

move that the Order of the Day be discharged.

Question put and passed, and the Order discharged.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6.30 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 30th October, 1900.

Question: North Perth and Board of Health—Hampton Plains Railway Bill, Select Committee's Report—Standing Orders, Suspension (to expedite Bills, etc.)—Government Business, precedence—Patent Acts Amendment Bill, Recommittal, reported—Leederville Tramways Bill, Recommittal (progress)—Noxious Weeds Bill, third reading—Lands Resumption Amendment Bill, third reading—Fremantle Tramways Bill, Recommittal (progress)—Killing of Kangaroos for Food Bill, third reading—Loan Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Roads and Streets Closure Bill (general), second reading—Streets (Victoria Park) Closure Bill, second reading, etc.—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—NORTH PERTH AND BOARD OF HEALTH.

MR. HALL asked the Premier: 1, Whether it was the intention of the Government to carry out the resolution passed by this House last year to establish a Local Board of Health at North Perth. 2, If so, When. 3, If not, for what reason.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Pending the result of the motion now before the Legislative Assembly, the Government proposes to defer action in regard to the matter. 2 and 3, Answered by above.

HAMPTON PLAINS RAILWAY BILL.

SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. MOORHEAD brought up the report of select committee appointed to inquire into the Bill.

Report read, and ordered to be printed.

STANDING ORDERS, SUSPENSION.

TO EXPEDITE BILLS, ETC.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved:

That in order to expedite business, the Standing Orders relating to the passing of public Bills, and the consideration of Messages from the Legislative Council, be suspended during the remainder of the session.

He said: My object in moving this motion is to expedite business, and not in any way to hurry on things at a rate hon. members do not desire. It has been usual during all previous sessions to move such a motion as this towards the end of the session, and the motion has invariably been agreed to. I can only assure the House that the Government have no desire to take any advantage of the motion; and I shall be glad to confer with my hon. friend opposite (Mr. Illingworth), so as to meet his views as far as possible in regard to giving full consideration to any measure that comes before the House.

Question put and passed.

Standing Orders suspended accordingly for the remainder of the session.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

THE PREMIER moved:

That Government business take precedence of all other business, for the remainder of the session.

He said: This motion has the same object as the one just passed. We have sat here for many years and have always had such a motion towards the end of the session, and I do not think anyone can say the Government have ever tried to take advantage of it. It is merely brought forward with the object of expediting public business, and, as I said before, I shall be glad to confer with the hon. member opposite (Mr. Illingworth) in order that any business he desires to be dealt with shall be brought forward before we prorogue.

Question put and passed.

PATENT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

RECOMMITTAL.

Order read, for third reading of the Bill.

On motion by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, Bill recommitted for amendment of Clause 2.

Clause 2 :

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved that after the word "by," in line 2, the following words be inserted : "An Act of the 36th year of her present Majesty, No. 1." It appeared that under this Act there was a patent extant in many respects similar to the McArthur-Forrest process patent, known as the Siemens patent; and since this Bill went through Committee, the Government had ascertained that litigation had been opened between the McArthur-Forrest people and the Siemens people. The Siemens people claimed that the McArthur-Forrest people were infringing their patent. This Bill was introduced ostensibly with the object of defeating any further extension of the McArthur-Forrest patent; and if the Siemens people succeeded, we should have the same trouble, without this amendment. The object of this amendment was to include those patents granted under the present Act.

MR. MOORHEAD: What about Diehl's process.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The patents of the McArthur-Forrest people and the Siemens people were the only ones registered here.

MR. JAMES: Did not the Attorney General's statement go to show the object of introducing this Bill was not to amend the patent law, but to prevent the McArthur-Forrest people from enjoying whatever rights they possessed under existing legislation? This would be a very dangerous precedent. The Bill was introduced with the sole object of taking away whatever rights the present law conferred upon one particular company, and if that was not strong, he did not know what was.

THE PREMIER: We were not thinking of the company, but of the colony.

MR. JAMES: The persons who would be affected by this Bill would be influential wealthy companies who could well afford to pay, but would not pay, and not the working miners. He understood purely

public batteries would not object to pay 5 per cent., or whatever it might be.

THE PREMIER: It might be 100 per cent.

MR. JAMES: Individual persons taking proceedings to dispute existing rights said the McArthur-Forrest Company had no patent, or that the patent was not a good one. They relied on that for the purpose of avoiding payment as long as they could, but now they recognised there might be some claim, and as they could not kill the existing rights by litigation they tried to kill them by legislation.

MR. A. FORREST: Quite right, too.

MR. JAMES: It was wrong. If this Bill did not touch so narrowly the interests of some of the members of this House, those members would not be influenced in the direction they were.

THE PREMIER: Perhaps it touched the hon. member?

MR. JAMES: Not a bit. He did not say members were always thinking of their pockets, but they were influenced insensibly. If they had no interests at all, perhaps they would say, "Why should we pass a Bill for the purpose of taking away from any company whatever rights they may have?"

THE PREMIER: The Government were thinking of the country.

MR. JAMES: Such procedure would not be in the interests of any country in the long run. The Imperial Parliament had passed no Bill of such a nature as this.

MR. MOORHEAD said that in no way was he interested as solicitor to this company. He had on one occasion an opportunity of advising in connection with the matter, but opinions expressed by a member ought not to be sneered at because on one occasion, or at any time, that member had been engaged as counsel in the matter. Legal members were just as impartial as others when it came to a question of justice and expediency, whether the persons affected were their clients or not.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member (Mr. James) said that others were interested.

MR. MOORHEAD: This Bill would be a very bad precedent, which some of us might live to regret. He regretted exceedingly to hear the Attorney-General state boldly that this measure was aimed

directly against one company, or the successful litigant against that company. Our laws gave protection to a man who brought forward a process that might assist an industrial and commercial undertaking, and it ought to be perfectly immaterial to this House, as it was to the law, whether the person who claimed protection was the inventor or the assignee. The law granted this protection for 14 or 21 years, as the case might be, and in doing so really gave a bonus to the inventor for benefits derived through the exercise of his brains. As to statements made about large amounts of money this company was deriving from this colony, he had inquired and was much astonished to learn that the company had obtained very little from this colony as the result of using their patent. As a matter of fact, by the introduction of the McArthur-Forrest process into this colony the gold return obtained here had been increased by £2,000,000 from tailings, which were before regarded as useless, and on this amount the company claimed 5 per cent. for the use of their process. They obtained last year £4,000 or £5,000, and they would obtain this year probably £20,000. This Bill was a bad precedent, and was the result of opposition raised by the mine owners, and not the result of agitation on behalf of smaller men engaged in the mining industry. The inference to be drawn from this kind of legislation would be that when any person got a monopoly or exclusive right for the use of his process, Parliament might in the future step in and say, "We will stop this, and we have as a precedent the Act passed in 1900."

THE PREMIER: The hon. member's speech was somewhat of the character of special pleading, because he inferred that this was a Bill to take away from persons a right that belonged to them. The fact was that these persons obtained protection for their process for a certain number of years, and Parliament which granted that right had surely also the right to refuse a renewal of the protection for a further period. Indeed it was not a right, but a privilege, to apply to the Governor for a renewal; and the Governor might send the application to the Supreme Court, which tribunal, if satisfied that there were sufficient grounds, might recommend the renewal

of the patent. The effect of this Bill was to say that Parliament did not wish to renew this patent.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The privilege of applying for a renewal established a right to apply.

THE PREMIER: No; if Parliament had intended to establish that right, why did not Parliament extend the term, and instead of making it 14 years, make it 21 or 27 years? Clearly that was not intended, and surely Parliament, which had granted this right, had a right to say what should happen after the 14 years had run. If the hon. member (Mr. Moorhead) had told us what amount this company hoped to obtain in prospective, it would be more interesting than to be informed of what they had obtained hitherto, because they had received only what some persons using the process were willing to pay by arrangement, and we did not know what immense amounts the company might obtain in the future if able to enforce payment from all persons against whom they made a claim. We must remember, too, that it was discretionary with the company as to what amount of gold won by the process they should claim as their share. He believed they were asking five per cent. on the gross result at present.

MR. A. FORREST: That was equal to about 25 per cent. net.

THE PREMIER: They might ask 50 per cent. in the future, as there was nothing to prevent them. Was Parliament willing to hand over the whole gold-mining interests of the colony to this company? for that was practically what this claim amounted to. The member for East Perth (Mr. James) had said that only the capitalists had to pay this charge; whereas if the mine owner were attacked, the effect would be that everyone connected with gold-mining would be attacked. It did not happen that every mine was worked at a profit, many being worked at a loss; yet even when worked at a loss, the 5 per cent. could be exacted. Those who were working what was called a poor man's mine had to pay this charge as well as those who were working larger mines, if this process were used.

MR. JAMES: The poor man was the one who paid: the others would not pay.

THE PREMIER: If we were going to hand over the mining industry to this company for a longer term than had been agreed to when the patent was granted, then he must say we ought never to have granted it; and indeed if we had known what we were doing in granting that right, it would not have been granted.

MR. EWING: Parliament ought to have known.

THE PREMIER: It was easy to say that; but when the Attorney General last session introduced a Patent Bill providing for a scrutiny of specifications before granting patents, that Bill was opposed strongly in this House by some members, and was opposed more strongly in another place by some learned gentlemen, and was eventually thrown out. They would not allow the Government to exercise any scrutiny over specifications for patents; whereas if there had been that scrutiny when this McArthur-Forrest patent was applied for, it would not have been granted.

MR. JAMES: The other colonies had allowed it. New Zealand allowed it after the matter had been investigated by the Supreme Court.

THE PREMIER: Because there was no supervision over the specifications in this colony, the specification of the McArthur-Forrest people had been allowed to be altered, and by so allowing it the mining industry in this colony had been mulcted in heavy charges extending over 14 years; and, notwithstanding that, the member for East Perth (Mr. James) now wanted the mining industry to be mulcted for another 14 years. These people having got their patent were entitled to be paid for the 14 years. They should take that and be satisfied, and the patent should not be renewed.

MR. VOSPER: Since he spoke previously on this Bill, he had considered the matter more fully, and had come to the conclusion that this was an improper kind of legislation, and ought to be rejected. It would take away rights properly belonging to the McArthur-Forrest syndicate, and we should not take away those rights, even for the purpose of benefiting the mining industry. The patent had been granted for 14 years, with a right or privilege to apply at the end of the term for renewal for a further term; and if that application were sent

to the Supreme Court for investigation, and the Court recommended a renewal of the patent, the owners of that patent had an absolute right to renewal. The Court would report according to the merits of the case, and then would be the time for the Government or any parties interested to make objections, so that the Court might hear all the facts and determine accordingly. Instead of taking that proper course, the Government brought in this Bill to prevent any application for a renewal from being sent to the Supreme Court for investigation on its merits. Consequently the Government were seeking to deprive the owners of this patent of their right to apply to the Court, and were seeking also to deprive the Court of the power to investigate the application.

MR. A. FORREST: The hon. member had changed his mind since he spoke last week.

MR. VOSPER: Yes; he had changed his mind, and had a right to do so. In the case of a publican who obtained a liquor license for one year, he had not an absolute right of renewal; but a right had grown up by practice, and if Parliament attempted to take away his right to apply for a renewal and to have the application considered on its merits, there would be a great demand for compensation, and Parliament would find it very difficult to resist that demand. It was well known to mining men that almost every variety of ore required some different strength of solution for applying the cyanide process effectively; and any person who could obtain a patent for applying a particular strength of solution to a particular class of ore might be deprived of his right of renewal under this Bill. We could not afford to protect the mining industry or any other industry at the expense of committing what had been described as legalised robbery. He would do his utmost to prevent the passing of such unrighteous and immoral legislation.

