatever some members have marked me out for a personal attack in connection with this question; I do not know why, unless it is that they feel the weakness of their own cause, and think that abusing me will do instead of argument to support the motion. Perhaps they are all too conscious of the weakness of their cause, and are afraid the hon. member for Fremantle may expose that weakness. At any rate I think very little of what they have said so far. We all know the harbor at

Albany is a fine harbor—no one has ever contended that it wasn't; I am sure I have not; and we all would like it to keep up its reputation. I believe, myself, that in Albany we have the best declared port in this colony; I say best declared port, because I believe we have other ports at the North that are quite equal to it, but not yet declared. We are now told that unless something is done to deepen this harbor the mail steamers will not call there. I should like to ask how it is that these mail steamers do call there regularly, and have done so for years past? We do not hear that the P. & O. boats have ever refused to visit Albany, and I believe there has been no difficulty in inducing the Orient steamers to call there. It cannot be in such a bad state when the magnificent vessels belonging to these companies are able to visit the place regularly. Are there no other ports in the colony that are laboring under far more serious drawbacks than Albany? Has not the port of Fremantle for years past been waiting patiently—too patiently in my opinion—for this House and the Government to provide Fremantle with what everyone admits it ought to have,—a safe and commodious harbor for all weathers? I do not wish to raise the question of the relative importance of the two harbors—there is no need for it; but it cannot be said that Albany is the only port in the colony that ought to receive the attention of the Government. Those steamers that have contracted to call at Albany have done so with a full knowledge of the depth of water available, and they have done so without any serious drawback that I know of. The P. & O. boats have called there for many years; and the Orient Co.'s boats have called there regularly of late; and I believe the Messageries steamers intend calling there,—to suit their own purposes and to serve their own interests, I suppose; also certain German steamers. All these companies must be aware of the depth of water at the entrance to the harbor. It seems to have been taken for granted by some hon. members that I would oppose this proposed expenditure of money, because it is for the port of Albany. I tell these hon. gentlemen they are mistaken. I do not approve of this expenditure at the present time for a very good reason,—

that we have not the money to carry it out; and those who have brought forward the proposition have not shown where the money is to come from. At some future time, when it is shown that we have the means to undertake this work I hope I shall show that my ideas are not so contracted as the ideas of some hon. members seem to be. But at present, I must say I agree with a good deal that has fallen from the Colonial Secretary, and that is that those who bring forward motions of this kind ought to show us that they are practicable; and they ought to show where the money is to come from. There is nothing in the motion before us to show what this work would cost, or how the money is to be obtained to carry it out. Therefore, it seems to me that there is a good deal in what the Colonial Secretary says when he talks about the necessity of members being practical, when they bring forward motions which they wish the Government and this House to adopt. There is one thing I cannot understand about this resolution, and that is the very cordial support it has received from the hon. member for Sussex. I can quite understand the member for the district, and the late member, being strong advocates of this work being undertaken; but I am certainly at a loss to know what has secured for it the strongly expressed support of the hon. member on my right. It is beyond my comprehension altogether; perhaps the hon. member himself may tell us the cause of it. I am not going into the question of the cost of this work; it appears that it would involve an expenditure of from £30,000 to £50,000, according to the estimate of the Director of Public Works. Probably it would be nearer the latter amount than the former. We are told that the first cost of the dredge at Adelaide would be £14,000; and we all know that a vessel of this kind after it has been lying idle for a considerable time will require a large amount spent on it to make it seagoing. Then there would be the expense of getting her over from Adelaide, and the expense of working her, and the expense of getting the necessary lighters or barges to carry away what she raises. We are told by the hon. member for Plantagenet that the W. A. Land Co. have estimated that the cost of the dredg-

ing to be done would not be more than £4,000 or £5,000; and the hon. member shows his confidence in the estimate of the Works Department, which amounts to treble that sum, by quietly ignoring it, and asking the House to accept the estimate of the Land Company. I am inclined to think, myself, that the estimate of the Works Department will be found nearer the mark; I don't think that the Works Department is in the habit of under-estimating the cost of anything it undertakes. Allowing for contingencies, I think we may venture to put down the expenditure at about £50,000; and I would ask where is the £50,000 to come from? It cannot come out of current revenue, that is very certain; and, I take it, there is not much chance of a loan in the present position of affairs. If so, where is the money to come from? Those who have supported this resolution have not shown us, and, until they do, what is to become of the resolution even if the House agreed to it? It simply means this: it is not worth more than the paper it is printed on. Therefore, what is the use of our discussing the question? Above all things, I do like to see members showing themselves (as the Colonial Secretary said) practical; but I am afraid that in their eagerness to advance the interests of the port of Albany, they have not shown themselves to be very practical on this occasion. It may be said—it has been said by one hon. member—that if this was some fad of the Government they would soon find the money. I take it that one of the duties of this House is to see that the public funds are not wasted upon the fads of the Government or the fads of individual members; and it is quite certain that the Government could not spend the money without the vote of this House, one of whose duties is to check the Government in all unauthorised expenditure. Do those who wish to see the Government undertaking this expenditure desire to see a repetition of the financial policy of last session, and another loan raised for the purpose of balancing the revenue? Is that a policy which hon. members wish to see the colony pursuing? If it is, I for one cannot support it.

