

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 23rd November, 1894.

Personal Explanation—Grant in Aid of Humane Society
—Leave of Absence—Pharmacy and Poisons Bill.
Legislative Council's Amendments—Message from
the Governor: Assent to Bills—Proposed Expenditure
of £50,000 upon Extension of Goldfields Water
Supply—Message from the Legislative Council:
Amendment in Medical Bill—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7-30
o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. RICHARDSON: With the kind indulgence of the House, I rise to reply to certain remarks personally concerning myself. The other evening, when I was absent, the hon. member for the Gascoyne made allusions to me which were quite contrary to fact; and it would be, perhaps, as well if the hon. member, in making aspersions on any member, would have more strict regard to what are the facts of the case, especially when the member referred to is not present. One would think that a due regard to those rules which regulate the conduct of man to man, and of gentlemen to gentlemen, would prevent anybody from throwing out aspersions against an absent person, and would induce the member who makes the aspersions to stick more closely to the facts. The hon. member for the Gascoyne is reported to have said that when this House was discussing the Imported Labour Registry Bill last session, I moved an amendment to the Bill, and that then, as I generally do when a division is called, I walked out of the Chamber. I totally deny the truth of that, both as to fact and inference. In the first place, I never moved an amendment to the Imported Labour Registry Bill. I believe the hon. member himself moved an amendment. I challenge the hon. member, or any other person, to point to two occasions when I have walked out of this House after the division bell has been rung; and if there is a solitary instance, for which I can allege good and sufficient reason for not having voted, I think that cannot be said to be a rule. The aspersion also suggested an inference

that I am afraid to give effect to my convictions by recording my vote. It has been my rule, while in this House, to speak without fear or favour, and to vote without fear or favour. When we were discussing the Chinese Immigration Act Amendment Bill last session, I spoke against it because it contained some very pernicious clauses; and when I afterwards appealed to the Premier and consulted him on those clauses, he consented to amend them in the direction I wished, and to withdraw the obnoxious portion. That concession removed many of my objections to the Bill, but not all of them. That Bill came on before the Imported Labour Registry Bill, and it was to my mind a question of policy—and I hope I shall never be an impracticable politician by not having regard to what is politic in these things—as to whether, in view of the latter Bill coming on, it did not offer, as I thought it did, a much greater chance of my getting a certain amendment made, for ensuring the return of imported Chinese labourers after their period of service had expired. It had been pointed out, by the Government, in discussing the Immigration Bill, that a great objection to the importation of Chinese labourers was that those imported were not sent back at the end of their period of service; and, to meet that objection, I moved an amendment for ensuring that they should be sent back. I also thought that I had reason for believing the Government would not very strongly oppose my amendment for increasing the number of Chinese immigrants in proportion to ship's tonnage, by admitting two Chinese, instead of one, to every 500 tons of ship's register. I moved that amendment afterwards.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: What I did say was that when I moved an amendment to the Imported Labour Registry Bill, on a previous occasion, the hon. member for the De Grey, after speaking in support of it, walked out of the House, as he usually did; and I meant to imply that the hon. member, as a rule—and I think other hon. members are of the same opinion as myself—runs with the hare and hunts with the hounds. I still think so. On that occasion the hon. member—not, as he states, after receiving certain assurances from the Premier, because my

amendment was moved and a division was taken before he could have had time to consult the Premier or anyone else—walked out of the House, and did not vote in the division.

GRANT IN AID OF HUMANE SOCIETY.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether the Government would be willing to give a donation in aid of a West Australian Humane Society, if such a society should be formed for the purpose of recognising acts of bravery in attempts to save human life, such as that recorded yesterday of a child of 10 years of age, who saved his brother's life at the risk of losing his own.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied: This House has for many years voted £20 a year to the Royal Humane Society of Australasia. Should a society be established here, Parliament would no doubt be willing to assist such a good object in the usual way.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

MR. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, moved that leave of absence be granted to the hon. member for Plantagenet, for one week.

Question put and passed.

PHARMACY AND POISONS BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

IN COMMITTEE.

Legislative Council's Message (see *ante*, page 1538) read.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that the amendments made by the Legislative Council, as per schedule, be agreed to.