MR. A. FORREST: The last speaker's remarks were quite refreshing, when contrasted with the same member's speech appearing on page 1030 of this session's *Hansard*, where the hon. member strongly denounced the abuses of this patent and the iniquities of the patentees; and yet, within a week, he characterised this remedial Bill as bad and immoral!

MR. VOSPER: The hon. member would combat immorality by immoral means, through this Bill.

THE PREMIER: Probably, on the last occasion, the hon. member had not known the facts.

MR. A. FORREST: A member representing a district in which the cyanide process was so largely used should not change his mind on such a question in a few days. The Bill refused the right of renewal merely because the patent was injuring working miners as well as capitalists. If, as was suggested, the process were applied to public batteries, the patentees could charge any percentage they chose on the tailings. All the large mining companies had combined to fight the patent at law, and if unsuccessful, many would have difficulty in satisfying the judgments and paying the royalty, as the gold won had been distributed in dividends. The agreement with the company as to their patent was for seven years, and the right to extend the term should rest with Parliament and not with the Judges; for Parliament, being representative of the people, was the proper body to decide such questions. The hon. member (Mr. Vosper) often twitted others with changes of opinion, and should therefore be consistent.

MR. VOSPER: Why not read the *Hansard* report?

MR. A. FORREST: The rules of the House prevented that, but he would publish the speech to-morrow.

MR. VOSPER: Having refreshed his memory regarding his own speech as reported in *Hansard*, he found that the hon. member (Mr. A. Forrest) was in error. He (Mr. Vosper) had opposed the Bill, at the time, as being a hypocritical piece of robbery.

MR. MORAN: Yet the hon. member had just said he had changed his mind.

MR. VOSPER: On the second reading he had said the McArthur-Forrest Company was a rapacious organisation; that they had behaved in the capacity of a vulture, and were oppressive to the mining industry. That he still maintained. But the Committee were now endeavouring to combat those patentees by copying their methods. On the second reading he had said, if this Bill should be applied to anyone it should be to this syndicate.

But he opposed the principle of the Bill as immoral, and unworthy of the Legislature.

MR. JAMES: The Premier was wrong in saying the amendment of the specification was granted by oversight. Our Patent Act was similar to those of Victoria, New Zealand, and Great Britain.

MR. A. FORREST: And Victoria paid £20,000 for the patent rights.

THE PREMIER: The Victorian Registrar could have refused the patent.

MR. JAMES: In all the countries mentioned, if the Registrar refused to amend, an appeal lay to the Supreme Court; and in New Zealand and Victoria such appeals had been allowed. This patent had no longer life in Victoria than here; but the Victorian Government bought out the patentees in the early part of last year.

THE PREMIER: In Victoria the patent was not so oppressive.

MR. JAMES: But the Government of that colony introduced no such Bill as this. Under our present law, the syndicate had a right to apply for an extension, the limit to which was fixed by the Governor, being seven years ordinarily, and fourteen years in exceptional cases only.

MR. A. FORREST: The Governor must send on the application to the Supreme Court.

MR. JAMES: No. In England, ten per cent. of the applications for extension were refused. The agreement with the syndicate was embodied in the existing law; therefore the law should stand unaltered to conserve existing rights. It was suggested the patentees might ask for the whole product of the patent. Not so; for Section 27 of the Patent Act provided that if a patentee refused to grant licenses on reasonable terms, thus preventing the invention from being worked, the Governor could compel him to grant licenses on reasonable terms. Surely none would say five per cent. was too high a royalty.

MR. A. FORREST: On the gross value it was too high.

MR. JAMES: By the use of this patent, enormous results were obtained from ore previously valueless, there being a difference of £2,000,000 in one year in the output of this colony; and of such a useful patent a renewal was surely

justifiable. Why aim at one company only?

MR. A. FORREST: The charge of five per cent. appeared at first sight reasonable; but out of the mines using the process many returned barely sufficient to pay the cost of production, and five per cent. on the gross amount of gold recovered meant 25 or 30 per cent. of the profits.

MR. JAMES: Was that unreasonable?

MR. A. FORREST: If the patentees received five per cent. on the dividends paid, that would be reasonable; but the mining community were determined to resist this charge, and to settle the matter in Parliament instead of before the Governor-in-Council, or in the law courts.

MR. MORAN: In many of the mines in other countries gold was extracted by cyanide direct from the ore, without intermediate process, one example being the Waihi mine in New Zealand. It was a quartz mine in a country where there was plenty of water; and they had for a long time crushed the ore dry, passing it through cyanide. In that case this company would take five per cent. of the gross output of the 100 head of stamps. In Queensland the goldfields consisted entirely of quartz mines, and cyanide was used very largely indeed. He believed that the Brown Hill mine, in Kalgoorlie, treated most of its ore by cyanide. The company would, if we did not prevent it, take five per cent. of the gold, whatever it might be, independently of the cost of extraction.

MR. A. FORREST: And the Government would take another five per cent.

MR. MORAN: The Government were not so bad, because the dividend tax was five per cent. on the profits. In this country to-day there were cyanide workings that did not pay, and in his opinion the works of the cyanide company at Southern Cross were not paying.

MR. KINGSMILL: The process was a cheap one.

MR. MORAN: The process might be cheap or dear, but everything depended on the capital outlay and the facility for working the tailings.

MR. KINGSMILL: And on the ore.

MR. MORAN: We could get a fair idea of the nature of the ore before

putting works up. The amount of gold obtained from stuff treated by cyanide in Queensland was about 6dwts. to the ton, and no tailings in Western Australia would give much more than that. Probably the amount would be about 4dwts.

A MEMBER: Four pennyweights would pay.

MR. MORAN: It would pay, but one wanted to have his capital back again. This company had had this process fourteen years in Western Australia, and it was immaterial to this House whether they had been successful in extracting their full five per cent. on every occasion. That was a matter for the law courts and the mine owners. This was the only process going to be used on some mines, and knowing the great importance to the mining industry, and that five per cent. of the gross returns represented a good portion of the profit—perhaps the whole profit—were we going to allow the company to renew this patent for another 14 years?

MR. MOORHEAD: The amount was 2½ per cent.

MR. MORAN: We were not going to allow this matter to go to a creature of Parliament, but to deal with it ourselves. If the matter got into a maze of legal arguments its settlement would take one, two, or three years. He was surprised to hear what had been said by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper.) That hon. member was a bit mixed over the matter, and one felt certain that if the hon. member had to give a casting vote he would vote for the Bill. This measure was going to affect the poor man just as much as the rich one. As to the illustration of the hotel license, that did not apply at all, because no person was compelled to go to any hotel, whereas this company was the only one from which cyanide could be obtained. There was no competition, but an absolute monopoly. The member for East Perth (Mr. James) had said that only 10 per cent. of the applications in England for renewal got through. Therefore, if this Bill was robbery, it was only 10 per cent. of the robbery that hon. member had told us about. We were afraid the cyanide company might happen to be one of the ten per cent., and obtain a renewal, and in order to make assurance doubly sure we asked Parliament to pass this Bill.

No member who had the welfare of Western Australia at heart, and surely no member representing a goldfield, should vote against this measure, if he studied the interests of the goldfields. One would like to hear the leader of the opposition (Mr. Illingworth) on this measure.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he had spoken against the Bill.

MR. MORAN: We should have to whip up a few more agricultural votes to stick to the goldfields, as usual.

MR. MOORHEAD: The more one listened to his friend on the right (Mr. Moran) the less he was inclined to accept that gentleman as an authority.

MR. MORAN: It was the same with regard to the hon. member as a lawyer.

MR. MOORHEAD: The hon. member had in the past referred to the permanency of the Norseman fields, but afterwards we heard him denounce the fields as so and so. He had on this occasion stated that this process was the only process for the extraction of gold from certain ores in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. If the hon. member knew anything about his constituency, he must be aware there were at least half-a-dozen different processes at work in Kalgoorlie for the extraction of gold: therefore the analogy in regard to an hotel license was closer than the hon. member had led the House to believe. In regard to the 5 per cent. in connection with the Brown Hill, one might point out that the arrangement with these companies was that where the ore was broken up and dealt with solely by this cyanide process, the amount to be paid was only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and not 5 per cent. By the application of this process to perfectly waste material, there had been an accumulation in some people's pockets of nearly two millions during this year. What members wished to support was the principle of this matter. If the company or companies were making a considerable profit by the application of a patent, was Parliament to be empowered to step in and say, "We will not continue that any longer"? It was purely a question of trial of fact. On the application for renewal of a patent the considerations brought before the court were principally, "What are the parties deriving from its use? What advantages will be derived by the com-

munity from its continuation? What is the original patentee deriving from the application of his process"? It was not complimentary to the judges of the Supreme Court to suggest that their judgment would be biassed by the arguments adduced by members of the Bar. This question should not be tried by a tribunal which had already made up its mind, in preference to the Supreme Court. It was an exceedingly bad compliment to the intelligence of our Judges to say their decisions might be warped by the arguments of counsel. Surely we had sufficient confidence in the common sense of our Judges to believe that in nine cases out of ten they would arrive at a right conclusion on a question of fact. The Supreme Court, being impartial, would be the proper tribunal for dealing with questions of this kind, rather than a tribunal which had already made up its mind.

MR. VOSPER: In some uncivilised countries, notably in South America, the Governments got out of their various difficulties by the simple process of confiscation; and so this Parliament was following in the same line, and had already put up a record for confiscation which could hardly be equalled by any other British Parliament. First came the Hainault mine, and the remedy which the Government propounded for that trouble was to confiscate the legal property of the jumpers, and there was great difficulty in obtaining for the owners of the mine the amount of compensation which this House ultimately granted. The next difficulty arose in connection with the alluvial question at Kalgoorlie, and there again the remedy of the Government was to confiscate the rights of some 15,000 people interested in alluvial mining.

THE PREMIER: Absolutely untrue. No existing rights were touched.

MR. VOSPER: If this statement were questioned by the Premier, it would be necessary to affirm it in language still more emphatic. The rights established under the Mining Act, by which alluvial miners were at liberty to go on leased ground and seek for alluvial gold, were confiscated by taking away the dual title, under the action of the Government.

THE PREMIER: Not at all. No existing rights were touched.

MR. VOSPER: Having maintained it on the ground at the time the trouble arose, he maintained still that the Government and Parliament confiscated the rights of a large number of alluvial miners in this colony, and this was how the Government got out of that difficulty. Now it was discovered that some members of the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Mines, and a few other persons, found it inconvenient to pay this royalty for using the McArthur-Forrest process; and the Government, instead of buying out the rights of these persons as other Governments had done, took the usual course of bringing in a Bill to confiscate those rights. The only inconvenient thing in the colony which the Government would not destroy by confiscation was the monopoly of the Midland Railway Company. He must therefore vote against confiscation; for although the owners of this patent might have robbed the gold-mining industry in various ways, yet that circumstance did not give us a shadow of excuse for robbing them. We could not hope to suppress commercial robbery by a robbery backed up by legislative enactment.

