

# Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd February, 1892.

Perth Pensioners' Barracks—Aborigines Protection Act, 1886, Amendment Bill: in committee—Masters and Servants Act Amendment Bill: second reading—Public Health Act Amendment Bill: second reading—Estimates, 1892: adjourned debate on the Financial Statement—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7:30 p.m.

## PRAYERS.

### PENSIONERS' BARRACKS, PERTH.

MR. DE HAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether any proposals or overtures had been made to the Government relative to the sale or other disposal of the old Barracks, or of any portion of the land on which they stand; and whether, in the event of any such proposal being made, the Government would decline to accede to it?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that no such proposals had been heard of or made. The Government had no intention of selling, or otherwise disposing of the old Barracks, or any portion of the land on which they stand.

### ABORIGINES PROTECTION ACT, 1886, AMENDMENT BILL.

The House went into committee on this bill.

Clause 1—Short title and incorporation with principal Act:

Put and passed.

Clause 2—Punishment of aborigines for breach of contract:

Put and passed.

Clause 3—"Subject to the provisions of Part II. of the Principal Act, any employer of an aboriginal who shall be guilty of any breach of a contract under the Principal Act shall, upon the complaint of any Justice of the Peace, Protector of Aborigines, or other person, and upon conviction before any Justice of the Peace, forfeit and pay a sum not exceeding Twenty pounds."

MR. DE HAMEL moved an amendment to strike out the words "Justice of the Peace, Protector of Aborigines, or other," so that the clause should read "upon the complaint of any person," etc. He said he wished to point out that this

Act was, by section 1, incorporated with the principal Act, the Act of 1886; and, in addition to that, he thought it was the duty of the Government to introduce simplicity into our legislation, and to make our Acts so that he who runs may be able to read and understand them. He wished to show that the words which he moved to strike out had crept into the bill by error, or by a too faithful following of the words in a clause in the original Act, and would cause that Act to do what the House never intended it should do. If he succeeded in showing that, he thought the committee would support him in striking out these words. The object of the principal Act was mainly to give protection to aboriginal native servants, at the same time extending protection to the employers. One of its main features was the regulating of contracts between natives and those who employed them; and it was fixed by that Act that an employer should have no remedy against a native under agreement to him unless the contract was signed and witnessed by certain persons specially appointed by the Act. Clause 24, which was the clause that had been followed in the wording of the present bill, said: "It shall be lawful for any Justice or Justices, on the complaint of a Protector of Aborigines, or other person, that an aboriginal is from any cause unfit or unable to work . . . or that an aboriginal under contract is ill-treated, forthwith to cancel such contract." There it is "on the complaint of a Protector of Aborigines or other person." Let them see what was meant by "other person." To find that out in the ordinary way they would naturally refer to any previous clause in the Act to find what other person had been referred to. He found that in clause 19 it was provided that a contract under this Act shall be witnessed by a Justice of the Peace, a Protector of Aborigines, or "some other fit and proper person appointed by the Resident Magistrate" for that purpose. If they had only this clause to refer to, he should have said that the "other person" referred to was some fit and proper person appointed by the Resident Magistrate. But, on looking further into it, it seemed strange to him that, even in a clause that appeared after this clause, these words "some fit and proper person

appointed by the Resident Magistrate" were omitted, and the only words inserted were "or other person." Seeing this, he looked up the whole question, both from the *Hansard* reports and from the "Votes and Proceedings" of the House, and he found that the bill as originally introduced—and it was originally introduced by the present Attorney General, who was then Acting Attorney General—provided for these contracts being witnessed before a Justice or a Protector only; there was no mention then made of any "other person." A considerable discussion took place in the House, and it was pointed out by the hon. member for the Gascoyne the great inconvenience it would be if these contracts could only be witnessed by a Justice or a Native Protector, and that unless some alteration was made the Act would be unworkable. A select committee was appointed to consider the bill, and the Government, in order to meet the wishes of members, introduced a special amendment, which was embodied in a new clause in this 19th clause, in these words, "or some other fit and proper person appointed by the Resident Magistrate." One would have expected that the same words would have been introduced in clause 24, but he found that clause 24 (which was originally clause 23) was passed without amendment at all, and before clause 19 was introduced into the bill. The result of that was that the words "or other person" in clause 24 must be taken to mean any person, as they had no reference to clause 19, which was introduced into the bill after clause 24 had been passed. Moreover, clause 19 was directory; it directed how these contracts were to be witnessed, for the protection of the natives, and they had to be witnessed by a Justice of the Peace or a Protector of Aborigines, or one of these persons specially appointed as a fit and proper person by the Resident Magistrate. But clause 24 was merely permissive; and that clause allowed a Justice, on the complaint of a Protector, or any "other person," to cancel these contracts, the clear object being that when a native was being ill-treated, or was unfit to work, a Justice of the Peace, on the complaint of a Protector of Aborigines or of any person—not necessarily a Protector of Aborigines—could cancel the contract.

This was evidently the intention. He therefore proposed to amend the clause now before the committee, so that a complaint might be made by any person who saw that there was a breach of contract on the part of an employer of natives. If they allowed the words "Justice of the Peace, Protector of Aborigines, or other person" to remain, the only construction that could be put on the words "other person" was that they applied to the person referred to in clause 19 of the principal Act as "some other fit and proper person, appointed by the Resident Magistrate." The result would be that the poor native would have no help from this 3rd clause at all. But if the words he proposed to strike out were omitted, then any person who saw that a native was being ill-treated or anything like that (constituting a breach of contract) could make complaint against the employer, and, upon his conviction, he could be fined. He hoped the committee would consent to strike out these words, so that native servants might receive that protection which it was evidently the intention of the Legislative Council, in 1886, he should receive.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) thought the criticism offered by the hon. member for Albany on this clause had made it as clear as mud to most of them. He hoped that some members of the committee had been instructed by the comments of the hon. member, who had taken great pains to build up an argument that, he (Mr. Burt) submitted, did not apply to this clause in any way whatever. The thing was as plain as a pike-staff what the clause meant. It provided for the punishment of employers for breaches of contract with their aboriginal native servants; and it would be readily seen that a native, unless he had someone to tell him that a breach of contract had taken place, someone at his elbow (so to speak) to put him up to his rights, was not likely to take any steps to protect himself against his employer. It was obvious that if they waited for a native to put the law in motion against his employer for breach of contract, they would wait in vain. It would be very little better if they adopted this amendment of the hon. member for Albany, who would leave it to "any person" to make the complaint. Now any

person would be every person, and they all knew that what was everybody's business was nobody's business; and the result of this amendment would be that no one would make a complaint, and the native would be at the mercy of his employer in any contract between them. What the clause did was to specifically mention justices of the peace and native protectors as persons who might be reasonably expected to do this much for a native. But it did not prevent anybody else from doing it. The complaint could be laid by any person, but the special attention of justices and protectors was called to the fact that it was within their province to do so. As to clause 19 of the principal Act, which the hon. member for Albany had labored so much, that clause related to the cancellation of contracts. It had nothing whatever to do with the present clause. Obviously, they must authorise some special person to cancel a contract. It would not do to have it within the power of anybody to cancel contracts between natives and their employers. But that was a different thing to what this clause provided for, the laying of a complaint against an employer for a breach of contract against a native servant. As he had said, this clause left it in the power of any person to do so, but it specially particularised justices of the peace and protectors of aborigines. Inferentially, it let them know that they were expected to do so, though it did not say so in so many words. But if they struck out any reference to these persons, the result would be that it would be nobody's business to do these things, and the native, in that case, might as well not be protected at all in these cases.

Amendment—put and negatived.

Clause—put and passed.

Clause 4—"It shall not be obligatory upon any member of the police force to serve any summons or execute any warrant of arrest against an aboriginal, in respect of any offence under section two of this Act, beyond a distance of thirty miles from the place where such summons or warrant was issued, except when specially directed by a Resident Magistrate":

MR. R. F. SHOLL thought it would make the bill more useful if they added the words "or justice of the peace" at

the end of the clause. When the principal Act was brought in, containing a similar provision to this, it was pointed out at the time that it would be practically unworkable, and it had since been found to be unworkable. He referred to the provision about not executing warrants for native absconders beyond a distance of 30 miles. If a native succeeded in getting 30 miles away he could laugh at his employer. Now 30 miles was not much for a runaway native to travel; he would cover it in a few hours, certainly in a day. It was only when a policeman was specially directed by a Resident Magistrate that he could execute a warrant beyond 30 miles; and, to get these special directions in some of these Northern districts such as the Ashburton, an employer would have to travel 200 or 300 miles. He thought they might fairly allow a justice of the peace to issue these directions where the Resident Magistrate was hundreds of miles away. It might be said that the power might be abused,—and he believed that was the reason why it had been left out, because it was feared that some justices would be always directing the police to go after native absconders. But he thought the Government might have this much confidence in honorary justices. He moved to add "or justice of the peace" at the end of the clause.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said they were always happy to agree with the hon. member for the Gascoyne on every occasion, as far as possible; but there was this difficulty about this matter: it was a matter of administration, rather than anything else. It was not that the Government thought by any means that a Resident Magistrate was more capable of grasping whether the police should be directed to go after a native than a justice of the peace was; but it must be remembered that a Resident Magistrate was a paid officer of the Government, and was more in touch with the Government, and the police were under his charge, in his district. It might not always be at all convenient or practicable at these outstations, particularly about the Gascoyne and the Murchison, for the police to be employing their time in running after natives who had merely broken their contracts. They had quite enough to do

in looking after natives who stole cattle and sheep. The Government only a few days ago had been asked to provide additional police, for the purpose of putting down these depredations, and the Government were prepared to do that. But if they were also to be asked to provide police to hunt up these runaway niggers, they would want another batch of police. He thought it was quite enough to empower the Resident Magistrate to give these special directions. He thought the best thing a settler could do, if his native ran away, was to fetch him back. That was the rule in his district. If their natives ran away, they ran after them and fetched them back again,—not by force, but by moral suasion. They did not generally run away a second time. There would be no end of work for the police in running after native absconders if they allowed justices of the peace to issue these special directions. The distance might perhaps be increased from 30 miles to 50 miles, if the hon. member wished.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said if the Attorney General objected to insert the words "or justice of the peace," he was quite willing to accept the hon. gentleman's suggestion as to increasing the radius from 30 miles to 50 miles, and withdraw his own amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved to strike out the word "thirty," and insert "fifty" in lieu thereof.