MR. LOTON: I regret that the motion of the hon. member for Plantagenet does not meet with my approval; I regret it

for this reason, that I think it is of the greatest importance that the improvements in the way of dredging at Albany should be taken in hand at the earliest possible date; but of what use is it for us to express that opinion, knowing as we do, that we have not got the "sinews of war." Although this work may be a very important one, are there not other works of equal importance, in various parts of the colony? I am afraid the Director of Public Works was not very wide of the mark when he said that the people of Albany themselves have done a great deal of damage to the interest of their own port. There is no doubt about it. We have had for a considerable number of years one of the finest lines of steamers in the world, the P. & O. Co., calling there regularly, and without demur, and they continue to call there. At least one other company has followed suit. It is true that we hear of larger steamers being built now, and it is within the bounds of possibility that these larger steamers will not be able to enter the harbor at Albany at low water. But I am not aware that this has occurred yet. We must also not lose sight of this fact: that steamers will not call at Albany unless there is some return for the outlay; and, while no doubt we ought to do all we can to improve our harbors, we should not overlook the requirements of the interior. It would be of very little use for a dozen of steamers calling every day at Albany unless we had something to supply them with to carry away. It is the financial difficulties in the way that prevent me at present from supporting this motion; and it appears to me that any lengthened discussion upon it can result in no practical good, at the present time. It has been said that it does not bind the House or the Government to anything; but it appears to me that if we pass it, and induce the Government to enter into negotiations for the purchase of this dredge, we shall be bound to find the money to pay for it; and we have no means of doing so that I can see without running the colony into debt. The hon. member for Sussex told us that the Government could very easily find the money if they really wished to do so; and he said it was ridiculous for a Government with an annual revenue of £400,000 to say

that it could not raise a small sum like this. I regret to say that the revenue last year was considerably less than £400,000; it was not more than about £350,000, I am sorry to say. The revenue of this colony, I regret to remark, has not yet permanently reached the sum of £400,000. Although I agree that it is very desirable that this work should be undertaken as soon as practicable, I cannot support the motion now before us, and so cripple the revenues of the colony at the present juncture of affairs.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): I rise simply to say, for the information of the House, that in a letter which I have from the commander of H.M.S. "Myrmidon," that officer expresses his intention of coming to Fremantle in November, and that he proposes to proceed to Albany and make a survey of Princess Royal Harbor.

MR. MORRISON: I think we cannot expect the Government to undertake to expend money when they haven't got it; at the same time I am glad to find that they recognise the necessity of keeping this first-rate harbor of ours in proper order and condition. I think it is very desirable that this should be done. Albany is one of the principal gates of the colony, and one of its main entrances; and we all know, if we go to the front door of a house and find the entrance neglected and covered with broken bottles and kerosene tins, the impression created upon the visitor is not very complimentary to the owner. So with this port of Albany. A great many visitors obtain their first impressions of the colony from King George's Sound; and it is very necessary that we should try and give them a favorable impression. If the passengers by these steamers find that they cannot venture inside the harbor but remain in the roadstead outside, the probability is that they will form a rather poor opinion of the colony. Therefore, I am in favor of seeing everything done, in a moderate way, to make the port of Albany what it ought to be. As one of the chief ports and one of the best harbors in Australia, it is our duty to try and keep it in proper order. The Government tell us they have no money to do the work; but it has occurred to me that something might be done in this way; we are told that the W.A. Land

Company are prepared to do the work for about £4,000; if so, I would suggest that they be allowed to do it—I would even go so far as £10,000; and let them receive a certain percentage of the harbor and light dues for a certain number of years. The colony, itself, is not more interested in the welfare and prosperity of Albany than this company is; and I think if we could get them to do this it would get us out of the difficulty as to funds. I do not see how the Government in the present state of the public finances could undertake this work; therefore, I am unable to support the motion as it stands—not that I do not think the work is a necessary work, but that I do not see how the Government, itself, can undertake it.