MR. WILSON: This Bill was of a dangerous character, and if the House passed it there would be reason to regret it. If the Bill were not taking away anything these persons had a right to, there was no use in this legislation; whereas if the Bill was intended to take away something these persons had a right to, then the Bill was something in the shape of confiscation. Royalties were usually charged on the gross return, and not on net profits; therefore objections which had been raised on that score were groundless. If mine-owners could not run their mines to cover a charge of 5 per cent., or whatever it might be, for using this process, those owners would not use the process; and if they could not run their mines in some other way so as to be profitable, those owners would close their mines. This Bill took away the rights of patentees in Western Australia, and this was a dangerous course to take. If these persons applied to the Supreme Court for renewal, and if they satisfied the court that they were entitled to it, they would get a renewal, and not otherwise. Therefore why could not that course be taken in this case, and leave the Government to raise their opposition in court, and

make out the best case they could against the renewal of this patent when applied for? If in the interests of this country, Parliament would be justified in taking away any rights these persons might hold under their patent, then we should legislate against the one patent, and not make this Bill applicable to the renewal of patents generally. We could not safely pass the Bill, as it would establish a precedent that would be dangerous in the extreme, because this legislation would be treated in the future as a precedent for taking away other rights in a similar manner. The safer course would be to adjourn the discussion, and he therefore moved that progress be reported.

Motion (progress) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	8
Noes	20

Majority against ... 12

AYES.
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Kingsmill
Mr. Moorhead
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Vosper
Mr. Wilson
Mr. James (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Darlôt
Mr. Doherty
Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. D. Forrest
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hubble
Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Locke
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. Moran
Mr. Oats
Mr. Pennefather
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Sholl
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Wood
Mr. Reason (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

Question (amendment) put and passed.

Bill reported with amendment, and the report adopted.

LEEDERVILLE TRAMWAYS BILL.

RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS, Bill recommitted for amendment.

New Clause:

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS moved that the following be added, to stand as Clause 9:

Whenever any telephone service now or hereafter constructed is prejudicially affected by the construction or working of the tramways, the Postmaster General may, at the cost of the promoter and his assigns, do all such things as may be necessary to protect the telephone service from being so affected, either by

placing the same on a metallic circuit system or otherwise.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The word "now" would make the clause apply to existing telephones. Such a clause should appear on the Notice Paper for perusal. He moved that progress be reported.

Motion (progress) put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

NOXIOUS WEEDS BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

LANDS RESUMPTION AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

FREMANTLE TRAMWAYS BILL.

RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS, Bill recommitted for amendment.

New Clause:

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS moved that the following be added, to stand as Clause 6:—

Whenever any telephone service now or hereafter constructed is prejudicially affected by the construction or working of the tramways, the Postmaster General may, at the cost of the promoter and his assigns, do all such things as may be necessary to protect the telephone service from being so affected, either by placing the same on a metallic circuit system or otherwise.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: For the same reason as he had given in dealing with the Leederville Tramways Bill, he moved that progress be reported.

Motion (progress) put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

KILLING OF KANGAROOS FOR FOOD BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

LOAN BILL, £790,000.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: I do not propose to take up the time of hon. members very long in dealing

with this loan Bill. All those who watch the current of affairs in this colony in regard to loan expenditure will be of opinion that the amount is not excessive, and I feel sure the Bill itself is not unexpected. During recent years we have not followed the procedure of other years by asking for large appropriations. We find it far better in the interests of the colony to ask for appropriations of loan money annually, rather than to ask for large appropriations which are to cover a great number of years. Of course the reason for that is obvious. To ask for large appropriations injures the credit of the colony, and also prevents persons from investing in our stock; because they know there is this large amount standing like a spectre at the gate, which may be raised at any time, and may affect the value of the stock they purchase.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You did not think so in 1896.

THE PREMIER: No; we have got wiser since then. Looking back upon the matter now, I think our appropriations at that time might have been different; although there were difficulties then, and there always will be difficulty in getting the authority of Parliament to construct large works without an appropriation of money. At a glance it will be seen that all the works on this schedule are necessary, and most of them are in hand. The obligation placed upon the colony by this authorisation is something like £23,000 a year in interest at 3 per cent. Of course under our present system of raising loans, this £790,000, if placed on the market at present, would not realise that amount, as our loans are worth not more than £93 or £94 per £100 in the London market. I do not think, however, that the sum of £23,000 a year is one that will frighten any hon. member. It is not a large sum under our existing circumstances, considering that at present we are spending out of revenue on works and buildings nearly £400,000 a year. I believe that no other colony in Australia has been able to spend so large a sum out of its consolidated revenue on works and buildings. It has been a marvel to all the other colonies how we have been able to spend such a large amount from current revenue on public works and buildings throughout the colony, and the adoption of that

course will stand us in good stead by and by, because we have no interest to pay on the large expenditure. I remember that an old friend of mine, Mr. Service, who was Premier of Victoria, once said to me with regard to the finances of the colony, "It does not matter so much how you spend the revenue of the country. If you do make a few mistakes, it is done with; you have no interest to pay; but the great thing you have to consider and take care about is the loan expenditure, the money you have to repay and to pay interest upon. You have to take care to see that the loan money is wisely spent." That no doubt is the great thing we have to look at. We have to take care we do not spend this borrowed money upon works that are unproductive, because a day of reckoning will come when we shall have to repay this money, and we have to pay interest all the time as well. I may say at once that I desire to make this Loan Bill as small as possible in amount. Although, if I had only studied my own wishes, I might have made the amount a great deal smaller than it is, I thought it only fair that I should deal with this matter in a way that would commend itself to my judgment of what is right; and I felt sure I would be acting in a manner that would meet the views of hon. members in providing certain amounts on this Loan Bill which might very well, if I had chosen, have been left over to another year. In regard to the items, it will be noticed that the first relates to the Fremantle Harbour Works. None of us now—and I do not know that we ever did—will regret the construction of those splendid works at Fremantle. Not only have they been carried out satisfactorily, but looking at their magnitude and the immense amount of work done, it must strike any observer that the undertaking has been carried out at a reasonable cost. When one goes down to that harbour at Fremantle and sees those two big moles consisting of solid rock, excavation having been carried on for thousands of feet (in some cases to as great a depth as 30 feet, and 450 feet wide); when one sees all the works going on there, the construction of timber wharves and all the dredges at work, one may, I think, say there has been no extravagance with regard to that undertaking, and must admit that the work

has been carried out systematically and well. In my opinion the work reflects the utmost credit on those who have been in charge of it. No one can say that care has not been bestowed on the work by the Engineer-in-Chief, who has devoted himself to it; and it is a pleasure to me and all of us to know he has brought his enterprise and the great responsibility he took in recommending this work to be carried out—staking his professional reputation almost—to a successful result. We see those mail steamers alongside now twice a week, and oftener than that too; and you may depend upon it there will be more of those great ocean liners coming. The Messageries Maritimes, the German, the P. & O., and the Orient will all come here in a very short time. When we think that all this has been achieved and accomplished at not too great an expense, we must all be pleased. On the 30th June we had only £48,803 available on the authorisation for this work, and we propose to ask for another £120,000, which will give an authorisation of £168,803 for the year. I think that will carry us through the year and a little beyond. I may say about half that amount of £48,803 has been already expended, and there is not more than £20,000 available at the present time; so unless we are able to provide this amount, the works cannot be continued. Then we have £10,000 for lighthouses. There is £18,264 already authorised, and this £10,000 will increase it to £28,264. The Government intend to provide two small lighthouses at the entrance to Fremantle, one at each mole, and they also have ordered lighting apparatus for a leading light near Woodman's Point, so that vessels coming round from Rottnest Island will be able to come straight in at the entrance to the mole. There will be a white sector of a certain angle, and so long as vessels are in that colour the captains will know they are perfectly safe; and vessels may come into Fremantle just as well at night—in fact better by night than by day. This provision will be a great advantage, and will make the approach for the mail steamers to Fremantle at night absolutely sure. Then we have to erect a lighthouse at Breaksea Island, which will not be a very expensive matter, because the light is already here. We also propose to place

a lighthouse at Cape Naturaliste, the entrance to Geographe Bay. I am told that after leaving the Leeuwin it is necessary for naval officers to know exactly where they are when by Cape Naturaliste. The lighthouse will be of very great advantage also to coasting steamers that come to Geographe Bay and up the coast, and especially will it be so to the P. & O. and Orient steamers, because to the north of Cape Naturaliste there is, unfortunately, a bad reef called Naturaliste Reef, and it is very necessary in order to save time and make the passage quickly, that naval officers shall know exactly where the steamers are when opposite Naturaliste. That is a matter that is very urgent in the interests of navigation now that so many steamers come to Fremantle. Then we propose also to do a number of works, especially one at Point Hampton, near Cossack, which will cost £12,000. On these estimates I have provided for a stock jetty, that being much required. That district has been under great disability for many years owing to the difficulty of shipping stock, and is the only part of the coast where stock cannot be shipped easily. In most other places stock can be shipped more easily than at Cossack, though Cossack is the principal port for sheep on the North-West coast. We propose to build a jetty which will not be quite close to Cossack, but three or four miles away. It will, however, give people the advantage of shipping their stock from the jetty direct. There are works at Albany, Carnarvon, Derby, Fremantle Seawall and Esplanade, and Ashburton River Water Supply, making £30,000 altogether. That amount added to the sum for Fremantle Harbour Works and Lighthouses gives a total of £160,000 for Harbour and River Improvements.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

THE PREMIER (continuing): Having already dealt with the first part of the schedule, Harbour and River Improvements, I now come to the second part, Railways. Hon. members will notice that it is proposed to obtain an authorisation for the expenditure of £335,000. The first item under this head is "Addi-

tions and Improvements to opened Railways, £70,000." We had on the 1st July £28,112 available under this head; and hon. members will notice in the annual Estimates that out of consolidated revenue we provide £15,000 for this purpose; so that the authorisations available under this head will be £28,112 and £15,000; total, £43,112. There are many things to do in regard to additions and improvements for opened railways and for improving the system generally by providing new sidings, station yards, overhead bridges, and other improvements, also the duplication of the railway by laying heavier rails, and in fact a thousand and one things connected with the railway system that require some expenditure for improvements, and which may be properly charged to capital account. The work required throughout the colony for giving greater facilities to the public in connection with the railway system is so enormous that the Government are not able to attend to every one of these wants, but will do the best they can in the circumstances. The amount that will be authorised if this vote is approved will not be very large, but will be sufficient to carry us well over the financial year. The next item under this head is "Boulder Railway Duplication construction (second instalment), £20,000," together with "Brown Hill Loopline, £14,000." Hon. members will notice it is proposed to provide £34,000 for these purposes; we had also £26,046 available on the 1st July for these two works, which are practically the same work under two different headings. These works are in hand, and they are very urgent and necessary, for there is a great amount of traffic between Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and the extension of a line from Kamballie back by Brown Hill to Hannan street, Kalgoorlie, is a very necessary work, which will pay well and give great facilities to the large mines which it will tap. The duplication of the line is in hand, and also the construction of stations at various points. These stations are made with a view to the convenience of the public, and also for the protection of the railway revenue, as I believe many persons travel on this line without paying the fare at present, consequent on the want of check appliances. All this will

be overcome when we get the double line to Kamballie, and also the double line back from Brown Hill to Hannan street. The next item under this head is "Donnybrook towards Bridgetown Railway (final instalment), £5,000," this being merely the balance due on a contract which has been paid, but requires authorisation. The next item is "Northam towards Goomalling Railway (final instalment), £20,000." For this line £20,000 has been already provided, and this further authorisation of £20,000 will complete the work for a length of 30 miles. This is an agricultural railway running from Northam up the Salt River to Goomalling through an agricultural district, the land being settled and improved the whole distance. It is an excellent piece of country, and I do not think there is a better piece of agricultural land in the colony. This land is all occupied by farmers, and if a railway will not pay from Northam to Goomalling through this agricultural district, it is hopeless to expect that any agricultural railway in the colony will pay, for, as I have said, there is no better piece of agricultural land suitable for cereals in Western Australia. This land is nearly all occupied at present, and I anticipate this railway will not only be a great convenience and assistance to the producers in that district, but I have a great hope that with economy this line may be made to pay. The next item is "Rails and Fastenings, £100,000." We have already £64,242 available from the 1st July under our authorisation; but a great many rails are required for the Leonora line, the Nanine line, for the substitution of heavier rails on the line to Southern Cross, and for general purposes; and this amount is required in order to provide the rails for these works, and also to keep a certain quantity of rails in stock for current use. The next item is Rolling-stock, for which £100,000 is provided. We had in our authorisations on the 1st July £65,269. This amount will be amply sufficient for the year, and will enable us to pay for the rolling-stock which comes to hand, and to do more than that: in fact I was assured by the General Manager that without this new authorisation of £100,000 we should have about sufficient to pay for the rolling-stock likely to come in for payment up to the 30th June