Question—put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5—Repeal of 49th section of Principal Act:

Put and passed.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported.

#### MASTERS AND SERVANTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I rise to move the second reading of an Act to amend the laws relating to masters and servants. This bill is framed on legislation that has existed in England for some time, and it is really the same Act, with very little amendment, as was introduced in the

Legislative Council here three or four years ago, but which the House on that occasion did not think fit to endorse. It makes very little difference in the law between masters and servants, beyond what was proposed under that Act, which considerably mitigated the law. For instance a servant prosecuted by his master for a breach of contract cannot be imprisoned in the first instance. He must first of all be fined, and imprisonment only follows upon non-payment of the fine. This Act goes a little further than that. Instead of imposing a fine, with imprisonment to follow in the case of default, it provides that the justices hearing a case may, in their discretion, make various orders, as they think the justice of the case requires. They may order an abatement of the whole or of any part of the wages due to the servant; or they may direct the fulfilment of the contract of service, with a direction to the party complained against to find good and sufficient security for the carrying out of the contract, or they may annul the contract, discharging the parties, and apportioning the amount of wages or remuneration due up to date; or they may also impose a penalty of £20, or they may assess the amount of compensation due to the party complaining. It will be seen that a variety of courses are left open to the justices trying the case. As a last resource, we propose to empower them to order imprisonment, in certain cases. That is where the magistrates have directed the fulfilment of the contract and ordered the party complained against to find good and sufficient security, and the party neglects or refuses to obey the order. In that case the justices may, if they think fit, commit the party to gaol until he finds security. That is really the main principle of the bill. Instead of fining a man, we empower the justices to put him under recognisances to perform his contract; and, if he still makes default, this punishment of imprisonment comes into operation. The rest of the bill merely deals with the necessary procedure, to a large extent, the only important section being section 13, which provides for imprisonment in cases of aggravated misconduct, or injury, or ill-treatment. That is in cases where the offence is of such an aggravated character that the justices do

not consider that any pecuniary compensation, or other remedy provided by the Act, will meet the circumstances of the case. There is also a provision that the Act shall not apply to seamen, or to apprentices to the sea service; nor will it affect the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Acts, or of any Act regulating the pearl-shell fishery, or of the Aborigines Protection Act of 1886. I propose, also, to except from its application the Act we have passed this session, dealing with breaches of contract on the part of aboriginal native servants. The bill, it will be seen, places the master and the servant on a footing of absolute equality. All through the bill the two are to be found running in connection with one another. In the same way as we deal with the servant we deal with the master also, for a breach of contract. I think the bill will be an improvement on the present law, and one which this House may very readily give its consent to.

MR. CANNING: Perhaps it is hardly necessary for me to say that I do not intend to oppose the second reading of this bill, but I think it is only right I should say that when the bill is in committee I shall propose what may be regarded as a very important amendment. On looking through the bill carefully, I find that, in certain eventualities, the penalty of imprisonment is to be awarded. I have no doubt it will be generally admitted that undue severity in any measure defeats the object of that measure. If you make a measure unduly severe, you make it practically inoperative; and I do not think there is anything more likely to lead to a disregard of the laws of a country than having laws which cannot really be carried out. In this bill, which provides for imprisonment in certain cases, I find there is no distinction made between men and women, between male servants and female servants. The punishment of imprisonment may therefore be awarded, in certain eventualities, to women or girls under this bill, as it stands. The effect of that will be simply this, that the Act so far as women and girls are concerned will be inoperative. It has been said that the bill is modelled on the English Act. The circumstances of this colony, and indeed of Australia, are very different

from those of the mother country. There they have, I believe, something considerably over a million more women than there are men; here we know the preponderance is quite the other way. Again, without taking a sentimental view but a practical view of the matter, we know very well that if a magistrate awarded the punishment of imprisonment to any girl or woman for a breach of contract, it would not be carried out. We know that perfectly well; and why should we put magistrates in this false position? Moreover, I must confess, making all due allowance for the preciousness of young women and for the state of things existing in this and the other Australian colonies, I think it would be rather hard after all to say to these girls, "If you do not carry out your agreement properly, you shall go to gaol." Of course if they transgress the law in other particulars, if they steal their master's property, or maliciously injure or destroy it, there are other Acts in existence under which they can be dealt with, apart from this Act, which deals with breaches of contract. Therefore, on the whole, I do not think it is desirable that this Act should provide this punishment of imprisonment in the case of women or girls. With this exception, the bill has my support.

Motion—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): In rising to move the second reading of this bill, I need hardly inform the House that the same bill (introduced by the hon. member for Albany) was passed here last session, but it did not pass in another place. The object of the bill, as members are aware, is to abolish the present Local Boards of Health, and to give the power they possess and exercise to the Municipal Councils. That is the whole scope of the bill, to do away with the Local Boards of Health as at present existing and to make the Municipal Councils of the colony the guardians of the public health, and to allow them to do their business as Boards of Health at their ordinary meetings. In other words we propose to amalgamate the two bodies, or

rather their functions, in one body, that body being the Municipal Council of the town, and to abolish the Local Boards altogether. I beg to move the second reading of the bill.

Motion—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### ESTIMATES, 1892.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE UPON THE TREASURER'S FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

MR. RICHARDSON: Before proceeding to offer a few remarks upon the Budget generally, I desire to join others who have preceded me in complimenting the Ministry on being in a position to put forward such a favorable Financial Statement as that given to us the other day by the Colonial Treasurer. We all hope it will do the colony a great deal of good, and that it will raise us in the estimation of our neighbors, and also in the eyes of the financial world, with the result that our loans in the future will go off better in consequence of the sound state of our public finances. It has been remarked by some former speakers that the Ministry themselves are not to be complimented so much for the present state of our affairs, that it is the result of fortuitous circumstances, chiefly the discovery of gold and other resources. I am not going to say much on that; I should be sorry to detract anything from the credit due to the Government. But there is one thing we may fairly congratulate them upon, and that is, that in the face of a growing revenue and a swelling surplus they kept their expenditure within reasonable grounds, and that too in the face of a strong temptation to spend money. Ministers, like private people, are always more or less tempted to incur expenditure when the means for doing so are within their reach. As their income expands, so does the desire and the temptation to spend it. In view of the pressure from all quarters, in view of the applications for assistance from all parts of the colony that must have been brought to bear on them, to spend money here, there, and everywhere, the Ministry appear to have kept the expenditure well within bound, and to have a respectable surplus to the good.

I think this is a point upon which they may be fairly congratulated and complimented, and I have pleasure in doing so. But there are a few items on these Estimates which we might have done without. Although we have had an exceptionally prosperous year, still we must not always calculate upon the same good luck; we must not calculate too much upon that prosperous year being followed by another. We all hope it may, and believe that it will; still we must not reckon with any certainty upon it, and we must not indulge in any items of extravagance, but rather confine ourselves to matters of absolute necessity and useful objects. I think there are one or two items on these Estimates that might have stood over until our prosperity is more assured. One is the ornamentation of what is called Perth Park, for which we have £2,000 set down. There is another item of £2,000 for the reclamation and improvement of the river side. That is a work I thoroughly believe in; the object is a good one and a wise one. I think that for people living in a city like Perth there is nothing more necessary than to have nice recreation grounds, and I think in this case the result will be very beneficial. But I think that a wilderness like this park on Mount Eliza might, at any rate, wait another year, until we see whether we can afford it, especially as there are a number of other much more urgent cases where the expenditure of public money is necessary. Moreover, we would have to spend a great deal more than £2,000 before this park could be of use, in making roads for people to get up to it. The same with reference to the proposed Observatory; I do not think there is any very pressing need for it, this year, at any rate. Anyone, in speaking against such a work, renders himself liable to be sneered at or censured as not being endowed with a scientific turn of mind. I believe an observatory is a very necessary work, both in the interests of science, and in order to remove a certain amount of reproach from us, and to enable us to take our place in this matter with our sister colonies. But I think it is rather premature; I think we might wait at least another year, and see whether our present prosperity is going to be sustained. It must be borne in mind that the first cost of an Observatory

will not be the only cost; there will be an annual expenditure for its upkeep. I hope the Government will take any opposition there may be to these votes in good part, and not make a party question of them. No doubt, on the main issues of their Estimates they are quite right in standing their ground, but on little matters of this kind I do not think they ought to do so, if they see there is a feeling of opposition to them. I notice a considerable number of increases in these Estimates, and I hope the Government, when we come to them, will be able to justify them. The hon. member for East Perth indulged in a great deal of regret because of the discrepancy between our imports and our exports; the hon. member did not see much subject for congratulation in the fact that our imports had increased to such a large extent, and he seemed to think that this discrepancy between the two was anything but a sign of prosperity. I am not prepared to inflict upon the committee anything like a homily upon political economy on this occasion; it would be out of place, and take up too much time. But I must remind the hon. member that a great many recognised authorities on political economy lay it down as an axiom that the imports of a country are a good index of its prosperity, without reference to exports at all. The case as between a country and a private individual is not a parallel one. The imports that come to a country must have been paid for, and this shows that the country requires them. An immigrant coming into the colony, possessed of £500, with the intention of settling down here, does not bring 500 sovereigns in his pocket; he will go to the Bank before he leaves and get a draft upon a Perth bank. That draft may pass to a merchant, who will send it away for goods, which come here as imports; so that the money is really exchanged for goods. This accounts for a large proportion of our imports, I believe; the accession to our population of people with a few hundred pounds in their pockets who are about the very best type of settlers we could have. It has been said that our Customs duties are very high, and no doubt they are; but I cannot agree that this is altogether the cause of the high cost of living. No doubt a reduction in the Customs tariff would re-