MR. RANDELL said there was considerable consternation among the chemists in Perth, caused by these amendments made by the Upper House, as the value of the Bill was said to be thereby taken away.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the chemists desired that no one should own a chemist's business unless registered under the Act. The exceptions made in the Bill applied to those persons having vested interests in

such businesses at present. But the Legislative Council had altered that, and by these amendments the Council provided that any person or company registered under "The Companies Act, 1893," might carry on the business of a chemist, etc., "by an agent, manager, or servant who is a pharmaceutical chemist." He (the Attorney General) had been interviewed by the president of the Pharmaceutical Society, who stated the chemists preferred to have the Bill passed with the amendments made by the Council, rather than not have the Bill at all, and would accept it with a view to doing something with it in a future session. He (the Attorney General) had understood that members of the medical profession did not desire to own a chemist's business, but there seemed to have been a misunderstanding about that, for the point now was that medical men did wish to own a chemist's business. Such business, however, must be conducted by a chemist duly registered under the Act. The first amendment made by the Council gave power to the Pharmaceutical Society to sue in its own name. The second amendment was to strike out Clause 37, which provided that on the death of a chemist his widow might carry on the business for not more than twelve months, unless the board specially allowed further time. But as another amendment provided that any person might carry on such business, by employing a registered chemist as manager or agent, the object of Clause 37 was gone. The third amendment was to strike out sub-clause (b) of Clause 39, which contains only the exemption from penalties of a person who might carry on the business of a chemist after the passing of the Bill, and a new sub-clause was inserted—this being the principal amendment—by which any person might carry on the business through a manager or agent duly registered as a chemist. The others were consequential on that one principal amendment.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported.

Report adopted.

Ordered—That a Message be transmitted to the Legislative Council, informing them that the Assembly had agreed to the amendments made by them in the Pharmacy and Poisons Bill.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR: ASSENT TO BILLS.

The following Message was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

The Governor, by his Deputy, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has this day, in Her Majesty's name, assented to the under-mentioned Bills:—

"An Act to authorise the Establishment of a Bank for the purpose of assisting the Occupation, Cultivation, and Improvement of Agricultural Lands."

"An Act to further amend 'The Railways Act, 1878.'"

"An Act to consolidate the Law relating to Friendly Societies."

"An Act to authorise the Construction of a Railway from Mullewa to Cue."

"An Act to authorise the Construction of a Railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie."

"An Act to amend 'The Police Act, 1892.'"

"An Act to further amend 'The Scab Act, 1891.'"

Government House, Perth, 23rd November, 1894.

PROPOSED EXPENDITURE OF £50,000 UPON EXTENSION OF GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

IN COMMITTEE.

Adjourned debate upon the motion of the Premier—"That it is advisable that the Government be authorised to expend the sum of £50,000 for the purpose of increasing and extending the Water Supply on the Goldfields, to be advanced to such extent as may be required during the current financial year from any funds in the hands of the Government, but to be ultimately recouped from funds to be hereafter provided by Parliament for such purpose"—resumed.

MR. RANDELL: This matter seems to me very serious and important. I hope the Honourable the Director of Public Works will give us some further information concerning this expenditure—at all events that which has occurred in connection with well sinking and tank making on the Coolgardie goldfields. The Premier, in speaking on the matter the other evening, said he did so with some amount of regret, and I believe he afforded all the information he had in his

power at that time. It seems to me a very extraordinary circumstance that a large sum of money has been expended over and above what seemed to be understood to have been expended by the head of the department; and now, at the close of our session, a message is brought down from the Governor, asking us, upon very meagre information, to entrust the Government with the expenditure of £50,000 for works already executed and for what may be necessary to finish those works.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No; not to finish them. For new works.

MR. RANDELL: I understood a considerable sum of money had been expended, and it was not discovered by the Works Department until very recently, when it was found that certain charges which ought to have been made to the account had not been made, in the shape of forage, hiring of teams, and so on, and that a considerable portion of the £50,000 had been expended.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No. The £70,000 voted out of the 1894 loan had been expended.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I was not present when the Premier spoke on this matter, and I regret it, because I should, probably, have been able to give a little further explanation, or to give the desired information to hon. members. I think, some fortnight to a month ago I drew hon. members' attention to the fact that if they intended that the Government should carry on the water supply upon the goldfields in the way the Government had done in the past, the amount of £70,000 on the Loan Estimates would not nearly cover the possible contingencies of the immediate future; and I told hon. members, when they were moving the Government for a larger expenditure for deep boring, that if it was the opinion of the House that the Government should carry on boring operations in future, it would be absolutely necessary for the Government to be supplied with a further sum of money. I well knew then that what I said was perfectly correct. Now, the Premier, as I notice from a report, told the House a fairly correct statement of affairs—not, as the hon. member opposite (Mr. Randell) seems to have understood, but that the £50,000 asked for in the Governor's message was to cover some