next. The total of our orders for rolling-stock is £316,000; but the whole of the stock will not come to hand for payment till about 18 months or two years from now, so we have not provided for paying for all the stock ordered, but we have provided for all the stock that will come in for payment within a year or more from now—far beyond the end of the financial year. Hon. members will therefore notice that this £100,000 might, if I desired it, have been left out of this schedule. Still, I think when we have ordered such a large amount of stock, some such provision should be made. Hon. members will be fully informed as to the amount likely to come in for payment, not only for the present financial year, but also with regard to subsequent deliveries. We have always had to do this; though I do not suppose everyone will approve of the method. One would almost say that if we order a thing we ought to have the money in hand to pay for it. But in the case of rolling-stock for our railways, that is not always possible, seeing we have to order so far ahead. If we order rolling-stock now, probably from one to two years will elapse before that stock is delivered; therefore to provide the money now to pay for it two years hence would really be providing an unnecessary authorisation. At the same time, I quite agree that the authorisations should be nearly if not altogether equal to the liabilities; and I think it well for this £100,000 to be authorised, although it is not likely that any but a small portion of it will be used during the next financial year. There is a small item for Surveys, which is a very useful and necessary item, and includes the examination of the country between Kalgoorlie and our eastern border near Eucla. The amount for these surveys is £6,000, and it is necessary to have such a vote for preliminary surveys in respect of loan works. Passing that by, we come to the erection of public batteries, £30,000. This account is at present overdrawn. On the 30th June we had only £1,910 available on loan account for public batteries; and as hon. members are aware, we have authorised altogether about £70,000 for this purpose, and that amount had all been spent on 30th June with the exception of £1,910. Since that time I believe there has been some slight expenditure, so that

the account is much overdrawn at the present time, and an advance has been made pending a fresh authorisation. Unless more money be provided for this work it will be impossible to erect any more public batteries, or, in fact, to complete those already in hand and unfinished. I do not think hon. members will be adverse to this small additional expenditure on public batteries. I think if we closely look into the matter, if we consider all the difficulties which surrounded the starting of the system, and which we encountered in selecting sites, some of which selections were not altogether successful, we must come to the conclusion that the public battery system has not been altogether a failure. At any rate, we have produced £80,000 worth of gold from the earth which, but for the public batteries, would probably have been in the ground at the present time; and we have not lost very much money. Last year I think we lost some £6,000; I have said £8,000 in my Financial Statement, but the Minister of Mines has shown me that £2,000 of that was charged against the year's expenditure although due to the year before; so that last year we produced £80,000 worth of gold, and it cost us £6,000 more than we received in fees. Those who believe there is an indirect benefit, though a direct loss, in such enterprises as public batteries—a very favourite argument with some people—cannot have a better opportunity of applying that argument than is afforded by this experiment. I have looked into the matter somewhat closely, and am of opinion that the colony has gained by the work of the public batteries up to date, and I believe that if the system be continued with care and economy, the public batteries will be self-supporting; at all events, I hope so. We shall not be able to do very much with the £30,000 allocated in this Bill; still, we can go slowly. We must not rush the matter; we have a great many batteries already working; and so long as we can supply the most urgent demands, perhaps we shall be doing all that is expected from us, or that the public have a right to demand at the present time from the Legislature. Then there is a small item of £20,000, consisting of "Development of Goldfields generally, £16,000,"

and £4,000 for the development of the Murchison and Peak Hill fields. On the two last-mentioned items there are some liabilities. Then there is an item of £15,000 for Development of Agriculture, including drainage. The Commissioner of Lands is very anxious that some money should be spent upon drainage, especially in the South-West District, south of Pinjarra and on the Harvey. Therefore I have put the words "including drainage" in this schedule. I am of opinion, however, we shall be able to carry out that drainage scheme without any cost to the country.

MR. MORAN: Have all the surveys been made?

THE PREMIER: All, or nearly all. I believe we can carry out this drainage on a principle by which those who benefit by the works will pay for them, or nearly so; and I will introduce a Bill on Thursday next, if possible, by which we can make this drainage scheme self-supporting, or by which it will not be too great a burden on the people. At any rate, if we cannot make it altogether self-supporting at the beginning, then a few thousand pounds out of this £15,000 may be available for some of the main drains. There is no doubt a large area of land between the railway and the Harvey River which is inundated in winter time: I suppose there must be 100,000 acres there which might be made very productive if the water could be kept off in the winter season. Nearly all the surveys have been made, and we must place the matter in the hands of the Engineering Department to do the drains. That is the only plan I can suggest. A good many persons have had a try at draining this country—amateur engineers and others; but there is only one class of persons competent to do such work, and that is people who have served an apprenticeship to the work, who understand what they are about and are able to arrange a system before they begin. The plan of making drains here and there and not knowing where they are going to end is sure to be a failure; and for my own part, if we are going to do anything at all, I shall strongly urge upon the Commissioner of Lands that he place the work in the hands of the Engineer-in-Chief, and allow the drainage to be carried out in a systematic and proper

manner. That is the only way to do it properly, and it will be far the cheapest method in the end.

MR. PIESSE: That was the proposal we had before.

THE PREMIER: But we have had a good many amateur engineers at work.

MR. PIESSE: We were led astray.

MR. GEORGE: Like sheep.

THE PREMIER: Any other way is only patchwork, and will not be conducive to ultimate success; for the work done will be detached, and not carried out with a view to a final scheme.

MR. GEORGE: If you will put a special docket marked "urgent" on the order, it will be done immediately.

THE PREMIER: There is £30,000 provided for "Departmental." There was for this purpose £17,950 available on the 30th June, but hon. members will know that during this year the departmental expenditure will probably be greater than last year, owing to the large expenditure on the Coolgardie Water Scheme and the laying of the pipes. The last item is "Discount on Loans," which has been spoken about and criticised a little, and the wording of which may have misled some persons who do not perhaps realise what is meant. It simply means that many of the items on the loan authorisations have been reduced. For instance, if we borrowed £100,000 for carrying out a work and got only £94,000, and the work cost £100,000, we can easily see that we want £6,000 more to finish the work. If such things happen with a large number of loans, we can understand we shall get short of cash, for our loan realisations will not come up to the total of our authorisations. Now, the idea is that this item of £200,000 should be distributed about on the loan items where there is a deficiency—not on every item in the Loan Bill. For instance, if we are carrying out a work and it is costing the full amount authorised, then it is necessary for us to add to the money raised an amount equalling the discount. Hon. members will at once see that as we raise our money at the present time on the London market at three per cent., we have to raise it at a discount, unless there be a great wave of prosperity, or something occur to make money altogether more cheap than it is at the present

time. So long as we adhere to the three per cent. loans, we must raise money at a discount, because we know very well before we go on the market that our bonds cannot realise anything like £100. There is not a colony in Australia at the present time whose bonds could realise £100 at three per cent.; therefore we have to lose by the amount of the difference between what was realised and £100. The works cannot be carried out (or, at any rate, not as a rule) for less than the amount placed on the loan schedule. In fact, as I said the other evening, you will always find Ministers in charge of carrying out work very unwilling to place the cost of the work at more than the amount it is going to cost. The tendency is rather to under-estimate than to over-estimate the cost, in order to make a good case out to induce the Legislature to vote for the proposal.

MR. GEORGE: That is an admission.

THE PREMIER: The tendency is not to increase the cost so as to make it more difficult to carry the proposal. Engineers err, as a rule, the other way. As a rule they are inclined to put the cost higher than it is likely to be, so that they shall be on the safe side. Then comes a little war between the engineers and those entrusted with the financial operations of the Government, as the Government do not want to make the amount more than necessary. I do not say that it is the rule in this colony, but such is the tendency of human nature. In our experience all the money authorised has been required to carry out the work. Sometimes the amount has been enough, but we have always, or nearly always, required the amount asked for at first. The result has been that, seeing our loans have been raised at a discount of from perhaps 2 per cent. to $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., or even 7 per cent., there is a deficiency. This £200,000 will bring all our loans to date up to par. Of course it is not intended to bring every item up to par, but only those items that require to be operated upon. There are some items on the authorisations not operated upon at all, and we would not interfere with those. I noticed the other day in one of the newspapers it was said the fact that our loans were raised at a discount showed our credit was bad and our financing worse. I could not help laughing at that.

It all depends upon the price you are willing to pay for the money, and what you get for it. If we raised the rate of interest to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., of course we would get more than £100 for £100 put on the market; but seeing we have commenced on the 3 per cent. principle, it is wise for us to adhere to that principle, although it is not so good for the Treasurer, because he has to explain to the House that he wants more money to bring the amount up to the estimated cost of the works; whereas on the other hand he would have this £200,000 or £300,000 to deal with. Probably he would have several hundreds of thousands at 2 per cent., 3 per cent., or 4 per cent. more, as we have had at times, which would be a balance to be reappropriated to some other purpose. Those who say—whether newspapers or others—that the fact that we raise loans at a discount shows our credit is bad and our financing worse, only betray their absolute ignorance—that is if they make these assertions *bona fide*—because that fact has nothing whatever to do with it. If, for instance, we raised a loan to-morrow at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., I do not suppose we should get more than £80 for that. We might get £77, £78, or £80, if it were a $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan; but if, on the other hand, we raised the loan at 3 per cent., we should get £94 per £100, and if at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. we could get several pounds more than £100 per £100. It therefore seems to me that in England you do rather better by having the minimum below par than over it. The tendency is to raise loans at a discount and not at a premium. I suppose the reason is that the people who invest their trust money prefer to give, say, £95 to receive back £100 years afterwards, and obtain interest on £100. It is more easy for them to arrange their finances in that way than to pay £102, £103, or £104. A good deal of explanation is wanted about the odd pounds over, and I was informed by financiers at home that those who invest in stock, especially those who invest trust moneys, always prefer to invest at a discount instead of at a premium.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Get some spare cash for expenses.

THE PREMIER: That is the tendency, I am informed, in regard to financing in

the old country. I could have left this £200,000 out of the Loan Bill without any trouble, and have said nothing about it, because we could easily have carried on for another year. It could have been left to the next Treasurer, who would have to tell exactly the same tale I am telling you to-night, except that he would probably have then to say the discounts were larger than now. I thought it better to include the amount, however, as it will enable all our items on the loan schedule which have been operated upon at the present time to be brought up to par. That is all I have to say about this little Bill. There is nothing sensational or new about the Bill. The works, with scarcely an exception, are in hand, and I think I shall voice the opinion of hon. members if I say they must be continued. I therefore have no hesitation whatever in asking hon. members, and strongly advising them in fact, to pass the Bill as soon as it is conveniently possible, so that we may get the Loan Estimates on the table. Of course members are aware that until this Bill is passed by this House, it would not be convenient, nor would it be courteous to the Legislative Council, to place the Loan Estimates on the table, because some of these items will be included in the loan estimates of expenditure. And that is another reason why I hope no undue delay will take place in regard to the passing of the Bill. In conclusion, I wish to say that if there is any other information with regard to any of these items I can give members, or if members think there are any items that can be done without for the present year, I shall be very glad to listen to hon. members on the subject and see whether their views can be met.