duce the cost of living to some extent, but I think the main cause of the high cost of living here is the dearness of many articles of daily consumption which we really ought to produce ourselves. If you were to reduce the *ad valorem* duties by two and a-half per cent., and to cut off the duty on sugar and on tea and other necessities, the whole thing would not make a difference on the average of £1 a year per head of the population. Where the heavy cost of living comes in is in the cost of articles we ought to grow ourselves, but which we have not been able to grow for the want of facilities for sending them to market, and the consequent absence of anything to stimulate local production. The Government can do nothing more to reduce the cost of living than by providing increased facilities of communication between our producers and our markets. At any rate they will do a great deal more in that direction, in my opinion, than by tinkering with the tariff. As to the Agent Generalship, I believe it is the general opinion among many members that the term of five years is too long a tenure of the office. No doubt when we come to the item, this question will be fully debated. But I think it is decidedly too long a period. I do not think it is fair to the Ministry themselves, nor fair towards those who may succeed them in after years, to make this appointment for a fixed term of five years, and lock it up (so to speak) all that time. The position of Agent General, in all the other colonies, is looked upon as a reward for eminent political services done to the country. It is one of the choice tit-bits which a Ministry has to offer as a reward for faithful and conspicuous services rendered. In Sir William Robinson, no doubt, we have a very able man, a gentleman who will be an ornament to the position, and who will serve the colony well. But I think the term of the appointment should not be for so long a time as five years.

MR. QUINLAN: In common with all previous speakers, except my hon. friend the member for East Perth, I wish to offer my congratulations to the Ministry upon their good management of the finances of the colony, and the progress it has made during the first year under our new form of Government. That is sufficiently shown by the increase of

revenue, which exceeded the estimated revenue by the sum of £53,505. It may be said that to some extent this was due a great deal to good luck; I think it is probably due in a great measure to the inauguration of Responsible Government, and to the good management of the Ministry who have had charge of the country's affairs, who have shown the world that Western Australia is well worthy the attention of capitalists and investors, and others seeking new homes for themselves. I congratulate the Ministry also upon their having saved £10,000 during the last year in the estimated expenditure for the year. With respect to the increase of revenue derived from the Customs, which was £35,886 in excess of the estimate, I attribute that largely to the improvements suggested by Dr. Wollaston in the system of working our Customs department. The way that gentleman reorganised the department caused, I believe, an increase of thousands of pounds in our revenue from that source. Certainly, in some respects, some of the reforms he introduced have been against the interests of such people as myself, with regard to clearing spirits and goods of that kind. I notice also a considerable increase in the revenue from land sales. This is satisfactory, no doubt; but although it helps to swell the general revenue to include these land sales in it, still we must not forget that we are parting with the national estate. I think the Government are to be congratulated upon having a credit balance of £107,647 at the end of the year. It has been said that it is not wise policy to have such a large credit balance, with a Treasury "bulging with money" (as it has been put), and it may be a question whether it would not have been better if a great portion of this money had been spent upon necessary public works, so as to provide employment for people. Still, no doubt this large credit balance will have a good effect on the money market at home, when we come to float another portion of our loan. I notice a considerable increase in the stamp revenue, and also in postage receipts, notwithstanding the reduction in the postage rates to Great Britain. All these things are signs of progress. The same again with our telegraph receipts, which were £1,179 over the estimated receipts. There was also

a satisfactory increase in the fees received in the Registrar General's office, and in the office of the Registrar of Titles. Then we come to the Railway Department, where the revenue was £10,000 in excess of the estimate. That, I consider, very encouraging. I hope the Government are going to show us at last that this important department may be worked at a profit. I hope that will be the result this current year. With regard to the floating of the first instalment of our loan, I spoke of that in the debate on the Address-in-Reply rather disparagingly. Since then we have had an explanation from the Government, from which it would appear that things were not quite so bad as we thought. Still I hope they will be more successful with future loans. I am glad to hear they have made satisfactory arrangements with the local Banks with regard to loan moneys brought into the colony. With regard to our exports, I am glad to see the item of gold forming an important item of the colony's exports, there being no less than £53,000 sent from Yilgarn alone, which I think fully justifies the railway proposed to be built to those goldfields. I have no doubt, in my own mind, that Yilgarn will be one of our chief sources of revenue, by attracting a large consuming population. With regard to the indebtedness of the colony, I think it is comparatively light, when compared with the indebtedness of the other colonies, which I find amounts, in some of them, to over £60 per head of the population. Here it is only £28 per head. Coming to the estimates of expenditure for the current year. I am delighted to refer to the fact that the Government intend to spend at least £30,000 in public buildings and improvements in Perth. All who come to the colony naturally expect to see the capital of the country a decent place, and an attractive place. I am sorry to say it is not a very attractive capital at present. Although £30,000 is not a very large sum for such a purpose, it will do something in this direction; and I hope it may be increased year by year. With regard to the proposed subsidy to Municipalities, I consider that in the case of Perth we are justly entitled to receive £1 for every £1 raised by rates, when we look at all the Government buildings in the city which have never paid any



rates, and when we bear in mind that we have people coming to Perth from all parts of the colony, wearing and tearing our roads and streets. But I suppose we must be thankful for small mercies, and accept whatever we can get. A jocular remark has been made in reference to the members representing Perth all sitting on the Opposition side of the House. I have already explained the reason I am sitting on this side, and I do not wish to repeat what has been said before. The Government are aware of my reason for occupying the position I do in this House. I am sure they will not think that I sit here simply for the sake of opposition to the Government. It does not follow that because I am sitting on this bench I am always going to vote against the Government. I shall, in the future, as I have done in the past, vote for what I think is best in the interests of the colony. I was glad to hear the hon. member for York saying that he is not the leader of any Opposition, because really there is no organised Opposition in the House. If there has been, I must say there has been a disruption amongst that body already. Since I have occupied a seat in this House I have always been able, within reason, to get everything I have asked from the Government, by going about it in a quiet way. No doubt, mind you, the Government considered what I asked for was in the interests of the country. I think it is better to do things in this quiet way than to be jumping up here like a jack-in-the-box. I have found it so, for I have generally got what I wanted. I think on that score alone the proposed increase of Ministerial salaries is reasonable enough. I am not going to argue the legal aspect of the question with my hon. friend who represents East Perth, who says the Government cannot put these increases on the Estimates without amending the Constitution Act. Anyhow, I hope they will find some way of doing it. Talking about Ministers, I am pleased to acknowledge the immense amount of good which the Attorney General did for the colony by his presence in England. A man of his attainments and great ability must have produced a very favorable impression, and no doubt the colony will benefit by it. With regard to the Agent-Generalship, it seems to me very

odd that a Governor receiving £4,000 a year should resign that position to accept £1,500 a year as Agent General. However, I take it that is his own business, not ours. I do not see what it has to do with us even if he accepted the office for nothing, so long as he is a suitable person for the position. No doubt he is looking after Number One, and I suppose he will get a pension for himself as a Governor. When the Estimates come before us I propose to move some amendments,—with regard to Rottnest, for one; except as a Reformatory for boys, I should like to see this place done away with altogether. I am sure the natives could be more usefully employed elsewhere. I should also like to see a sum set apart for prospecting for minerals. At present we are paying £1,000 a year to a Government Geologist, who, no doubt, does his work well; but I understand he merely goes to report on discoveries made by other people. I think he might be more usefully employed in seeking for minerals himself, instead of simply reporting upon the discoveries of others. Once those discoveries are made known capital will soon test whether they are worth anything or not. Another thing I should like to see is a decent Court House built in Perth; we want it badly. As to a public market, the hon. member for the Swan said this ought to be provided by the Municipal Council. I agree with him there, if we had the money for it. But the City Council has no funds for it, and we must therefore look to the Government. The hon. members for the De Grey and for Geraldton said they saw no necessity for spending £2,000 in providing a park for Perth; but I think it is a generally acknowledged fact that we have very few places of recreation in this city now, where people can go and enjoy themselves in the open air. The Government garden is too small for the population now, and I think it is high time that something should be done in the direction of making a new park, and I am very glad the Government have put down £2,000 towards that purpose.

MR. DE HAMEL: I should like to preface the few remarks I propose to offer with reference to the Budget with a few words in respect to what fell from the hon. member for York last evening.