MR. BURT: It has been said that there are other works of equal importance that ought to be undertaken if we had the means to do so; for myself I think this is a work of paramount importance, and one that stands first on the list. It strikes me that here we have to a certain extent a duty that we owe not only to ourselves and the people of Albany, but also to the whole of Australasia. Albany, it must be remembered, is looked upon rather as a national port. It was one of the two spots selected and agreed upon by the delegates at the Imperial and Colonial Conference as places that ought to be fortified, and as ports of refuge in time of war; and as one of the two gates of Australia. Therefore, it appears to me that we have a national, and not merely a local duty here, a duty that we owe not only to ourselves but to others to see that this important strategical harbor should be kept in proper order, and accessible to vessels of any size. I do not know that this is denied by the Government; and this question now resolves itself into one of ways and means. With regard to that, I think the gist of this resolution has been lost sight of somewhat. This proposal, or this suggestion, is brought before the Government, in the present state of the finances, for this particular reason: that we can now get a dredge suitable for what we want for £14,000 which, at any other time, would cost us £40,000. That is the point I want to impress upon the Government; we have a chance here of saving £25,000 or £26,000. That is something worth considering these hard times. Looking

also at the fact that this dredger would do away with the necessity for the continual drain upon the revenue in the shape of annual votes for jetty extensions all over the colony, I cannot help thinking it would be a great saving in the long run; and I think if the Government were to set themselves to the task when they are preparing next year's Estimates they might find the means for meeting the charges connected with this dredger. If they considered the saving to be effected in the vote for jetty extension and operations of that kind at our ports, and were to take a little more hopeful view of the future and of the elasticity of the revenue, I think they would be able to manage sufficient funds for the carrying out of this work. If they are not able to pay for this dredger now, perhaps the Banks would negotiate a bill for them—I don't know whether a bill of the Government at twelve months would be accepted, but I should hope it would. At any rate, if the South Australian Government want the money down, and refuse to give us credit, I should think the Government could manage to get the money somehow. I am sure of this; if other gentlemen in this House were on those Treasury benches they would find the money pretty readily.

Upon the resolution being put, a division was called for, the numbers being—

Ayes ...	7
Noes ...	11

Majority against ...	4
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AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burt	Hon. Sir M. Fraser, K.C.M.G.
Sir T. C. Campbell, Bart.	Mr. Harper
Mr. A. Forrest	Mr. Loton
Mr. Keane	Mr. Marmion
Mr. Parker	Mr. Morrison
Mr. Venn	Mr. Pearce
Mr. De Hamel (Teller.)	Mr. Handell
	Mr. Richardson
	Mr. Sholl
	Hon. C. N. Warton
	Hon. J. A. Wright
	(Teller.)

The motion was therefore negatived.

MESSAGE (No. 4): CONSTITUTION BILL.

THE SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—

"With reference to Message No. 8, of the 29th ultimo, the Governor has the honor to transmit, herewith, copy of a telegram received from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State on the 1st

"inst., in reply to the Governor's telegram of the 27th ultimo.

"Government House, 2nd August, 1889."

"TRANSLATION OF CODED TELEGRAM.

"To the Governor of Western Australia.

"Received your telegram. Threatened prolonged discussions rendered it impossible to pass Bill this Session. Fear that I can add nothing to my telegram of 23rd July. Inform Governor New South Wales, Governor Victoria, Governor South Australia.

"London, 31st July, 1889."

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT, 1876,
AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. PARKER (for Mr. Scott) obtained leave to introduce a bill to amend "The Municipal Institutions Act, 1876," Amendment Bill; and moved the first reading of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

RE-APPROPRIATION BILL, 1889.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) in moving the second reading of this bill, which is to re-appropriate a sum of £6182 7s. 8d., for the telegraph line from Roebourne to Derby, perhaps it may be desirable for the information of members of the House who did not happen to be on the Finance Committee, that I should explain why this bill has become necessary. By an Act passed by this House in 1885, the 49th Vict., No. 20, a sum of £4,500 was re-appropriated, out of the vote for the Roebourne-Derby telegraph, for the completion of the line from Northampton to Roebourne; so that the Roebourne-Derby line was thus handicapped by this charge of £4,500 taken out of the sum allotted for it, in the first instance. At that time the exact length of the line from Roebourne to Derby was not known; and as the contract was taken at so much a mile, it was not until the work was completed that the actual cost of the line was ascertained. It was then found that a sum of £6,182 7s. 8d. was due to the contractor, beyond the amount available from the sum first appropriated from loan for the construction of the line. Immediately on this being shown to His Excellency he consulted the Finance Committee as to the course it was desirable to pursue: and perhaps I may be per-