MR. GEORGE: Why do you not ask for a million?

THE PREMIER: I can assure hon. members that this is quite enough for our financial obligations for one year. It will carry us very well over into next year, and, as I told the House when I was addressing them in regard to the finances, my desire was to make the Bill as small as possible. The £200,000 with regard to discount and £100,000 for rolling stock, these making £300,000, and perhaps some other items, could have been left out had I really been desirous of

omitting them; but I thought it was right and due to this House that we should keep our authorisations in accordance with our requirements, and not get our authorisations in any way into arrears. I can say that we never have spent money where we have had no authorisation, except very small amounts, which have been clearly placed before hon. members. I do not think they come to £50,000 altogether, during the whole of the years I have been Treasurer of the colony. I beg to move the second reading.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I must congratulate the right hon. the Premier on his good judgment in not asking the House for further authorisations except for items that are absolutely necessary. I am afraid that if he had included any other items than we have here, we should have had a pretty strong debate. However, he has shown wisdom by steering clear of all debatable matter. I notice there is no provision for the Nannine Railway, above all things. He very cautiously left that out of the Loan Bill.

THE PREMIER: There is provision already.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not take exception to any of the items of this Bill. As the Premier says, they are all works in hand, and works which must be continued. I just want to make a remark about this £200,000 for discount. I am not quite sure as to what the intention of the Government is in regard to that. Of course we know that it is an inevitable thing, but we want to see that this amount is allocated to the respective loan accounts which it is intended to make good; because unless we do that we shall find ourselves in this position. Take the case of the Coolgardie Water Scheme: a sum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions has been voted by this House for that particular work, and we shall have to make provision for the actual expenditure. Our expenditure, as the Premier says, is necessarily only the proceeds of the loans, whatever they are. If it is £93 per £100, there is only £93 to spend instead of £100. If we do not get these moneys properly allocated to each one of these public works we have in hand, we shall get into a confused state of finance by and by, which will be most unsatis-

factory. There are only two ways of dealing with the question: one is to allocate amounts to the different votes so as to make good deficiencies; and the other—which I should be disposed to advise the House to adopt, if we were in a good financial position—is to make good the amounts out of revenue, the same as interest and sinking fund, and enter full debit to each vote; but seeing the many claims there have been upon us, I can easily understand the Premier would not be disposed to entertain that suggestion. What I desire to impress upon the House is that we should have our bookkeeping upon such a basis that the bookkeeping should show the amount of money actually expended upon any particular work and the interest properly debited. For instance, in the case of the Coolgardie Water Scheme and Railway works, we want to show the country the amount of money we expect to raise and the actual cost. If we do not do that, we shall find ourselves in a state of confusion by and by. I would rather see this £30,000 for public batteries come out of revenue, because it is clear we are not exactly making these a paying concern; and while it is all very well to say we have lost only £6,000 on the working of public batteries during the last two years—

THE PREMIER: We paid the loss out of revenue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes; but wear and tear also go on all the time, and should be provided for. I am anxious to see these public batteries made a success in the country, and I do not know of any reason why they should not be a success; but in order to make them satisfactory to all concerned, they must be made to pay not only their working expenses, but such a sinking fund as will redeem the properties within a reasonable time, because in ten or fifteen years a battery that has cost £5,000 will be of little or no value. We do not want public batteries to be erected as pauper institutions, but we want them to be made a great convenience to the country, which they really are; and where such conveniences are provided by the State, it is not too much to ask the people who use them that they should pay the actual cost of working, and sufficient to cover wear and tear, because while we do not want to make a profit

out of the people by working these batteries at high rates, yet we should not work them at rates of crushing so low that we are compelled to lose on the out-lay year by year, while making no provision for wear and tear. We have heard at various times a good deal about failing fields. I remember that in 1872 Bendigo was said to be done, and that never another ounce of gold would be got there; but in 1878 the returns from gold-mining in Bendigo were greater than ever before, except in the alluvial times. So it will be with us; we must reasonably expect that our gold mines will be as gold mines in every country have been, and that as we go deeper we shall have stable mining for many years to come. I have no fears as to gold-mining in this colony giving out. It is true certain districts and certain fields may fail, as has happened in other parts of the world where there is gold-mining; but taking the great mining industry as it stands, we need not trouble ourselves for the space of our lives or the lives of our children as to this industry failing in Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: I thought you were a croaker?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not a croaker in regard to this colony's gold-mining, at any rate. Going back to my own conscience, I do not believe in croaking concerning the future of this country. In regard to the Bill I do not desire any alteration made in it, though I would prefer to see the £30,000 charged to revenue for the reasons I have stated. As I understand the amounts will be allocated to the various votes, I think there will be no objection to the £200,000 appearing in this Loan Bill to provide for discounts on previous loans. With regard to rolling-stock for the railways, on which the Premier spoke somewhat strongly, I understand that, taking the report of the General Manager of Railways which has been placed before us, it is not probable that any newly ordered rolling-stock will be delivered prior to the 30th June, 1901, and the cash requirements for the current financial year are therefore about £57,000. But I think the Premier, in quoting the General Manager of Railways, might have given us the preceding paragraph.

THE PREMIER: I did not quote him at all.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But the Premier referred to the facts stated in that part of the report, and he might have given us the facts in the preceding paragraph, where the General Manager states that the total sum we require is £464,000 before the close of 1902. There does not seem much time for the extra £400,000 to be provided, if we are expected to pay this total amount before the end of 1902.

THE PREMIER: Not so much as that; £250,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The present authorisation will take us till the end of June, 1901.

THE PREMIER: It will do more than that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Here we are expected to pay over half a million of money for rolling-stock, and in addition to that, if members will go through the General Manager's figures, they will see that he says nearly a million of money will be required during that period for various purposes connected with railways. While there is no objection to this Bill, yet for all practical purposes it is simply a recoup Bill for moneys that have been reappropriated, and against which this side of the House has protested whenever such reappropriation took place. Now we come to a time when we have to pay for the reappropriations, and in this Bill we are making provision to do so, for which purpose we are asking for close on a million of money to recoup the various amounts which have been reappropriated to other purposes previously. Well, if the House will borrow the House will have to repay; and if only hon. members will remember that fact when future Reappropriation Bills come before us, we shall probably be wiser, and instead of reappropriating we shall go for a loan direct, as we ought to have done in this case. I shall, of course, support the Bill.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I do not suppose it is of much use doing otherwise than supporting the Bill, because we want the money and have to get it, and practically there is not much use in discussing the measure. It is certainly no use trying to defeat any of the items, because we know that unless the country gets the money the country will go

"bung." I want to draw attention to a few remarks made by the leader of the Opposition when he expressed the hope that on the occasion of any future reappropriations the members of this House will bear in mind the lesson we have learned from reappropriations in the past. In regard to that advice, I do not think many members now here will be long in a position to do what the hon. members suggests. In reference to the last item in the Schedule, £200,000 for discount on loans raised previously, there has never been a Loan Bill before this House without the present leader of the Opposition calling the attention of the Government to the necessity of making provision for that which we now have to meet in this Bill, and we have simply been staving off matters which ought honestly to have been attended to years ago. With reference to the several items under the head of "Railways," while the Premier was doing it he might as well have made the amount in the Bill £1,000,000, for the House would have passed it all the same, knowing that the money is wanted. Here the Government ask £100,000 for rolling-stock for railways, when we know that in the present condition of the railways this amount is simply playing with the question. The General Manager of Railways tells us that he wants rolling-stock in order to carry on the business of the country; and those members who are engaged in business will know there is hardly any undertaking in the country that is not suffering every day from the want of rolling-stock on railways. Indeed, this cry for more rolling-stock has been going on year after year, even from what may be called prehistoric days, when a former Commissioner of Railways was dismissed in his night-shirt. Here we have the General Manager of Railways, who surely should be trusted in connection with this matter, telling us that he wants more rolling-stock, and the Premier has not the pluck to ask this House to authorise the raising of the money. Of course, if he does not ask us for the money, we can do no more with him, I suppose. There is one item affecting my district to which I must call attention. People who have settled on land in the Harvey River district were led to understand that £30,000 was to be

put on the Estimates this year for a general scheme of drainage; but there is no amount provided in the Estimates for that purpose, nor do I see a sufficient amount provided in this Bill. Therefore, unless something is done in the coming season to deal with the drainage question, there will be a general flitting from that district. I do not suppose it is possible to increase the amount of this Bill now, but so far as the South-West district is concerned, the Government, in pursuance of their policy of settling people on the land, have sold land in situations where it is practically impossible for the people in winter to get about without a steam launch or a boat. In some parts men have to go out of their way 20 or 30 miles to avoid water that accumulates through want of proper drainage.

MR. A. FORREST: What about the droughts?

MR. GEORGE: We have no droughts in the South-Western District. We are not dealing with the North, but with white people in the South-West. The Government have sold that land practically on false pretences, and it is their duty and the duty of this House to redeem the honour of the country by giving to those people who have been seduced into settling on the land an opportunity of earning their living. There are numbers of farmers in that district who purchased their seed and manure for this season, but have not been able to get on the land to put the seed into it. If this is to go on and no proper remedy be applied, then the sooner we get a Government with some sense of honour, the better.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): As I understood there would be some objection to the vote of £30,000 for providing more public batteries in the country, it is only right to point out the great success these batteries have been on the goldfields. The providing of these batteries is one great work for which I give the Premier credit. In my district I have had better opportunities of finding out the good that public batteries have done than has perhaps any other member of the House; and I do not think any other member has taken so great an interest in this work as I have. Up to the present the Government have

spent some £72,000 upon this work, and they now ask us to vote another £30,000. The member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) said a few nights ago he thought the matter should be left to private enterprise. But when we look at the great difference between those crushers worked by the Government and those worked by private enterprise, I think we can see that even if there has been a loss of £8,000 in working them during the last two years, the indirect benefit has been marvellous. Private batteries in the northern districts invariably charge from 24s. to £2 a ton, according to the size of the parcel, for crushing ore; and the Government charge 15s. per ton at all their batteries.

MR. A. FORREST: That is not enough to be profitable.

MR. GREGORY: I think I can show they can be made to pay at that rate [Mr. A. Forrest: No.] The Government returns show that this can be done, leaving a very fair margin of profit to the State, the only condition being that the prospectors must be compelled to bring their stone to the battery, otherwise the battery should be shut down and removed. In looking at the loss of £8,000 which accrued in the first two years of the working of public batteries, the Premier was correct when he stated that the batteries had great difficulties to contend with. There was great difficulty in obtaining proper sites, and the superintendent was not conversant with the fields, did not know any of the mining people, could not engage suitable men, had great trouble in obtaining water, and had other difficulties to face which would have broken the heart of almost any man. But I think, although it is estimated there will be a loss this financial year, that with economy and with strict management we shall find at the end of the year the batteries will almost pay their own expenses.

MR. MORAN: Do not let us have any more Yerillas.

MR. GREGORY: And after that period they should be made to work at a profit. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) has mentioned the case of Yerilla. Yerilla was a place where the management was not too good at the start; but I was the first to advocate that the battery be removed from Yerilla.

MR. MORAN: Was not gold somewhat scarce?