He told us there was no Opposition in this House; that we are all members of one happy family; and that we on this side sit here simply because there is no room for us upon the other side. There is many a true word spoken in jest, and, so far as the hon. member spoke for himself, I have nothing to say. But I would suggest to him that he should show the sincerity of his words by crossing over to the other side of the House, and taking up a position in that nice vacant chair opposite, which stands very invitingly near the Ministerial benches, and which I think the hon. member would fill very comfortably. It would be a relief to me if he did go over and occupy it, for I hate looking at vacancy. But, joking apart, I should myself be very sorry indeed if there were no opposition in this House; in fact I cannot understand Responsible Government without any opposition. But there are two kinds of opposition; there is hostile opposition and there is friendly opposition. And I say that in the interests of the country a friendly but vigilant opposition is necessary under this form of Government, to criticise the actions of the Ministry in power,—not to act in a spirit of hostility towards them, but, while supporting them where such support can be given in the interests of the country, at the same time prepared to criticise their actions. I desire to exercise this right of friendly criticism in reviewing the financial statement made by the Colonial Treasurer. There has been a good deal of glamour thrown over that statement, by the fact that it showed a large and unexpected surplus; and any remarks I have to make, although not so congratulatory and complimentary as others, will be equally sincere. I think it is a matter for congratulation, not only to the Government but also to the country and the public at large, to find the actual revenue for the year so much in excess of the Estimate put before us last session. This at any rate goes to prove that the Colonial Treasurer when he made his financial statement on that occasion did not allow his imagination to run away with him, and it gives us confidence in his future estimates. I can cordially endorse the congratulations showered upon the Government, so far. But I am unable to agree in all the

Premier stated in the Budget Speech a few evenings ago, and, more than that, I am bound to disagree with many of his deductions. The first objection I take is to this statement: that the Government received £62,000 last year more than they expended. I ask the Premier whether in making this statement he has taken into account every item of expenditure. I take it that what is an absolute liability is as much an expenditure as though it were actually expended, if we apply the same rule to a Government running the business of a country as we would apply to a private company running an ordinary commercial business. In running a commercial business, when you have a bill outstanding, or any guarantee which takes the form of a bill, or a liability which may, or probably will have to be met, that bill or guarantee would take its place on the debit side of the account. That being so, I turn to this guarantee given by the Government to the National Bank for the Midland Railway Company. I am not going to trouble the House with that transaction, but it amounts to this, according to the agreement: the National Bank agree to advance the sum of £60,000, by five instalments, to the Midland Railway Co., and the Government undertake, if that amount is not paid back by the Company, to repay it to the Bank, with interest. The agreement, very funnily, omits to specify the rate of interest, but they undertake to repay the £60,000 with interest.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No.

MR. DE HAMEL: I have the agreement here: "I, Sir John Forrest, etc., acting for and on behalf of the said colony, etc., undertake to repay you all such advances to the extent of £60,000, including interest."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That is including interest.

MR. DE HAMEL: Quite right. I am wrong. I beg your pardon. Then we find that, according to this agreement, the Government are bound to repay this £60,000 within twelve months from the date of first advance, if called upon. The first of these advances would be made in November last, and therefore the liability of the Government under this guarantee will come into force in Novem-

ber of the present year. Taking it in that way, what becomes of the alleged credit of £62,000 standing at the end of the year? It is reduced to a credit of £2,000 only.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We had £107,000 to credit at the end of the year.

MR. DE HAMEL: I was referring to the excess of revenue over expenditure. The alleged surplus of £107,000 is reduced to £47,000.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What about the assets in that agreement? If you debit us with the liability, you should also credit us with the assets.

MR. DE HAMEL: I will say a word or two as to these assets. At the time this guarantee was given, the Company were entitled to 600,000 acres of land, and they undertook, as a security for this guarantee, to give up 200,000 acres to the Government. But, by means of this guarantee, the Company have been enabled to do so much more work on the railway that they are now entitled to another 600,000 acres. So that while on the one hand the Company give up 200,000 acres to the Government, on the other hand they have, by the action of the Government, been placed in the position to claim another 600,000 acres. Therefore, so far as I can see, the whole advantage of this transaction is with the Company, and none with the colony. But this is not, to my mind, the only error one finds on these Estimates. The Government take a most sanguine view in reference to the revenue from railways. I would like to know whether it is founded on a sure basis. I admit that it is highly satisfactory to find that the traffic receipts for the past year show an increase of £17,000. I do not wish to rob the Government of any credit due to them. That is highly satisfactory, and it is highly satisfactory that the receipts from our railways should for the first time approach to within £3,000 of the expenditure, which I consider reflects credit upon the Government, and also upon the Engineer-in-Chief, and our Traffic Manager, Mr. Roberts, who must have been mainly instrumental in bringing about this marked increase in our railway prosperity. But the Premier went further than that. He told us that the receipts last year came within £3,000

of the expenditure, but this year he estimates that there will be an actual profit of £4,000 on the year's working. I cannot see, myself, where this £4,000 profit comes in. The estimated expenditure for the year is £86,000, and the estimated revenue as placed before us is £91,000; but, out of this £92,000, £7,000 has to be deducted for wharfage receipts. This leaves the amount to be derived from railways, pure and simple, at £84,000; so that, instead of there being a profit on the working expenses of our railways of £4,000, we have a deficit of £2,000. And we only arrive at these results by allowing the large increase of £20,000 in the railway receipts for the current year—an increase of about 33 per cent. on the receipts for last year. Where this large increase is to come from, I do not know, unless the Government include the truckage of material for the new lines of railway to be constructed. If so, it is simply a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul. It is purely a fortuitous increase, a transitory income, which will not occur again in future years. Although in these remarks I have been opposed to the figures put before us by the Premier, I am thoroughly in accord with the remarks made by him in regard to what must be successful railway management. But I do not consider that he carried his deductions to their proper logical conclusions. He said: "I believe we are just beginning now to feel the effects of our railway policy. Hitherto, as we all know, we have for many years built them in a half-and-half sort of way, 20 miles now and 40 miles again, and we have expected these railways would instantly develop the country and instantly pay. I have always contended that this was altogether a wrong assumption. The fact of a railway running through a country does not make the land more productive, for it is only the inducement to increased settlement that follows a railway; and when you build a railway it must take some years before results can be attained." This is undoubtedly a sound principle. But it will apply to the railways we now propose to construct, equally with those already constructed; and we shall do well to bear this in mind. Then the Premier went on to deal with the estimated receipts and expenditure, and

told us that the Government expect to make a profit of between £4,000 and £5,000 on the working of the railways this year. He says: "This is the first year in the history of the colony when there has been any profit, or rather any estimated profit, on the working of our railways." What does that really amount to? Simply this, that this year our present railways, which have been running for years, are expected to make, not an absolute profit, but to make sufficient money to cover their working expenses, and just a little over. It is not so much absolute profit on the whole business, but just enough to cover the cost of working them. Hitherto there has been a dead loss upon the working expenses, but this year we expect to work our railways without this dead loss. So far, no doubt, that is satisfactory. But how do we get at it? How have we arrived at this satisfactory state of things? By gradually working up the traffic year by year, by gradually developing the country and encouraging settlement. It has been the work of years, as it always must be in the case of new railways in a new country. The Premier tells us so himself, and I am not going to quarrel with his conclusions. But let us apply this same process of reasoning to our present position, in view of the new railways which we are about to embark in. The railway mileage at present worked by the Government is about 200 miles. In a short time we hope to have nearly 400 miles of new railways opened.

MR. RICHARDSON: They won't be opened this year.

MR. DE HAMEL: We hope to enter upon the construction of nearly 400 miles of new railways this year. We shall then have double our present mileage of new railways. What, then, is the prospect that is before us? It has taken years of development and settlement for our present lines to be able to just cover the expense of working them; how long will it be before these new lines are able to pay anything at all? We all know they must be, as our present lines have been up to this year, a dead loss for a long time to come. Although the department may be able to make a small profit on the working expenses of existing lines this year, we have to face this fact, that in two or three years' time, when these new

railways are built and equipped, they will be worked at a loss to the colony, and I am afraid at a considerable loss for some years to come. I point that out now because I consider that instead of having a most flourishing prospect before us as regards our railway revenue, our railway management ought to be most rigidly kept under check and the expenditure rigidly under control. We have no right to spend a penny more than we can help, in spite of the fact that we hope our present railways will this year and next year pay their actual working expenses. The next point in the Treasurer's speech I wish to touch upon is that of the soundness and prosperity of the country. The hon. gentleman seemed to put it before the House that the country never had been in so prosperous a condition as at the present moment. I, myself, would like to know where all this prosperity is. If you make inquiry all round you will find that money has seldom been so tight as now, and everyone says that business has seldom been so dull. Yet the Treasurer tells us that the present prosperity of the colony was never equalled. I think, on his own showing, he is contradicted in that, when he makes a point of the increase in our imports, which he puts down at £22 per head of the population. I cannot imagine how anyone could congratulate himself upon the extent of our imports, because we are not a manufacturing country, and we are not importing the raw material to be converted here into exports. In a case like that one can understand that the higher the imports the more prosperous the manufacturing industries of the colony were. But here that is not the case. The greater portion of our imports will be found to be articles of food and clothing, and other necessities, all manufactured articles. I consider that, in the circumstances of our colony, increasing the volume of imports is a detriment to us and a drain upon us. I noticed that the Treasurer, when he dealt with our exports, dealt with that subject most tenderly, and passed on, having stated that they only amounted to about £14 per head. I observe that of our total exports for the year, amounting to £765,000, no less than £115,000, or nearly one-seventh of the whole, consisted of gold. That reduces what I call the gen-

eral trade exports—wool, shells, jarrah, hides, sandalwood, etc.—to something like £12 per head of the population.

MR. RICHARDSON: Why is not gold as good as anything else?

MR. DE HAMEL: It is, no doubt; but the other things I have mentioned represent the staple industries of the colony. It will thus be seen that we are spending at the rate of £22 per head, and only receiving at the utmost £14 per head; in other words we are over-running the constable; and to prolong these two lines a sufficient distance simply means bankruptcy in the end.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Is that the policy of the Opposition?