future possible works that may be required. There are no liabilities upon that £50,000—I am perfectly sure of that. The money is not ear-marked even. There is, in fact, an unexpended balance—or was when the accounts were made up in October—of something like £40,000 out of the £70,000 of the 1894 Loan. A total of £180,000 for the development of goldfields and mineral resources was voted out of the three last Loan Bills. The expenditure has been going on; and, to complete the works that were in hand—that is to say, the numerous tanks that the Government have sunk at Coolgardie, and the works that have been undertaken at Pilbarra, also works at the Murchison amounting to £5,000 or £6,000, which were incurred out of the vote, but not including the £15,000 for the Pilbarra and Kimberley goldfields, now set aside and ear-marked, as we include that amount in the present statement of liabilities against the goldfields vote—therefore, there is still a sum of £50,000 untouched, except that some works are in progress which will be charged against that amount. We also take as a liability the outstanding accounts for completing the works that have been undertaken up to the present; and, taking that liability into account against the £70,000 out of the 1894 Loan, up to the time the returns were made there was left a balance of something like £50,000 for future works. Every month that is disappearing, because there is a staff to be kept up on the various goldfields. The balance of £50,000 was really for further works. Hon. members will understand that in a district like Coolgardie, where communication has not been perfect, the officer in charge has to pay his accounts—he has to pay men's wages—and these orders come down to Perth, and have to be cashed by the Treasury. It is not just at the same time that the vouchers may come down for that expenditure—they may come down to the Works office a month or six weeks afterwards, and it is some time after that the Treasury gets them. Therefore, as the works were being carried on, the Government would not know, within a very considerable amount, the actual liabilities incurred on each particular work, or on the works as a whole. We in the Works office could tell fairly well that there were so many

cheques being paid; but, until the vouchers came in and were scheduled, hon. members must see that the Treasury could have no account of them. I think that explanation ought to be satisfactory to hon. members. The Premier did not say the £50,000 now asked for was in any way touched or allocated—no, nor compromised in any way. This sum is for works altogether new. After we have spent the unexpended balance of the 1894 Loan allotted for works on goldfields, unless this £50,000 now asked for were passed by the House, the Government would be unable to undertake those necessary works which may have to be carried on. During last summer there was a great expenditure in keeping the Coolgardie road open. The Government had to put down bores and to start condensers, because the public would not do this for themselves by private enterprise. We are, in fact, doing too much of the spoon-feeding altogether. Private enterprise ought to make and start condensers; and as to not letting private enterprise come forward in this matter, the Government were not anxious to do this kind of work. It was, however, absolutely necessary for the life of the goldfields, and for the interest of the whole colony, that these roads should be kept open, and to do that we had to incur this expenditure. But what would hon. members have thought of the Government if we had not come to the rescue in the way we did? We have had to do an immense work, and it was a marvellous undertaking under the circumstances. During the last dry summer, Mr. Jobson had to keep the Coolgardie road open and supply sufficient water for twelve teams every day on the road, and he had to keep Coolgardie and the whole of the Eastern goldfields alive. We are satisfied that, whatever amount of money has been expended in keeping up this water supply, the colony has, under the circumstances, had its money's worth. The amount asked for now is for any further undertakings that may be required. There has been, for instance, a desire expressed in this House that deep boring should be undertaken somewhere on the Eastern goldfields. Hon. members will understand that, in order to bore down to a depth of, perhaps, 3,000 feet, the Government will have to make up their minds to expend on that work

eight, ten, or twelve thousand pounds. As for the £50,000 now asked for, I say again that this sum is in no way compromised. If the House will not vote the sum, the Government will not be able to incur any liability, and will not be able to carry on those works which the public wish to be carried on. As to boring, if the Government were to invite tenders for boring, say, 3,000 feet, the cost would be £3 to £3 10s. per foot.