MR. GREGORY: No; the stone was worth from 15 to 18 dwts. and more; and let me tell the hon. member that during 1899 that battery put through 1,600 tons of ore; and that is more than the output of three other public batteries. I urged that this battery should be shut down because the prospectors were not bringing their stone to keep it going, and if that were not done, it was absolutely impossible for the work to be a success. I want this scheme to be a success, and it can only be made a success by first-class management, and by putting these batteries in proper sites; and as soon as we find they will not pay they should be removed. The charge for crushing should be sufficiently high to leave a margin of profit, so that when a battery comes to be removed there may be sufficient funds in hand to pay removal expenses. It was said the Government did not desire to obtain any interest on the money expended, but thought that the indirect advantages of these batteries would be a sufficient return to the State, and would enable the country to afford to pay the interest on the outlay. But we always anticipated that the batteries would pay working expenses; and I think we must insist on this, even if we charge a slightly higher price for crushing. There has been better work done in this than in the past year. In 1899 with nine batteries, there was some 18,806 tons crushed; and for the eight months of this year seven batteries have crushed 15,435 tons. The average monthly crushing last year was 174 tons, as against 275 tons this year, which means that each battery is turning out 100 tons per month more than they crushed last year. That looks much better; and I think, more especially when looking at the work going on in my own district, that the batteries will in future pay if kept fully employed.

MR. CONNOR: No one is opposing the item.

MR. GREGORY: I think it will be opposed.

MR. MORAN: Not unless you give too much away.

MR. GREGORY: It is very easy for the superintendent of these batteries to make them pay by raising the price one

shilling or two shillings. That would make all the difference; but I contend that officer was quite justified in starting at 15s. per ton, because at Mulline during 1899, where they crushed over 3,000 tons of stone, and where the battery was kept fairly well employed, the cost of crushing was only 12s. 10d. Perhaps the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) will listen to this; he has very often interrupted me in the House in regard to this matter of batteries: but here we have a Government return showing that the cost of crushing is 12s. 10d. per ton. I know there have been greater difficulties in some other places, but if we could keep up this average there would be a margin of profit. The Minister should put down a very firm hand on some of these batteries, because I find that this year the battery at Tuckanarra has crushed only 712 tons; that is at the rate of 60 tons a month. Now that cannot be expected to pay.

MR. MORAN: The leader of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth) is responsible for that.

MR. GREGORY: I am talking about public batteries: I do not care whether I hit the department or the Opposition, so long as we can make this enterprise successful; and I think the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) should do as I did, and if the prospector will not bring his stone to keep the battery going, then the hon. member should advise that the battery be removed to some other part of the colony. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear.] They should be removed to some place where the prospectors will come forward to assist the Government. There is too much of the idea that if the Government put up a battery in a district, the prospectors become the owners of the plant, boss the battery, boss the manager, boss everything. The superintendent must alter this state of affairs, and see that the batteries are properly looked after and made to pay; and if they do not pay they should be shifted. The battery at Lennonville crushed 228 tons a month, at Norseman only 270 tons, and at Leonora only 282 tons. The two last-mentioned centres are large districts, and a much better return should be given by each. Prospectors in those parts should be given to understand that unless they bring in their

ore and assist the Government, they will lose the plant. There are dozens of other places looking out for batteries. Laverton is a big district and is crying out for a plant; and if Leonora cannot keep the battery going, it should be shifted. I want to draw special attention to the batteries at Mount Ida and Mulline. At Mount Ida the average for the eight months of this year was 407 tons per month, and at Mulline 485 tons. The battery at Mount Ida turned out 3,698ozs. of gold to the value of £14,237; while the Mulline battery turned out 4,606ozs. to the value of £17,713. I have here a list of the prospectors in the Mulline district: there are 77 prospectors whose ore has been treated at this battery, and there is not one single mining company.

MR. MORAN: Then each prospector must bring his ore in a wheelbarrow.

MR. GREGORY: During that eight months the Government battery has turned out over £17,000 worth of gold, simply among working men. [A MEMBER: Hear, hear.] Since the battery has been erected, it has returned to the prospectors £36,367 worth of gold. Some eighteen months or two years ago some public-house property was sold at that place for £200, and a fortnight ago the owner asked £2,500 for it; and I believe all the property in the district is increasing in value the same way.

THE PREMIER: That is good business for the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest).

MR. GREGORY: No; not at all; the place I speak of is a long way from his property. The people in Mulline were so poor two years ago that I believe if the whole lot had been turned upside down, one could not have got £100 from them. They had very little food, and could very seldom raise enough money to do mining; but now they are one of the most prosperous little mining communities in Western Australia; and not only has the battery helped those people, but it has helped other men in prospecting; and I think it is due to these public batteries that we have many new discoveries and a lot of good "shows" all round that district. An enormous number of leases was taken up last year, and nearly the whole of that work is due to the public battery. That this system is a good one has been proved at Mount Ida

and Mulline, and if the prospectors will only bring sufficient stone, the ore can be crushed at 15s. and return a fair margin of profit.

MR. MORAN: Does it matter whether there is any gold?

MR. GREGORY: If they choose to bring us ore which contains no gold, that is their lookout. If the prospectors will bring an average of 400 tons of stone per month, I say every one of these batteries can be made a success. But I wish to emphasise that we must make them pay working expenses—[**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Hear, hear!—and I was much pleased to hear the member for East Kimberley (**MR. CONNOR**) speak so strongly in favour of public batteries as he did the other evening, when he said that even if we have lost £8,000, and lose £8,000 again, the indirect advantages are so great that we should continue the system. If the batteries pay their working expenses, Parliament can be easily induced to allow their continuance. Up to the present we have had over £150,000 worth of gold turned out by public batteries; and, as the Premier said, nearly the whole of it would be still in the ground had it not been for this Government enterprise. It is to the prospectors who went out into the bush and braved the dangers and hardships of the desert that some encouragement should be given; it is to these men that Fremantle and the agricultural districts owe their prosperity—to the men who went out and proved that Western Australia was the greatest gold-producing country in the world. These men should have some reward; but the question is, how are they to be rewarded? These are not men who want spoon-feeding, and I should not care to see a prospecting vote, giving them assistance or the handling of money to go out into the bush. But what we can do is to give them a chance, and a little return for their work. The prospector has only two chances, one being to sell his claim to the capitalist, and the other to get his ore crushed by a public battery. If he sell to the capitalist and the mine turn out a success, the whole of the profits leave the country; and as soon as a man sells a lease at a fair price, he usually clears out of the country, taking his money with him. But if he crush his ore at a public battery, he is induced by small degrees

to purchase machinery; he gradually becomes the working owner of his mine; we get him to develop his own show and to take a big interest in the country, and we retain that man among us and retain his wealth; and I say nothing could be better or more conducive to the well-being not only of the mining industry but of the agriculturists and the people of the city as well. I hope the House will allow this item to remain, and that every possible effort will be made to make these batteries, if not absolutely profitable, at least self-supporting. Indirectly they have been a great success. They have done more good to the country than any other vote for the Mines Department; but they should be made as soon as possible to pay their own expenses.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): Sell the batteries for old iron. I think the hon. member is a fit and proper person to represent North Coolgardie, after the speech he has delivered to-night to his electors. I feel perfectly certain the hon. member will, without hesitation, make a blackguardly rush to get a few more batteries after the vote is passed. If he has not a special dog to sit outside the door of the Minister of Mines' office, no doubt the hon. member for North Coolgardie will sleep on the mat to wait until the Minister comes in the morning. He is an active little chap in looking after his electorate: he misses his meals when a public battery vote is about. A little while ago when the Norseman railway was being talked about and something was said about the glittering mining centre of Widgemooltha, half-way between Coolgardie and Norseman, the Premier spoke about that place in glowing language. I know a public battery was being dragged there by some process or other from Bulong, about fifty miles away. I saw some returns from that battery the other day. I thought it was a pity the Premier did not have this return when he was advocating the Norseman line and speaking of this Widgemooltha centre. The battery has had a most successful career already. This merely in passing, like. I thought if the Minister of Mines had these returns when in Committee, he might give them to hon. members. It would show what a thriving place this Widge-mooltha is: it is showing up, I can assure

hon. members. It has started with 4 dwts. to the ton! Give it time, it will go up to 40zs.—there is no telling.

MR. GEORGE: How many mines?

MR. MORAN: There are several mines: they all send their stone to the battery; there is plenty of stone there, enough to build the federal capital, mostly diorite. If we only had that information when the Norseman railway was being discussed, we should not have hesitated for a moment to have chucked the Bill out by a larger majority than we did. Tuckanarra is another place where there is a battery. Our dear old departed friend Mr. Kenny represented that place for a number of years. He was such another member as the member for North Coolgardie: he never missed a chance of advocating his electorate. He got a battery for Tuckanarra. But almost all Tuckanarra was down in a show-window in St. George's Terrace: most hon. members will remember distinctly when Tuckanarra was on view down here. There were some rich specimens, and there was not a member in the House who would have dared to oppose the Tuckanarra public battery at that time. The battery is still there.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And the gold is there too.

MR. MORAN: I suppose the battery is looking at the gold and the gold is looking at the battery. But the battery is still there, and if it is not looked after and oiled occasionally it will be eaten away with rust. That is what has occurred at Tuckanarra. Then there is a goldfield called Yerilla. The hon. member got a public battery for that place. He never rested until he got the battery—in fact the hon. member got four batteries for his electorate after the first vote.

MR. D. FORREST: A smart man!

MR. MORAN: The Minister of Mines gives batteries sometimes to get rid of the hon. member for a day or two. The hon. member got this Yerilla public battery; but what happened? It ran for a few minutes, and burst up Yerilla, that flourishing town of the goldfields. There was not a happier spot on the goldfields than Yerilla. There was a "pub." there doing good business.

MR. GREGORY: Four.

MR. MORAN: Only the other day I saw one of the Yerilla publicans down here—Mr. Cook. He carted his hotel and stuck to the battery. When the battery shifted to another part of the hon. member's electorate, so many hundred and odd miles, Mr. Cook hitched his hotel on to the battery and followed it, and no sooner had he erected his hotel at the battery than he was refused a license. I say Yerilla would have been a successful community to-day, looking with a promise and a hope to the future of having a public battery erected there. The hon. member has done all this for Yerilla. We know there is a public battery at Leonora, and there is one at Norseman: they are not paying. I am a great believer in public batteries; I believe they should be erected at a place where the gold is. I hope we shall not allow, in the future, any hon. member in this House to carwig the Minister of Mines and carry a bag which would hold more than half-a-dozen public batteries, to be put down in different parts of his electorate where at present the greatest number of people are singing out for them. That is the way in which the public battery question has been hawked about in the past.

MR. GREGORY: I simply introduced a deputation from Yerilla, and the people guaranteed the interest on the cost of battery, also to find the water.

MR. MORAN: We will let the hon. member off with a caution this time, if he will not do it again. The interest has never been paid. The deputation was introduced and the battery got, but the hon. member did not back a bill for that interest. All this goes to show that we should exercise the greatest care in the future in putting down public batteries; we should go cautiously to work in the matter. We have probably had more failures than successes in regard to public batteries. But I am a great believer in them still. All this goes to show that a place like Widgemooltha "bangs Bannagher" altogether. They wanted to get a public battery there before the railway to Norseman was brought forward, so that they could come out with a good crushing. It would have been a crusher for the Norseman line had the crushing been given earlier. It cost more to take the battery to Widgemooltha

than to erect it, in the first place. In reference to the Loan Bill itself, it is really too paltry to talk about. The whole amount is such a little bit out of 3½ to 4 millions of money which will be wanted directly: £750,000 is not much, but the House must not forget what was omitted to be stated the other night, that the Premier had another £880,000 authorised.

MR. GEORGE: He has let it out now.