MR. DE HAMEL: Yet I find the Treasurer rejoicing, and congratulating the colony on the splendid upkeep of our imports and the consequent prosperity of the colony. It reminded me of that ancient emperor who fiddled while Rome was burning; it seemed to suggest that the Ministry were ignorant of the real position of the colony. Instead of looking these facts fairly and openly in the face, they propose what, under the circumstances, seems to me an extravagant expenditure. The expenditure they propose on public works, out of general revenue, is £93,000; but of our alleged surplus of £107,000, I have already shown that, in my opinion, we ought to deduct £60,000 from that surplus as the amount of our liability for the Midland Railway Company's advance, and this knocks down that £107,000 to £47,000. Yet the Government propose an expenditure, on public works alone, of double that amount. In speaking of this subject the Premier said—referring to the £93,000: "I think there never before was such an amount placed before hon. members for public works and buildings in this House, and I think when the Government has the money to expend on these most necessary and urgent works, it shows that we have the money available, and that the colony has some backbone in it." I consider that when we contemplate spending something like £1,000,000 of loan money during the present year and next year, there is no need to expend so much out of current revenue on such works as are here mentioned, such as public parks and the beautifying

of Perth. I think those who contribute to our increasing revenue are the ones who ought to profit by this surplus. It is easy to find out who are the principal contributors to the revenue, and who have made it what it is, for we are told that our main source of revenue is the Customs, from which we received £237,000 last year, being an increase of £55,000 over the receipts from the same source during the previous year. From that it is perfectly clear that it is the general body of the public, throughout the colony, who are the principal contributors to the revenue; and no one can deny that the working man, the backbone of the country, pays far more, in proportion, in direct taxation through the Customs, than his wealthier neighbor,—not so much individually, but more in proportion. Therefore, I say we ought to have shown some consideration towards those who have given us this augmented revenue, by a reduction in the tariff out of which this revenue arose, and so reduce the cost of living to them. The next largest increase was in the land revenue, which showed an increase of £28,000 over the previous year. Not one penny of this, I am sorry to say, is to be devoted to colonisation, the introduction and settlement of people on the land. I consider it is a most important question for this colony that we should do more in this direction. It is no use our opening up any more land unless we start a policy of inducing people to come here to occupy that land. And to do that, we must offer them strong inducements. A good colonisation policy would be the best inducement we could put forward, and I think we might very properly devote this land fund, or a portion of it, to the carrying out of that colonisation policy. The success of a budget is not so much in the amount of the surplus that may have accrued at the end of the year as in the satisfactory apportionment of that surplus so as to do the greatest good to the greatest number. I have heard it stated by eminent political economists in the old country that a Ministry has no right to a surplus at all; that if they have a surplus it is clear that they have robbed the people of more than they ought to have taken out of their pockets. But, without accepting that doctrine, I do

think that when we have a surplus such as this, the Government ought to consider the general body of the public who have given them that surplus, and also do something to attract population and encourage the settlement of the soil.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** Build railways, for instance.

**MR. DE HAMEL:** Reduce our tariff, so that people from the other colonies may be more induced to come here. There is no question about it, the tariff of this colony is high, and, if by lowering it and making the cost of living cheaper, we could attract population, the consumption of dutiable articles would be correspondingly greater, and we might go on reducing the tariff, and yet derive a larger income from it. A proof of this policy was given by the Premier himself when he spoke of the result of the recent reduction of the postage rates to the old country, which showed an increase of over £2,000 in the revenue. In connection with that, there is another reduction which I hope will receive the attention of the Government before next year, and that is a reduction in our inland postage. It seems a funny thing that we should be able to send a letter 12,000 miles to Europe for 2½d., and yet have to pay 2d. for sending a letter from here to Fremantle. I think if the Government made a reduction in this inland postage rate, they would find the same satisfactory result as has been shown from the reduction of the ocean postage to England. I was glad to hear the Volunteer movement spoken of in terms of praise by the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson), but I cannot accord any praise to the manner in which our Volunteers have been treated by the authorities. For two years now they have been kept in a state of doubt and uncertainty as to whether they are to remain Volunteers, or to be formed into a Militia, or into a partially-paid force, or what. The result is, the men are losing heart, and the nucleus that you have of a good defence force is waning away, because of this uncertainty. I see there is £500 on these Estimates for a Commandant, but I hope that a thorough system of reorganisation will be carried out before we have a Commandant appointed merely to carry out a system which is a failure at the present time. I can assure members

that unless the force is re-organised, it would be much better to abolish the whole thing, because I feel that it is at present a farce, although if you properly re-organised the force you would have a body of men equal to any similar body of men in any of the other colonies. There is another point, touched upon by the hon. member for East Perth (Mr. Canning), which I should like to refer to. It is one that I had given no attention to until he mentioned it, but I have done so since, though I have not read the matter up. But I think the hon. member is right, and that we shall not be able to increase the salaries of Ministers simply on the vote of this House. I believe it is absolutely necessary that a bill should be brought in to give effect to those increases. I say this now because I want the Government to consider this matter thoroughly, as I should be sorry for this House to stultify itself by passing a vote which we might afterwards find we had no power to pass. The only other question I desire to touch upon is that of the appointment of an Agent General. I consider the position of Agent General is one that ought to be sought after. So far as the increase of the salary from £1,250 to £1,500 is concerned, I regard that as a trifling matter, not worth consideration; but when it comes to the question of a gentleman, not seeking the position, but actually dictating his own terms, that he must have it for five years, I think that is rather putting the colony in a false position. I think we have no business to make this appointment at the dictation of anyone. It would look as if there was only one man in the world able to take it. That seems to me a reflection upon the colony. I also think this House has no right to bind the colony to the services of an Agent General, whoever he may be, beyond the usual term adopted in the other colonies—three years. I do not intend to detain the committee any longer. I have gone fairly and fully into the principal points that occur to me in connection with these Estimates. When we come to discuss the items in detail will be the right time to offer any further remarks.

**MR. THROSSELL:** So much time has been occupied already in this debate that I propose to speak very briefly, and I can promise members that I will

pocket my notes, and confine myself to a few general remarks on the financial policy of the Government, as it may be judged from the financial statement of the Colonial Treasurer. It is highly satisfactory to find that the glowing anticipations of the Government as regards the past year have been realised, and more than realised. But I should like to point out that even in our prosperity there may be elements of danger. I will refer to that point presently. To my mind perhaps the most satisfactory evidence of the prosperity of the colony is the fact that our finances are in this flourishing condition, notwithstanding the fact that our agricultural and mineral industries are yet in their infancy. One of the most pleasing features to my mind in the general progress of the colony during the year has been the large additional population attracted into the colony. We are told that our population increased by 3,000 during the year. That means, if I understand it rightly, a clear gain to the colony—reckoning the value of each individual at £4, which I believe is about the average contribution per head to the revenue—of £12,000 per annum, equal, at 4 per cent., to the interest on a loan of £300,000. That is a point which no member has made yet in the course of this debate, but I think it is worthy of note, especially when it is taken into consideration that to gain this £12,000 we have only spent £72,000 out of loan money. This illustrates and confirms what I have always insisted upon—the necessity of adopting every means within our power to increase our population. I have said that even in our prosperity there is an element of danger, and, living as I do in the country, this element is constantly before my mind. While we are rejoicing and rightly rejoicing, over our mineral resources, and looking forward to their further development, and to the inauguration of public works in various parts of the colony, while we are justly proud of the prospects before us in this respect, I wish to warn the House that these very elements of prosperity are completely disorganising our labor market. Our goldfields and our public works are withdrawing our young people away from our farms and our stations, and our most important industry of all, the agricultural

industry, is neglected and abandoned for more attractive and better-paid occupations. This is a serious matter. I think the Government, in the face of the prosperity of the country in other directions, should do all they possibly can to introduce a steady stream of agricultural labor into the colony. I said it in this House last year, and I repeat it now, these public works that we are starting and these gold-mines of ours, are bound to attract people to our shores; but where do they go to? It is not the stamp of labor that will find its way into our rural districts; and this stream of labor finds its way to our mines or becomes swallowed up on our railways and other public works. All this is absolutely killing the most important industry of all, that of agriculture; and I would warn the Government that they must not hug the idea that these public works and these gold-mines, rejoicing in them as we do, are going to do for the farming industry all we suppose it is, unless we at the same time take some steps to recruit the agricultural labor market. I am glad to find that there is a large unexpended balance on the Loan Estimates for immigration purposes, and I hope the Government will avail themselves freely of the nomination system to bring out a suitable class of laborers to supply the wants of the agricultural community. That nomination system, conducted in a business-like way, would, in my opinion, answer all our requirements. What I would venture to suggest is that the Roads Boards and Municipal Councils in each district be appointed honorary boards for the nomination of laborers, to receive the applications for labor from the employers of the district, and that these local labor bureaux should remit these applications to a Central Board. When we have 200 or 300 applications sent in, in this way, for ploughmen and laborers, and men of that class, let us not trust to the chapter of accidents to send us out a suitable class of these immigrants, but let us send to England some practical business man, thoroughly acquainted with the requirements of our labor market, and give him instructions to select these ploughmen and laborers. Let him travel about, in England, Ireland, Scotland, or where he likes, or where he thinks he can procure the most suitable class of men. We may

then hope to have the wants of our labor market supplied. If we do not do this, I do not myself see how we can expect to see agriculture prosper, nor how we are going to check the large importations of produce which, notwithstanding our railways, still flood our markets. Go to Fremantle, even now in harvest time, and you will see the wharf covered with imported flour, and wheat, and chaff, and other products which we ought to produce in the colony. I ask, is this a right state of things? We know it is not. But it must continue, unless the demands of our labor market are supplied from outside the colony. It must continue so long as our goldfields, which are bringing prosperity in other directions, are at the same time utterly disorganising our labor market, and tempting our young fellows away from a quiet country life and the old folks at home. This state of things must continue, to the serious detriment of the colony, so long as no fresh labor finds its way to our country districts. Once more, then, I trust, and seriously trust, that active earnest efforts will be made by the Government to introduce agricultural laborers, gardeners, and men of that class, from the old country,—I mean a class of men who will not rush away to the goldfields the moment they set foot on our shores, but will content themselves with either seeking employment on our farms or settle down on the land themselves. With regard to the question of municipal endowment, I am pleased to see the Government putting down £5,000 on these Estimates for that purpose. But I think when you come to allot this money, as I understand it is proposed to allot it, by giving each municipality 10s. for every pound raised by local taxation, I am afraid you will find that Perth and Fremantle and one or two other large towns will absorb nearly the lot, and poor Northam — poor Northam! — will get little or nothing. While I have no objection to Perth and Fremantle and other large municipalities getting their 10s. in the pound, I do think that in the case of the smaller country towns, where the municipal income is under £500 or £1,000, the grant should be doubled. I think these municipalities should get pound per pound. Probably 10s. might be ample in the case of Perth, but, to