mitted to read an extract from the Minutes of that body, to show to the House how careful the Government was in consulting the committee, and how careful the committee is in the advice it offers to the Government. The committee in their minute say: "If it is sought to obtain an additional sum in excess of that voted by the Legislature for this work our duty appears to be limited to expressing opinions on the advisability of incurring liabilities,—not to confirm unauthorised expenditure already incurred. In these circumstances we think it better to leave the whole responsibility to His Excellency the Governor. The Director of Public Works, however, states that he only seeks to take the sum asked for from the money voted for the extension to Wyndham, and that the balance will be amply sufficient for the completion of the Derby-Wyndham line. If we have the power to do so, which seems to us doubtful, we respectfully advise His Excellency the Governor to sanction the proposed diversion." Following upon that, payment was made, and at the earliest opportunity the Government now come to this House for the necessary statutory authority for the expenditure that has occurred for the reason I have stated.

MR. A. FORREST: Before this bill is passed, I should like to know whether the Government are satisfied that, after taking this money out of the vote for the Wyndham line, there will be sufficient left to complete that line?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): So I am informed.

MR. PARKER: I do not rise to oppose the second reading of this bill, but I think that when we go into committee on the bill the Government ought to be prepared with an abstract showing the expenditure that has been incurred in the construction of this telegraph line from Roebourne to Derby.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): We have done that before.

MR. PARKER: But you have now asked for more. I think it is due to the House that it should see how the money has been expended. As a member of the Finance Committee I have had an opportunity of doing so; but I think the House when it goes into committee on

the bill ought to have this information.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): When we go into committee I shall be prepared to deal with the whole question, in all its details, if the committee wish it. I may state, for the information of the hon. member for Kimberley, that there will be sufficient money left to complete the line both from Derby to the goldfields and from the goldfields to Wyndham.

MR. A. FORREST: That's all right, then.

Bill read a second time.

RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On the order of the day for the further consideration of this bill in committee,

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said as the bill was certainly one that closely affected the concerns of the general public, and as there had been a generally expressed opinion on the part of the representatives of the people in that House that the remaining clauses of the bill—the clauses limiting the pecuniary liability of the Government and railway companies in cases of accident—did not meet with general approval, or at any rate the approval of the majority of elected members, he rose for the purpose of stating that the Government did not intend to proceed with the remaining clauses. If that met with the approval of this House, the bill would now be reported, and the remaining clauses struck out of it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said he should like to say one word before the bill was done with. He trusted that the snake, though scotched, was not killed, and that on a future occasion the clauses now abandoned might be brought forward again with a better chance of being successfully carried through. He should also like to be allowed to answer one or two remarks that had been made with reference to the bill as brought forward. It had been stated that it had been brought forward by him as Commissioner of Railways simply in consequence of the result of a recent accident, because the Government had been mulcted in damages. He assured the House—and many members knew it—that for the last twelve months and

more this bill had been under his consideration, and he had wished to bring it forward long before the accident referred to ever took place. He had introduced the bill solely in the interest of the public purse, and without any personal ideas whatsoever. It had struck him that an accident such as that which occurred in Victoria some time ago, which cost that Government £129,000, might in the case of a comparatively poor colony like this cause the Government the most serious financial embarrassment; and it was solely with a view to limit the possible drain upon the public purse that he had brought forward the bill. He hoped that on a future occasion the principle of the bill as regards this question of compensation would find greater favor among hon. members.

Clauses 7 to 10 were then expunged; and the schedule and the preamble and title of the bill as previously agreed to, having been adopted, the bill was reported to the House.

The House adjourned at a quarter to nine o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 7th August, 1889.

Revenue and Expenditure in the Plantagenet District—Hampton Plains Railway Proposals—Beverley Railway Station accommodation—Proposed Telegraph Line to the Yilgarn Goldfields—Message (No. 5): Despatch from the Secretary of State acknowledging Memorial re Constitution Bill—Double Trucks for conveyance of Sheep on the Eastern Railway—Railways Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Re-appropriation Bill, 1889: in committee—Municipalities Institutions Act, Amendment Bill: discharged—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, PLANTAGENET DISTRICT.

MR. DE HAMEL: I desire to ask the Colonial Secretary whether he can in-