MR. MORAN: The Premier has an untouched authorisation of £880,000, and with the amount of this Loan Bill he will have a million and a half to raise. If the market is favourable before the next meeting of Parliament, the Premier will be able to raise this million and a half. I hope he may get it. The opinion I hold is that the market will not be favourable. My opinion is that a million and a half is sufficient authorisation before the next Parliament meets. I hope the Premier will get the loan: that is all the harm I wish him.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): I did not intend to say anything about this battery question now, as I thought we might leave it until we got to the items of the Loan Bill or till discussing the Estimates; but I would like to say one or two words in reply to the member for East Coolgardie. He appears to have taken very little interest in the public battery question. If he had taken the same interest in the public battery question as he has done in regard to the finances of the country, he would have been able to place some more accurate statement before hon. members. As to the Yerilla battery, which the hon. member stated had been carted 150 or 200 miles somewhere to the other side of nowhere, I may state it has only been moved 30 miles, and as a matter of fact the battery has not started yet.

MR. MORAN: Has not left Yerilla?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It has not started working yet.

MR. MORAN: Where is it?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: At Niagara. The hon. member said that someone followed the battery. Yerilla is one of those places where mistakes may be made. It is not a mistake on the part of the Government, but on the part of the prospectors. As far as I understand it, Yerilla was one of the most popular centres on the goldfields in that part of

the colony, some years ago. A public battery was put there, and it crushed 1,500 to 1,600 tons of ore. It has now been moved away, as it has been proved the district will not pay: that is something. The people who were engaged in the district have gone away to somewhere else. As to the battery at Widgemooltha, the hon. member knows very little about it.

MR. MORAN: Have you ever been there?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Of course.

MR. MORAN: That's good.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The hon. member told the House that they only want the stone there. The hon. member does not know what the stone is like, but we are going to try it.

MR. MORAN: You have tried it.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: When the battery is started—

MR. MORAN: Give us the returns.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: A few parcels of stone were put through the battery, yielding a poor result. The hon. member wants to condemn on that. I think he might give the district time.

MR. MORAN: It can have "six months without the option," as far as I am concerned.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There has never been a battery within 50 miles of Widgemooltha.

MR. MORAN: You are wrong: there was a battery in the place for years.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Not for years: a battery was there for a very short time. There is not a sign of a battery anywhere near Widgemooltha; there has not been one there for the last two years.

MR. MORAN: The white ants ate it.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There is no battery nearer than Burbanks on the one side and Norseman on the other. A very extensive examination has been made of the district, and the report I have received in regard to many of the properties is very favourable. We are quite satisfied that the stone is there, and the battery is going to try it. There has not been a great deal of expense in getting the water, and I hope the hon. member will be of a different opinion from what he is now in a little time.

MR. MORAN: An average of four pennyweights.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: About 50 tons were put through as a trial, and you know you cannot get all the gold. I may tell the House that if we get an average of 400 tons a month at the public battery, that will make it pay. But many of these batteries at present have not been kept going, not through the fault of the management, but often through the fault of prospectors, and we could not get sufficient water in the first instance to keep them going. As to the Mulline battery, there is an instance of a public battery which is paying. For six months it has been paying all the working expenses and the interest on the capital. That is a satisfactory result, and if we can only keep the battery going we can make it pay. But unfortunately the prospectors do not always come up and supply the batteries in the way in which they first lead one to expect. The Tuckanarra battery has done good. It has not been a success financially, but it has opened up the district and been the means of floating one mine and having the battery started. There is a difficulty in moving these batteries, unless the stone gives out altogether. Members know very well if it is suggested to move a battery, that their constituents will come down here, and members will introduce a deputation to the Minister. The deputation will beg that the battery be not removed; they will ask to be given another six months' trial. They will say that if the battery is taken away it will condemn the district, it will ruin the district, and that we shall never hear any more of it. I may inform prospectors that in many instances if they do not keep the batteries supplied by a certain time, batteries may have to be removed from Tuckanarra and other places, though it is expensive removing batteries. It is not the cost of the plant, but the carting of the plant and the procuring of water which cause so much expense; and if the batteries do not pay after a certain time, they will have to be removed. If batteries can only be kept going with stone we can make them pay; and what the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory), who has a thorough grasp of this question, has told the House in regard to the Mulline

and other batteries is perfectly correct. I do not intend to weary the House on the present occasion, but will give them a little history in regard to the batteries when we get to the Estimates. I merely rose on the present occasion to make a few remarks in reply to the member for East Coolgardie.

MR. MONGER (York): Before the question is put I would like to point out to the Premier the advisability of increasing the amount mentioned in the Bill to even money. It seems somewhat strange that in a Loan Bill which has for its object the authorising of the Government to float a loan of £790,000, the amount should not, at a time like this, be increased to £800,000. There is one item which has been overlooked by the Government, and which may appear to some members small; but when we are asking the representatives of the people to sanction a loan of this magnitude, we ought not to leave out an additional £10,000 for the purpose of exploiting the only unknown, or practically unknown, portion of Western Australia. In these progressive times it is only fitting the Government in their last Loan Bill should find a place for such an item; and in making this suggestion I am referring to that portion of the country between King Leopold Ranges and the vicinity of Wyndham. It would be a standing tribute to the name of Forrest, associated as that name is with exploration work, to include as one of the last items in the last Loan Bill which the Premier will have the honour of introducing, an item of £10,000 for the purpose I have mentioned. I submit this as a suggestion to the Premier, and I hope he will see his way to carry it out. In other respects I am in complete accord with the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 6, inclusive—agreed to.

Schedule:

MR. KINGSMILL, referring to item, "Ashburton River Water Supply, £3,000," asked what was going to be done, and for whose benefit the Government proposed to spend this £3,000.

THE PREMIER: The idea was to provide a water supply for the country about Onslow township, where a good

deal of money had been spent in artesian boring, in order to provide water for stock, unfortunately without success. The bore, he believed, was taken down for nearly 2,000 feet, and there were good hopes of success, but eventually the project had to be given up. The Ashburton River is tidal for a good many miles up, and three or four miles from the mouth there is a natural bar, where it was believed, with an expenditure of some £2,000, a dam or weir about 4 feet high could be constructed. The cost would all depend on whether the work was of wood or of cement, and of course the latter would be dearer; but the effect of the work would be to prevent the tide coming up, and there would thus be provided a magnificent stretch of fresh water for about a dozen miles, which would be of great advantage in the way of shipping stock, while the township of Onslow might be supplied by means of windmills and pipes. Some surveys had been made, and the question had been under consideration for years; and it was possible that if in the first instance this work had been done instead of spending money on boring, there would now have been a permanent supply of water for stock, and for the town. It was thought at the time, however, that if water could be obtained by boring, it would not only be an advantage to that part of the country, but would indicate the presence of water all along the coast. If the work now proposed could be carried out, it would be money well spent, because he believed there was no good water in Onslow at the present time, fresh water having to be carted a dozen miles or more.

A MEMBER: Were there many people at Onslow.

THE PREMIER: There were not many people, but there was a township, with a magistrate and a hospital. Some £2,000 or £3,000 had been absolutely lost in the boring operations, and it was intended to spend the money in the Schedule in order to make certain of getting water, if the engineers approved of the scheme, because of course if the engineers did not approve of the scheme, the money would not be spent. The river ran, he believed, almost every year, and when the water once came down the salt water would never get up again,

though until the river did run, the water would continue to be brackish. This work was undertaken in the interests of stock being shipped at Onslow, travelling teams touching the river higher up, where the tide did not reach, and the water was fresh.

MR. D. FORREST: There was only a small population at Onslow, but there was a big country at the back, and there were gold mines and large pastoral interests to be considered. At Onslow, which was the only shipping port in the district, the present water obtainable was quite brackish. He had taken a good deal of interest in the proposed work, not only since he became member for the district, but for many years before. About five miles from the mouth of the river there was almost a natural crossing of stone and cement, and very little money would be required to erect a weir about 4ft. high for the purpose which had been mentioned by the Premier. The river was tidal for about ten miles; and about six miles from the mouth, for six months after the river had run, the water was fresh and available for travelling stock and horses, but horses which were accustomed to fresh water could not drink the water obtainable at Onslow. The Premier had said something about pipes, but it was doubtful whether the £3,000 would be sufficient for that work, and the people were not asking for pipes; but merely for a water supply which they were quite willing to cart. The Premier had mentioned that the Government spent a certain amount of money in boring. Close on £2,000 was spent, but the people could not get any fresh water.

THE PREMIER: What was the distance from the weir to the town?

MR. D. FORREST: A mile and a half. This was a pastoral district, and this year something like 3,500 bales of wool were exported. The Government had built a tram and a jetty, and a very little extension of the jetty would enable a steamer to come alongside. He had Captain Talbot's authority for that statement. At present people had to lighter their wool, sheep, and everything. This export of wool brought a lot of money into the country, and pastoralists consumed a lot of goods. The agricultural members ought to support this vote, and he asked members not to put

any obstacle in the way, because the work would be a very good one. He would not say that the work would be reproductive, but it would pay something. The tramway and jetty had just been let at £312 per annum, which would, he believed, pay interest on the sum expended by the Government.

MR. CONNOR: We had heard of export in the north of the colony increasing. In Wyndham the export was increasing, and from that port at least £100,000 worth of stuff would be sent; yet people had absolutely no water, either fresh or salt, unless they took sea water. It was to be regretted that the person who drew the Bill did not think of that place, which was one of the hottest and one with the least water. We had £6,000 mentioned for Derby Harbour Works, and £3,000 for Ashburton River Water Supply. We should have had some "Bunbury" in the Bill.

THE PREMIER: The Estimates contained £1,400 for Wyndham.

MR. CONNOR: £1,400 would not afford a supply of water at Wyndham sufficient for requirements. At Wyndham people were producing more beef at present than this part of the colony could take. A lot of members pooh-poohed the idea, but that was a fact. The Government ought to foster the industry.

A MEMBER: The Government did so.

MR. CONNOR: Not to the extent they should.

THE PREMIER: How much had been spent there?

MR. CONNOR said he did not know. He wanted to impress upon members what was necessary to expend. We had markets opening up in other parts of the world for the produce, and unless facilities were given by the Government to develop the industry, a most unfortunate thing would happen, for the market down here would be flooded. We did not want to depend upon one industry, but to develop the outside parts of the colony as well as the gold-producing districts. The Government should give facilities to increase exchanges between this colony and other countries. He supported the Bill.

MR. A. FORREST: The works at Derby had been promised for some considerable time, and if they were not

effected this year, the whole thing would be carried away out to sea. The jetty and works there were in such a state of disrepair that no shipping could take place unless these works were carried out between the present time and the next cattle season. As to the North, those districts were the most important in the colony. The port of Derby shipped at least £100,000 worth of produce per annum in wool, cattle, and sheep, and the little money people there received for the large amount of revenue contributed justified the execution of the works referred to. People in this part (South-West) of the country, where they had a good climate and everything else, wanted to be spoonfed, as did also miners, but the Northern squatter was a pioneer who stuck to the country and asked no one to help him.

MR. MORAN: And shot niggers.

MR. A. FORREST: They did not shoot niggers, but he believed that niggers were shot in the country the hon. member came from.

MR. DARLOT: We had heard a great cry from the large centres in the South, of the necessity of a cheap supply of meat, and we had been told facts by two members representing the great cattle producing districts. From what he had heard both hon. members rather understated than overstated the case. In this morning's paper we read that 1,300 head of cattle had to be travelled a distance of 18 miles in a tropical climate, and to be shipped, without a drop of water. That meant that the cattle at the very least must go from 30 to 48 hours without water. Enterprising firms went into the cattle trade and brought stock down to be put into a yard at Fremantle and to be fed on hay until they were slaughtered. Some of the cattle fell away from fretting, and a number suffered so much from the knocking about that could not be avoided on board ship that some of them actually had to be shipped back from Fremantle. For a great part of the year the colony relied on those districts for its meat supply, and there was not sufficient money on the Estimates to make this jetty substantial. If the usual heavy tides were experienced the jetty would become useless, and the price of meat would be higher next winter than ever before. That was false economy.