make a proportionate subsidy in the case of Northam, you would have to make it £2. I think the least we can do for these small country municipalities is to give them an endowment of £1 for every £1 raised from local rates. I was surprised to hear the hon. member for the DeGrey denouncing the proposal to spend £2,000 in improving the public park on Mount Eliza. The hon. member referred to it as a wilderness, but I would remind him that it only requires the application of a little energy and money, intelligently directed, to make that wilderness blossom as the rose. There is ample scope for improving and beautifying this fair city of Perth, which I believe will yet become the garden of Australia. I believe this park is close to the Waterworks on the Mount; so that there will be every opportunity of converting what the hon. member calls a wilderness into a charming place of public recreation. It overlooks our beautiful river, and the picturesque range of hills in the distance, and altogether presents a delightful spot for such a purpose, and it would be a huge mistake to allow it to remain a wilderness any longer. All I can say is, if Perth does not want this grant for its park, send it up the country. I can name a place where, not £2,000, but half that amount, would be gladly received, and spent on improvements of this kind. With regard to the proposed river reclamation at the water-side, I think this ought to be a reproductive work. It will make a most pleasant place for recreation, and will be a great boon to the citizens. While we country members approve of this expenditure on your park and your river frontage, I ask my town friends also to remember the claims of our country districts, who do not ask for £2,000 for their recreation grounds, but will be glad to get £200. I can only say, in conclusion, that the policy of the Government during the past year has my cordial approval, and, I believe, the approval of the country at large. Sins of commission and of omission no doubt they have been guilty of. They would not be human were it otherwise. I do not suppose we shall ever be fortunate enough to get a Government against whom we shall not be able to bring that charge; but I do believe, and honestly believe, of the present



Ministry that for integrity of purpose and a sterling desire to promote the best interests of the country we shall never get their superior.

MR. MOLLOY: I have waited until older members of this House have had their say upon this important subject of the Budget before venturing to offer any remarks. As the junior member of the House, representing the important constituency of Perth, I have listened very carefully to the arguments and criticisms that have been adduced with respect to the Treasurer's financial statement; and I rise with very great pleasure to avail myself of this opportunity of saying that, although sitting on this side of the House, I also offer my congratulations to the worthy Ministry who have been able to present such a glowing statement to us and such a satisfactory account of their stewardship. The hon. the Premier prefaced his budget speech by a reference to the revenue of the colony ten years ago and the revenue of the colony last year. He told us that it had increased from £180,000 in 1880 to a revenue of £497,000 in 1891. The hon. gentleman referred in a tone of jubilation to the progress which the colony had made since the inauguration of Responsible Government, and he referred with pride to the fact that his expectations in that respect had been verified, and that his liberal estimate of the first year's revenue under that form of Government had even been exceeded by £53,000. He also told us that the actual revenue for the year exceeded the actual expenditure by no less a sum than £62,000. This, to my mind, is a very satisfactory state of things, and it redounds to the credit of the Government that they had this pleasant tale to tell. It is true that the principal amount of our revenue has been made up from Customs duties, and I notice that there was a vast increase over the expectations of the Premier in the receipts from this department. The Customs revenue in 1890 was £182,546, and the estimated receipts for 1891 were £201,800, whereas the actual receipts were £237,686, or an increase in Customs alone of £55,140. I think all this speaks well for the introduction of Responsible Government, and those who were so anxious to see that form of Government adopted have now the satisfaction of knowing that it has

largely tended to the growing prosperity of the country, as evidenced by this fact alone, that the Customs returns show an increase in the duties collected on importations to the extent of £55,000. But, although this is a matter for congratulation, I think it is still necessary that economy should be exercised as regards the contemplated expenditure for the year which is upon us. It must not be assumed with too much confidence that a similarly flourishing state of things will be repeated in the present year. However, we are not here at present to criticise in detail the proposed expenditure for the year; I take it that we shall have another opportunity of discussing these votes more minutely. When that opportunity arrives, I have no doubt the question will receive that amount of consideration which its importance demands, and that the Government will receive the loyal support of every member of the House in that which they think will conduce to the proper administration of public affairs and to the progress of the colony. In the matter of our railways, it has been stated that there is some reason for congratulation in the improved state of things in this department as compared with past years. That there is this improvement is evidenced by the fact that, while in previous years there was a distinct loss of about £14,000 a year upon the working of our railways, last year the loss sustained was reduced to about £3,000. Although this is undoubtedly a source of gratification to members and to the country, still I take it that, with proper economy exercised, and a careful handling of this department, our railways instead of being a dead loss to the country may be made a source of profit. It has been observed by some members that these figures do not include the interest on the capital expended in constructing the line, but simply the working expenses. I am one of those who are of opinion that in a rudimentary colony like this railways are not intended to yield direct profits like ordinary commercial ventures. They are built more for the sake of the indirect advantages they afford in the development of the country; and I cannot but think that a too sanguine view has been taken, and that the expectations formed have been too high, as to the result of working our railways dur-

ing the present year. I notice it is estimated that this year the revenue from our railways will amount to £91,000. I think this is rather too high a jump from £63,000, the revenue received last year. It contemplates an advance of 50 per cent. in one year. We must bear in mind that although the revenue from this source is increasing, there is a corresponding increase in the expenditure; so that if our expectations as to an augmented revenue are not realised, we may find that instead of returning a profit our railways may still entail upon us a considerable loss. The estimated expenditure for the current year to realise a revenue of £91,000 is set down at £86,000, as compared with an expenditure of £68,000 last year. This is a matter which should receive the very careful attention of this House when considering the Estimates of expenditure for the current year. It will not do for us to be too lavish, and to go in for creating new offices. We ought to man the department certainly with the necessary officers to carry out the work expeditiously and efficiently. While on this point, I notice there has been a new officer appointed as General Traffic Manager, at a salary of £800, and placed over the officer who has conducted the traffic business of this department for many years past, and done it so successfully that he has received the congratulations of members in this House, and has improved the business to such an extent that there has been a saving of £10,000 or £12,000 under his control. When there was every reason for rewarding the services of this officer, who has carried out his work so efficiently and given such general satisfaction, we find him overlooked, and a new office created, with a salary attached to it of about three times what this officer is receiving. This fresh officer is a stranger to the country, and to its circumstances and requirements, and yet we find him pitchforked over the head of an officer who has performed his work so efficiently in the past, and that too at an enormous salary compared with what we have been paying this old officer. I think such an appointment as this is a matter for regret; it certainly is no great encouragement to an officer of ability to pursue his work in the hope that his efforts will be rewarded by that promotion

which he is entitled to. I notice that in alluding to our imports for the past year a contrast has been made between them and our imports for 1890. I attach much importance to this matter. I see that while the value of our imports in 1890 was £874,000, they increased in 1891 to £1,162,000, or over 33 per cent. If we contrast this with the exports for the same two years, we find that the value of our exports in 1890 was £671,000, or about 25 per cent. less than our imports, and that in 1891 they were £765,000, or nearly 50 per cent. less than our imports. I do not think this relative increase is a matter for congratulation; I would rather see our exports exceeding our imports. Our imports are not made up of bank drafts, as one hon. member put it, but of goods consigned into the colony, and upon which Customs duties have to be paid, and the goods themselves have to be paid for. In this way we are sending out of the colony thousands of pounds annually for goods that might and ought to be produced in the colony. I think, notwithstanding what the hon. member for the DeGrey has said, that this is the commercial aspect of the question, and the right one.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): No.

MR. MOLLOY: The hon. gentleman has a right to his opinion, and so have I. I have had considerable experience, and will maintain my opinion even against that of the Attorney General on this subject. The Premier said the Government had £1,917,000 to spend; I can hardly agree with him in that respect. This includes the balance of the loan money, which has not yet been raised, and which cannot be said to be available for present expenditure; and provision has to be made for meeting the large amount of expenditure contemplated in these Estimates. It is intended to devote £93,000 out of current revenue to new works and buildings; this is a satisfactory and proper way of absorbing our surplus, and I am glad that the Government are going to give the taxpayers the benefit of it, by finding people employment. I think the Ministry are to be congratulated upon this wise investment of their surplus money. Some allusion has been made to members sitting on this side of the House, and particularly to

the three members for Perth sitting on the Opposition side. The Premier also told us that one of these members, the hon. member for East Perth, actuated by a feeling of hostility towards the Government benches, and with an utter disregard for the interests of the country, and simply to gratify his opposition and his spleen towards the Government, had made some very reckless statements. That is a very serious indictment. I am not here to defend the hon. member, who is well able to defend himself, but I will take this opportunity of assuring the House that no matter where I sit my vote will always be given in support of what I conceive to be best in the interests of the country. I at any rate am not sitting here with an utter disregard for those interests, nor in a feeling of recklessness, to gratify any spirit of opposition or any vindictive feeling towards the members occupying the Treasury bench. I am sitting here to bestow my best judgment upon every subject which may come before us for our deliberation, and I shall apply myself to the best of my ability in endeavoring to arrive at those conclusions which in my opinion will be most conducive to the progress of the country. I may say I am not sitting here in opposition to the Government in the sense of any factious opposition; I am sitting here principally for one reason, and that is because I did not approve of the action of the Government in giving the guarantee they did to the Midland Railway Company, because in my opinion it was not in the interests of the country. This is my principal reason for taking my seat on this side of the House, and not because of any material difference of opinion with regard to the views of the Government. I entertain the opinion that in this particular matter it was not wise in the interests of the country for the Government of the colony to come forward to bolster up the credit of a private company. I may be wrong, and the Ministry may be right; events may prove that they were justified in the action they took, and no one will be better pleased than I will if such prove to be the case. However, I am entitled to my own opinion, and, until it is proved that I am wrong, I certainly shall not give way to the opinion held by hon. members sitting opposite. There is one

matter on which I think the Government have to be congratulated, and that is for having obtained the services of so distinguished and able a gentleman as the Governor of this colony as Agent General. I think that no better appointment could be made; and I think this gentleman, considering how well he has served this country,—if there was any compliment we could pay him in return,—well deserved it. No member on this side of the House would begrudge it, considering the way this colony has progressed under his wise and prudent administration. When this matter comes on for discussion, I will have an opportunity of expressing my opinion upon it further. In the meantime I say that the Ministry are to be congratulated upon having received an offer from so distinguished a gentleman as Sir William Robinson to fill this position. I have now ventured to offer my comments with respect to the most salient features of the Financial Statement, the most important statement that has come before this House this session. Perhaps it is not worth while, Mr. Chairman, but I must ask you to protect me against the interruptions of the hon. member for Geraldton.

MR. SIMPSON: I am not aware that I interrupted him; if I did, I express my regret. I was simply conversing with an hon. member sitting close to me.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not speak so loud when members are addressing the House.

MR. MOLLOY: I was saying, sir, that I have now gone through what appeared to me the most important features in the Budget Speech. I will not detain the House any longer. I have endeavored to show that the Financial Statement which has been presented to us shows distinctly that we have made considerable progress since the inauguration of Responsible Government. A surplus of £107,000 is most decidedly a happy state of things; and the picture which the Ministry have been able to present to our gaze is decidedly a pleasant one, and one upon which they may fairly be congratulated. I only hope that the financial results of the present year, as indicated in the Treasurer's statement, may prove equally a subject for congratulation, and that the most glowing ex-

pectations of the hon. gentleman may be realised.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It was very refreshing, after the general chorus of praise that had been given to the Ministry, to listen to the fair criticism of the policy of the Government offered by the hon. member for Albany. Although the hon. member somewhat severely criticised portions of the financial policy of the Ministry, I do not think it can be said that he did not give them credit for all they deserved. I believe with most members that the present Ministry have carried out their duties honestly, and I think have taken a statesmanlike view of the position; but the Premier, in his very able Budget Speech the other night, gave, I think, a rather too glowing description of the financial position of the colony. He made a point of stating that our indebtedness per head of the population compared favorably with the other colonies, but he did not add that our taxation from Customs was higher, and that in this respect we are more heavily taxed than any other of the Australian colonies. With the hon. member for Albany, I think that instead of increasing our expenditure in the manner proposed it would have been better if the Government, with their large surplus, had brought forward a bill to relieve the public of some of this taxation by amending the tariff. Although they are in a position to propose an expenditure of £160,000 more than was expended last year, we do not hear a word about reducing taxation, and the Customs duties still remain what they are. Last year they amounted to £237,686, out of a total revenue of £497,000, or nearly one-half of the whole revenue. My idea—and I think it is the idea of a good many—is, that if we want people to come here to settle, the best inducement we can offer them is cheap living. But what do we find? We find that it is more expensive to live in this colony than in the other Australian colonies; in fact, we are told that the cost of living here is nearly double the cost of living there. It is all very well for the Government to come forward with a glowing and satisfactory balance sheet, and show us that apparently we are in a very prosperous condition; but I think it would have been better if they

had come forward with some measure to relieve the people of the colony from taxation. A great many years ago—I think it was in Governor Ord's time, when there was a deficit in the finances—a sort of panic set in, and the Government came down to the House and told us we must provide them with more revenue in order to meet this deficit, and that the only way of doing so was by increasing the Customs duties. So they brought in a bill for that purpose, which they said was only a temporary measure, and they promised it would be repealed as soon as matters improved. The House passed the bill on that understanding, and increased the Customs duties to enable the Government to tide over their temporary difficulties. But, from that day to this, that bill has never been repealed. The promise of the Government has not been fulfilled. Here we are with an overflowing Treasury, with promising goldfields in various parts of the colony, and every sign of progress and prosperity; yet not a word do we hear about reducing this heavy taxation. I think now is the time for the Government to take some steps in that direction, and to show the outside world that living here can be made as cheap, if not cheaper, than in the other colonies. People come here now with the intention of settling amongst us, but when they find the high cost of living they go away again. Therefore, while I give the Government credit for their general administration, and for their intelligence in other directions, I do think it would have been wiser policy on their part, now that they have had an opportunity of doing so, to have brought forward a bill to amend the existing tariff, so as to reduce the present taxation. There are several matters in the Budget Speech I should have liked to have touched upon, but I will not detain the House at this hour; I know this debate has dragged on to a weary length already, and I will only refer to one or two matters. With regard to the Agent-Generalship, I feel that neither this House nor the Ministry has any right whatever to bind the present Parliament or any future Parliament to any particular individual as the holder of that office for five years. We can give Sir William Robinson every credit—and I do give him every credit—as an able

Administrator, and as a gentleman possessing special qualifications for representing this colony in England, and no doubt with his high social position and general ability he would represent it better probably than anyone we could get. At the same time, I do object to anyone—I do not care who he is, or how able he may be—dictating his own terms to us, and sending out a stipulation to this effect, “If you give me so and so, and do this and that, I will do you the honor of representing you.” I do object to that sort of thing from any individual, however capable he may be, and however glad we would be to have his services. Possibly, so far as Sir William Robinson is concerned, it may not suit him to take this position for a shorter term, or under other conditions. But this is an appointment that ought to be sought after, and by good men. Sir William Robinson is a very able administrator, but I question whether he knows the requirements of this colony as much as some others in the colony do. He may or he may not; but, for my part, I should like to see the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government representing us in England. My objection as regards Sir William Robinson is not as to the salary or the individual; what I object to is his stipulation that the appointment must be for five years. With regard to the grants to Municipalities, I think it is a very proper and wise thing to assist these local bodies, but I cannot agree with the argument that because certain Municipalities have improved the streets in front of Government buildings which have paid no rates, they should get a larger allowance than other Municipalities. It must not be forgotten that these Municipalities have received other concessions from the Government. Perth, for instance, has had its fine Town Hall given to it by the Government, and the general appearance of the city has been largely improved by the imposing pile of public buildings erected, not at the cost of the citizens of Perth alone but of the taxpayers of the whole colony. It may be argued, and I think rightly, that the bulk of the population is centred in Perth and Fremantle; at the same time I do not think they have any right to a larger proportionate share of this endowment than other and smaller

towns. On the contrary I think that the smaller the income of a municipality the larger amount of assistance it ought to receive; on the same principle as we subsidise medical officers for these outlying districts. There is one thing in which I am in accord with the hon. member for East Perth about, and that is with regard to the revenue from land sales. I hope the Government will give that matter their serious consideration before the Estimates are framed next year, and that the revenue derived from the sale of Crown lands will not be placed to the credit of the general revenue.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We will leave that for you to do, when you are Treasurer.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I think it is wrong in principle. I think the revenue from land sales should be set aside for the upkeep of roads and other productive works. To call it revenue is a misnomer. You are simply disposing of the public estate once for all when you sell it. You cannot sell it over again, next year; and it is not right to look upon the proceeds of these sales as ordinary revenue. It is different with rents received from land; that is an income that may be depended upon yearly. With regard to our railways, no doubt it is encouraging to find that the working results show so satisfactorily; but at the same time it must be borne in mind that we are about to construct several new lines of railway, and we must not expect these new lines to pay as well as those that have been years in existence. We are about to extend our railway system to the South, and to Yilgarn, and up towards the Murchison, and it would be folly to expect these lines, next year or the year after, to show the same result as old-established lines. On the contrary we must expect a considerable loss on the working of our railway system generally when the country is saddled with all these new lines. With regard to increasing the salaries of Ministers, I am one of those who do not object to this increase; I think it is a very proper expenditure. I think every member will agree that it is an increase that may very properly be placed on the Estimates. For my part, I am very pleased indeed. We all know that the present Ministers give up the whole of their time to their public

duties; in fact, according to my view, they work a little too hard; they should leave most of the work to their Under Secretaries. The hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson) made some allusion to the education question, and said it was a disgrace to the colony that no larger amount was placed on the Estimates for this purpose. But I think when we consider our population and our revenue, and compare what we spend on education with what the other colonies do, it will be found that we compare very favorably indeed. I think we are perfectly safe in leaving this matter in the hands of the Government. There are lots of items on these Estimates which I shall take exception to, when the time comes, but I do not intend to detain the House any longer at present, beyond simply referring to a remark made by the hon. member for Albany as to the Government guarantee in the case of the Midland Railway. I am entirely in accord with the hon. member there. I look upon this as a liability contracted by the Government, and, whether the money may be required or not, it ought to have appeared on these Estimates of expenditure. A great many people—and I am among them—consider that the Government will eventually have to provide this £60,000. There is certainly a danger of their having to do so, and to that extent it is a liability, provision for which should have been made on the Estimates.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have got some of their cash at any rate.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: You would have that, in any case. However, I am not going to criticise the action of the Government in that matter now; but I think provision should have been made on the Estimates to meet this liability, for, as I have said, there is a possibility of the Government having to find the money to repay what has been advanced. I will only add that I was very much amused at what fell from the hon. member for West Perth, who said he could get anything from the Government by going in a quiet way about it. This is new information to me, for I have been unable to get anything from them. I think if the hon. member has been able to get all he wants he has acted with much diplomacy in the interests of his

constituents. I shall know better next time how to go about this kind of business, if that is the way to get at the Government.

MR. PIESSE: I think we have had such a confusion of figures placed before us that when the time comes for them to be printed, they will absorb the whole of the figure type in the Government Printing Office. I do not wish to follow this course, and will content myself with referring very shortly to one or two items. I think the surveys of existing leases should be proceeded with at once, and I do not think that the amount put down under the head of "Surveys" is sufficient to do what is required.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have also an amount under the Loan Bill to work on.