MR. GREGORY: Had provision been made for expenditure on the railways from Menzies to Leonora out of moneys allocated last year?

THE PREMIER: There was more than enough available.

MR. GEORGE: Referring to item in Part II., "Donnybrook towards Bridgetown Railway (final instalment), £5,000," asked the Premier to explain.

THE PREMIER: This sum was the balance of the contract.

MR. GEORGE: Was it the balance of the claim?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. GEORGE: What were the total claims?

MR. PIESSE: About £26,000. The final adjustment was something like £4,700, the original amount provided having been insufficient.

MR. GEORGE: After years of experience in railway construction, the department let a contract for £150,000 and the claims amounted to £26,000.

THE PREMIER: In building this line there were many difficulties.

MR. GEORGE: But similar errors might be made in constructing other railways mentioned in the schedule.

MR. PIESSE: Exceptional difficulties were met with in building this line. Owing to the character of the country the slopes allowed for had to be increased and the cuttings considerably widened. The claims made amounted to three times the amount paid, and the final adjustment was creditable to the railway officials, but for whose care £52,000 would have had to be paid. In most cases the engineers' estimates were correct; but this being a new departure, through exceptional country with a heavy rainfall and presenting great difficulties, some error in the estimates was unavoidable.

MR. GEORGE: The argument of the last speaker was practically a reflection on the surveying. The survey staff was very efficient, and the argument would not hold water. In building future railways the advice of the engineers should be followed, and the estimates should not be altered by the political chief. It was too much to pay £26,000 to allow the Premier to act as an amateur engineer.

MR. PIESSE: The contract price was £160,000. How was the Premier in fault with regard to extra claims?

MR. MORAN (referring to item, "Surveys new lines, including Malcolm to Laverton and Fremantle via Jandakot to South-Western Railway, etc., also preliminary inspection of route from Kalgoorlie to Eucla, £6,000"), moved that after "railway," the words "Boulder to Kalgoorlie via Boulder and Kalgoorlie Racecourse" be inserted. This extension of about two miles must be made, unless the Government wished the new tramways to absorb the traffic.

MR. MONGER: Surely such an amendment could not be made in a Loan Bill.

MR. CONNOR: Consideration was due to the great population at Boulder.

MR. KINGSMILL: Had the Malcolm-Laverton survey been completed?

THE PREMIER said he did not think so.

MR. KINGSMILL: What liability had been incurred out of the £6,000 put down for surveys of new railway lines?

THE PREMIER: Scarcely any, except a little for the Laverton line. About £5,000 was available, he thought.

MR. MITCHELL: "Preliminary inspection of route from Kalgoorlie to Eucla" might well be struck out. He moved to that effect.

THE CHAIRMAN: The amendment would be out of order.

MR. MONGER asked whether he could move that the word "Fremantle" be struck out and "Perth" inserted.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was too late.

Amendment (Mr. Moran's) put and passed.

MR. MITCHELL (referring to the same item, Railway Surveys) moved that the words "Kalgoorlie to Eucla" be struck out.

MR. GREGORY: This had already been agreed to by the House.

THE PREMIER: This item had been put in by the express order of the House; a resolution having been passed that this expenditure should be provided for.

Amendment put and negatived.

Part 4—Development of Agriculture, including Drainage. £15,000:

MR. MONGER: The drainage, he believed, referred to the South-West Division of the colony, in the vicinity of the Harvey River. The Eastern districts required as much consideration as the agricultural centres in the Southern

portion of the colony. He moved that the words, "and the damming of the river Avon" be added after "drainage." Settlers in the Eastern districts were as much deserving consideration as those who had taken up low-lying land in the South-West districts. The damming of the river Avon was of as much importance to the settlers in the Eastern district as the drainage of low-lying land on the Harvey was to the settlers there.

MR. MITCHELL: Did the item refer to private land or Government land?

THE PREMIER: The place the Government had in view to drain was between the Murray and the Harvey Rivers, but it was not intended to spend much money on that work. The work, he believed, would be self-supporting. The Government were going to ask for power to supplement any money spent by private people. The proposal to put a dam across the Avon would hardly come under the head, "Development of agriculture." The object was to settle people on the land. His idea was to raise money by bonds bearing interest, and the interest would be paid by the people owning the land. The Government could get the money the same way as for the Agricultural Bank. Power would have to be given to supplement the funds, if necessary. He believed the work would be self-supporting, and if it were not, any further expenditure could be stopped. To dam the river Avon would cost about £6,000. It would be a nice thing to dam the river at, say, York: a nice lake would thus be made there, and he would like to see it done; but the work could not be carried out this year.

MR. MITCHELL: The land which was to be drained was Crown land. Was the land to be sold afterwards?

THE PREMIER: It was not only intended to drain Crown land, but land which had already been taken up by settlers.

MR. GEORGE: In the South-West District, from Pinjarra downward about 100 miles, the Government had sold a lot of land, and the people who had gone on the land found that in winter they had no access, and the ground became very sour in consequence of the water lodging. The money to be voted under the Bill was for the purpose of making main drains, and the settlers would make their

own drains into the main drains. The settlers were willing to pay a rate which would pay interest in connection with the work. They only asked the Government to bring in an authorisation in connection with the Roads Boards Act, to rate people who owned property there. There was a lot of land which was not paying rates, through an error in the Roads Boards Act. People settled in the Harvey River District were willing to pay a rate to cover interest on the money. As to the damming of the river Avon, if the people to be benefited would pay the interest, then as far as he was concerned the work could be carried out.

MR. DARLOT: There was a false impression as to the object of the member for York (Mr. Monger). He had had a good deal of experience in connection with a class of damming rivers which would be applicable to the Avon river. In New South Wales there were creeks which ran for only a few months in the year or a few months after rain, and these creeks were dammed up. It did not interfere with the riparian rights of anybody. They were small earthen overshoot dams, capped with timber about 3 feet high. In the Riverina, where they had to cart timber 150 miles, the dams cost from £700 to £1,000 each, and the shallow portions of the creeks were dammed up so that the depth of water was increased to 6ft. This could be done on the Avon river. If Parliament passed a short Bill enabling the Government to charge settlers a reasonable rate which would go to pay interest and sinking fund, no doubt the settlers would be willing to pay the money in order to have the river dammed up. At the present time there was a good deal of country in the upper branches of the Avon river that was lying idle, because private enterprise was not sufficiently strong to provide a permanent water supply; consequently people could not stock the country.

MR. LOCKE: The item was not thoroughly understood by hon. members. Between Perth and the Vasse there were many thousands of acres, not a few patches, of some of the best land in the colony, capable of growing root crops such as potatoes, as well as cereals. This land required draining, and it would cost only a few thousand pounds to do the work. The damming of the river Avon

should not be considered in connection with this item: it was ridiculous to compare the two things. The settlers around the Avon river only wanted water for stock purposes, whereas the land in the Southern districts was to be drained for growing cereals and root crops.

MR. MITCHELL: There seemed to be a difficulty about this item. Some hon. members wanted to get rid of the water, and others wanted to retain it. He would support the item.

MR. MONGER: The settlers in the Eastern districts were entitled to as much consideration as the potato growers in the Southern districts. The Eastern districts required the same consideration as the Southern districts, and that part of the country represented by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) had not a water supply even equal to that of Onslow, for which an item of £3,000 had been passed this evening. If it was intended to encourage the development of agriculture, the Committee ought to be as considerate of the Eastern districts as of the Southern low-lying and unproductive portions of the colony.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The £15,000 now under discussion was set down, not so much for providing water as for getting rid of water in the South-West districts of the colony; but he was altogether at one with the member for York (Mr. Monger) as to providing a system of dams along the river Avon, the latter being a work he himself had urged for the last 20 years. He would have been glad to see this £15,000 made £30,000; but a great deal of useful work would be done for the lesser sum, and a system of drainage in the South-West districts would enable the Government to deal with 300,000 or 400,000 acres of land, of which large quantities were now lying idle. The first work should be to give relief to the settlers, and he hoped before the session closed a Bill dealing with the question of drainage would be carried through the House. The people in the South-West were willing to help themselves if the Government would only help them, and both himself and the Premier were pledged up to the hilt to render that assistance, in the absence of which a good deal of the country would be abandoned. The mistakes of the Government, if there had

been any, were rather of omission than commission, and one mistake had been in neglecting those districts when there was plenty of money available. He had expressed to the Premier his surprise that when the Lands Department was in receipt of a large revenue, some £50,000 or £100,000 was not set down for a systematic scheme of drainage, because, had that been done, and agricultural development had gone on simultaneously with the development of the goldfields, there would have been a large and close population in those districts to-day. But it was not too late, and although there was £3,000 or £4,000 left of the last vote for the development of agriculture, that was all ear-marked and was being spent as fast as possible in relieving the people from surplus water. He trusted the member for York (Mr. Monger) and other members interested in the Avon valley would, at some future day, wake up to the great necessity, not of relieving themselves from surplus water, but of providing a supply. The people along the Avon were in want of water when millions of gallons were wasted in the sea every year, and by means of which water the valley could have been converted, not only into one of the best cereal districts, but into one of the best dairying districts in the colony. The conservation of large stretches of water would have an important effect on the climate, and from that standpoint alone might be regarded as a national work. But while the Government had spent hundreds of thousands of pounds in building railways to the goldfields, such places as Bunbury and Northam had been utterly neglected.

MR. MONGER: The Commissioner of Crown Lands could not understand the amendment, or otherwise, from his remarks, he would certainly give it his support. If the Government were sincere in regard to their desire to develop agriculture, they could not for a moment object to the amendment; but if their idea was simply to benefit agriculture in the low-lying Southern portions, hon. members ought to know that. Every practical man must recognise that the amendment was a fair and reasonable one, and one which fell in with the ideas of the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member for York (Mr. Monger) seemed to think that by the amendment some of the vote might be spent in erecting weirs across the Avon river; but the amount was altogether insufficient for such a purpose. Was it a water supply the hon. member wanted? If what he desired was water for the town, there was already an authorisation for such a purpose; but the present vote was not sufficient for putting dams across the river. One dam he supposed would take up the whole of the money, and there were dams wanted at Newcastle, Northam, York, and Beverley, so that the amount required would be more like £50,000. All these dams would have to be built of cement, and would be engineering works.

MR. MONGER: Increase the amount.

THE PREMIER: That could not be done, he was sorry to say, though there was nothing he should like better than to have met the hon. member.

Amendment put and negatived.

Schedule as previously amended put and passed.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendment, and the report adopted.

ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: This is a Bill for closing certain roads and streets, and I do not know that there is anything important about any of them. In regard to the first, that in the town of Albany, the street will be closed with the approval of the council. It is found to be very steep, and the owner of the land on either side wishes to enclose it within his holding. At Broad Arrow the street to be closed is Yabsley street, and the land is to be cut up into lots. I have the maps here. I think it would be easier to deal with the various streets in Committee. I have looked into the proposals and they seem to be all right.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How about Lincoln street?

THE PREMIER: That is in Perth, at the edge of what is called Hyde Park; the square at Hyde Park. The street in Fremantle is a street near the

hospital, where the road goes through the cemetery. It is fenced in now, and the council want it closed. As far as I know there is nothing in the Bill that calls for adverse comment. I should be very glad if any hon. member would look at the plans.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

STREETS (VICTORIA PARK) CLOSURE BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. WILSON (Canning), in moving the second reading, said: This Bill is brought forward at the request of the Municipal Council of Victoria Park, for the purpose of closing portions of two streets going through the reserve, and I do not know that there is any opposition to the measure. The plans, showing the portions proposed to be closed, lie on the table.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10-28 o'clock until the next day.