MR. PIESSE: Perhaps the two amounts may be sufficient. Under the Land Regulations of 1887, before persons can be compelled to fence, the surveys must be complete, and as it is highly necessary that the land should be fenced, it is essential that the surveys should be pushed on as fast as possible. There is another item I may call attention to, an item of £600, for agricultural societies. This may, perhaps, seem a large item to those who are not so much interested in agriculture as I am, but I know that a little timely help will be the means of many societies establishing themselves, which ultimately will lead to a general increase in the production of useful stock. Although perhaps this year the Government did not see their way to set apart more than this sum for this particular purpose, I hope more will be done in the future. With the extension of our railway system, the various towns will be brought more in touch with one another; and by holding shows and agricultural gatherings, the people of one part of the colony will be induced to visit other parts, and thus become acquainted with the character of the land and the capabilities of the different districts. Another item I should have liked to have seen is one to provide a water supply in the country districts. I am aware that this would mean a large expenditure, but I think an effort should be made to do something. The town of Northam is especially short of water at the present time.

MR. SIMPSON: They drink too much.

MR. PIESSE: Such a season as this has not been experienced for years I know; but under ordinary circumstances the means of supply are not equal to the demand. Having regard to the settlement that is likely to take place in the country districts, a small expenditure on wells would be of great assistance. In many places the water difficulty is the great drawback to settlement. If a person goes to any particular part of the country to take up land and finds that there is no water within a distance of five or six miles he gets a very bad opinion of the country. I think I pointed out last session that this matter could be dealt with under the supervision of the Roads Boards if the Government could see their way to provide the funds. I noticed recently in a newspaper that the steamer *Albany* which is now *en route* to this colony has the largest cargo on board that has ever been brought to this colony. Most of it is grain and chaff.

MR. SIMPSON: We are paying £8 per ton for chaff now. Why don't you grow it?

MR. PIESSE: We want some assistance. I may tell hon. members that only recently 11,000 acres of land at Katanning have been sold, and something like 60,000 acres have been sold within 20 miles of Katanning during the last two years. Those who reside in this part of the colony possibly do not know what is taking place along the Great Southern line. The present dry season has been much against us, and I believe, had it not been for this that even during the present year the produce of this district would have had a great effect upon the imports. As to the education vote, the sum provided may be considered large, but nevertheless I should like to see it increased so as to afford further facilities for educating the children of the colony, especially those resident in the agricultural districts. The Central Board, I believe, has done all in its power to provide for the wants of these districts, but they have not anything like the funds at their command which are necessary to enable them to do as much as I am sure they would wish to. I shall not detain the House further, but I cannot sit down without adding my congratulations to those of other hon.

members on the satisfactory statement that has been put before us by the Premier.

MR. A. FORREST: Before the debate closes I should like to offer my congratulations to the Government for the manner in which they have conducted the affairs of this great country during the past 12 months, and for the very able manner in which they have placed everything before this House. I do not think there is a single member who could have anticipated that we should have had so large a surplus to the credit of the colony. I have been somewhat amused with the ideas which have been expressed about placing people on the soil. This has been a difficult problem in every colony of Australia, and it is especially so here where there are so many ways of making a living with less trouble and less risk. I do not think farming is considered profitable in any part of Australia. It is all very well for the hon. member for East Perth, who has never spent a sixpence in this way—

MR. CANNING: I have spent more than the hon. member.

MR. A. FORREST: I will not discuss that point with the hon. member; I prefer to leave it to the good judgment of this House. I was about to say that it is all very well for those who have never spent a sixpence in this way to talk about settling people on the soil. The hon. member for Northam and the hon. member for the Williams both know what it means. It is only men who possess large sums of money who can go on to the land, clear it, sink wells, and get a living out of it. A man without means would starve. The hon. member says the Government should sink wells. I suppose the next thing he will ask is that the Government should buy the land, stock it, and build the houses.

MR. CANNING: What is the use of building railways then?

MR. A. FORREST: It is no use trying to settle people without means on the land. The hon. member for Northam says that all the young men are leaving his district, and why is it? The answer is that they find the driving of teams more profitable. That shows us the difficulty there is; and as for the hon. member for East Perth saying that we should introduce large numbers of persons and

put them on the soil, why it is simply arrant humbug. Unless you have someone to look after these men and pick the land for them, you are bringing them here under false pretences. The Government should clear the land and fence it, and then you might get the people on the soil. I have had practical experience of farming. I have had good land and good managers, and yet everything I grew cost me four times as much as I got for it.

MR. CANNING: You are a millionaire.

MR. A. FORREST: I am glad to hear the hon. member say that. I shall say no more on that subject. I should like now to make a few remarks as to the guarantee to the Midland Railway Company. In his very lengthy speech this was one of the very few things the hon. member for East Perth could find fault with. He said that the amount of the guarantee should be placed against the credit balance of the colony. Without taking into consideration the deposit money, I do not think the colony has much to fear. If the Government would place the 200,000 acres of land they hold as security in my hands, I do not think there would be very much trouble about the £60,000. Why, then, when we have an asset of this description should we debit ourselves with the amount of the guarantee? The hon. member stated that this guarantee was a blot on the Government programme, but to my mind it is a matter of congratulation that the Government has seen its way to come forward and help this company, which has spent half-a-million of money here. Those who have lived here for many years know that the Attorney General is one of the most careful men in the colony, and we may be sure that he would not have agreed to help the company to the extent of a single sixpence unless he had been perfectly certain that the colony was safe. For myself, when I heard that the Attorney General had recommended this I knew at once that the colony was perfectly secure. As for the hon. member for Albany saying that we have no security, it is all nonsense, for if he has read the agreement he must find that we cannot possibly lose. I congratulate the Government on what they have done, and I congratulate the Premier on the fair way he has put the Estimates before us. If we had only had a good season

at the North we should have had £200,000 to our credit instead of £107,000.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I move that progress be reported.

Question—put and passed.

#### A WEEK'S RECESS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Sir, it has been communicated to me that there is a desire on the part of many hon. members to adjourn the sittings of the House for a week. So far as the Government are concerned, we are willing to meet the wishes of the House, and we have no objection whatever to the adjournment, if it is desired. At the same time, we are quite prepared to go on with the public business.

MR. PARKER: We have been in session since December last—during two of the hottest months of the year—and have devoted our time to the good of the country. The momentous questions that are yet before us require our very best energies, and, therefore, after two months' work, we require some little recreation and relaxation. An opportunity is now afforded us of spending a few days in the more congenial climate of Albany, where the temperature is much lower than here, which I think we should avail ourselves of. We can then come back as giants refreshed, and do better work with more advantage to ourselves and the country.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I may point out that the Government would be sorry to go on with the Estimates while a number of members were away, and if hon. members have made up their minds to go to Albany, as I believe they have, it would probably be better to adjourn. In order to test the feeling of the House, I now move that the House at its rising on Friday next adjourn until Monday week.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I do not know whether this is fair to the country members.

MR. PATERSON: What the country members object to are the adjournments during the week. They do not mind if the adjournment is for the whole week.

MR. HASSELL: I shall have great pleasure in supporting this resolution. I do not object to an adjournment of this kind; but what I do object to is to be



compelled to sit here and listen to lengthy speeches made by people who know nothing about the subject they speak on.

MR. CANNING: This has been a session of surprises, and I may venture to say that perhaps I have contributed something towards them. The speech of the hon. member who has just sat down is another of them, and it reminds me of a scene in the "Winter's Tale." When the statue speaks, the greatest surprise overtakes those who are taking part in the performance. I am greatly surprised to-night at the speech of the hon. member for Plantagenet, who up to the present has never made an observation except to express entire concurrence with every word that falls from the occupants of the Treasury benches; and I think that if they are believers in the doctrine of metempsychosis, they must think that the soul of some departed spaniel has entered the body of the hon. member. The hon. member himself has said little or nothing during the session, and he now comes before us and wishes to revolutionise parliamentary practice by curtailing the right of hon. members to speak as long as they think fit. As far as I know, in no part of the world is any restriction placed on debate where parliamentary institutions exist, so long as hon. members express themselves with decency and propriety; and yet the hon. member proposes, in a speech consisting of but very few words, to change the whole course of procedure and to place restrictions on hon. members. I really do not think we should allow the House to adjourn this evening without offering our heartiest congratulations to the hon. gentleman who has just sat down for having said something during the session to distinguish himself.

MR. HASSELL: If the cap fits the hon. gentleman can wear it.

Question—put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 4th February, 1892.

*Hansard Debates:* issue of—High School Bill: first reading—Geraldton-Mullewa Railway Bill: third reading—Police Bill: amendments of Legislative Assembly—Game Bill: amendments of Legislative Assembly—Bankruptcy Bill: second reading—Aboriginal Offenders Act Amendment Bill: second reading—Patent Act Amendment Bill: first reading—*Hansard* reporting: message from Legislative Assembly—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 8 o'clock.

#### PRAYERS.

#### "HANSARD" DEBATES: ISSUE OF.

THE HON. J. G. H. AMHERST, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary: 1st, Whether the advance copies of No. 1 and No. 2 of *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* of the current Session are now issued in order that hon. members may have an opportunity of correcting any errors that may occur in the report of their speeches; and 2nd, Under whose supervision, if any, the *Hansard Parliamentary Reports* come, before being finally issued to members? He said: In asking this question, hon. members will understand that I do not wish to attach any blame, or any negligence, or want of accuracy to the reporters; I merely wish to know whether the course that was pursued last session of sending to hon. members slips of their speeches is to be continued, or whether these weekly issues are to take their place, and, if so, whether hon. members are at liberty to correct any little error they may see.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I rise to order. The hon. member is making a speech.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member is only explaining what he intends by the question.

THE HON. J. G. H. AMHERST: All I wish to ask is whether these reports of the parliamentary debates are sent to us for correction, and whether there is any supervision, and if so, who has that supervision?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): In reply I have to state;—