MR. RICHARDSON: It does not cost anything like that at all.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): Well, Mr. Johnson has the figures, and that is about the average cost elsewhere. He knows something about the cost of boring for water. If hon. members wish deep boring operations to be carried on in any part of the colony, with the possibility of having to go down 3,000 feet or more for an artesian supply, they must calculate on an expenditure of not less than £3 to £3 10s. per foot. The hon. member (Mr. Richardson) may recollect that £10,000 was voted for putting down a bore at Southern Cross, and the money is gone without anything to show for it. If boring were let by contract at per foot, the expense to the department would be far more. Boring for coal is not so costly, because it is not in granite country, and tubing is not required. In boring to a great depth for water, the tubing costs an enormous sum of money, and the cost of carting tubing to a bore at Coolgardie would run into a large sum. As to how we are going to spend the £50,000 now asked for, it is impossible for the Government to say at present how they are going to expend it. I have here an estimate of probable expenditure, and a list of works proposed to be undertaken, amounting to considerably more than the sum we ask for; but how much of this expenditure the Government may undertake will depend on circumstances. One estimate is for boring at Coolgardie; another is for putting down trial bores at different parts of the several goldfields—possibly at the White Feather, at Kurnalpi, at the Ninety Mile, and at other places equally important. There is also a proposal to bore for water for working the mines at Southern Cross. Assuming each of these bores to cost £800 or £1,000, the expenditure on

these several bores would run into a large sum of money. These are only propositions placed before the Government for their consideration by the officer in charge of the water supply, and they are works which he thinks may be required. The total rough estimate of these works is £52,000 or £53,000. Beyond giving this general idea, I do not think the House will expect the Government to say how they intend to expend the £50,000. As to how the £70,000 has been expended, I think I explained that, and shown that up to the end of October last there was an unexpended balance of £5,000 available for works untouched. As, however, there appears to be a desire for more particulars, I will tell hon. members what works have been carried out with the money voted out of loans and allocated to the development of goldfields. (*See Printed Parliamentary Paper*):—

Works.	Expenditure and Liabilities to 15th October, 1894.		
	£	s.	d.
MURCHISON GOLDFIELDS			
Telegraph line, Geraldton to Murchison	16752	0	0
Making road across Lake Austin	145	2	6
Cue Public buildings	174	2	11
Well sinking at Mount Magnet	210	0	0
Minor works—forming and deepening wells, improvements to water supply, generally, on roads leading to goldfields, of which it has been impossible to keep individual accounts	5040	13	0
YILGARN GOLDFIELDS			
York-Yilgarn telegraph line	5847	4	0
Southern Cross Government Offices	5656	6	0
Do. Grant to Miners' Institute	200	0	0
Southern Cross Warden's quarters	106	3	11
Parker's Range water supply and conservation	01	7	10
Southern Cross, clearing streets	100	0	0
York-Yilgarn road construction	4985	15	7
Parker's Range road construction	334	1	0
Clearing road, Coolgardie to Hannan's	907	3	5
Bonuses for deep sinking	777	1	8
Coolgardie Post Office	548	4	3
Southern Cross-Coolgardie telegraph line	6445	11	0
Tanks (2) South-East of Coolgardie	2413	6	1
Tank at 25 miles North of Coolgardie	603	0	0
Woolganges tank	4490	10	7
Tank at 40 miles North of Coolgardie	553	0	0
Yelladine Ditto	1390	15	3
Temporary water supply, 90 Mile, Siberia	703	0	0
Bullabulling ditto	4289	13	10
Boorabbin tank	3200	0	0
Coolgardie, furniture for Warden's office	145	9	8
Hannan's bore	963	0	0
Karrarawaljee tank	3155	19	3
Urgent and minor works, including sinking of a multiplicity of soaks, wells, and bores, and the purchase and working of condensers, also wages of caretakers at tanks and soaks, and of caretakers and labourers at condensers, and generally keeping road open from Southern Cross to Coolgardie, and to North and East of Coolgardie, from 1891 to 1894	27413	1	2

Works.	Expenditure and Liabilities to 15th October, 1904.	£	s.	d.
YILGARN GOLDFIELDS (continued)—				
Government Reserve tank, bore, well, and tank at Outlet Gorge, Cool- gardie	7368	11	5	
Tanks near and half-way to Hannau's Reen's Soak tank	3801	14	1	
Plant, &c., for tanks between Southern Cross and Coolgardie	1588	0	0	
Coomandallin tank	2182	17	10	
Forge and transfer of same	896	11	11	
Water Supply, North and East Cool- gardie, including purchase of camels	2455	5	3	
Survey of sites for tanks, and locat- ing same	216	1	5	
Miscellaneous services on roads, Southern Cross to Coolgardie	369	15	10	
Transport of plant and material	918	18	10	
Miscellaneous operations at wells, soaks, &c., Southern Cross to Coolgardie	3133	9	2	
Boring for water for mines East and South of Southern Cross	15143	14	5	
Award to Rollo and Hall	500	0	0	
Hannau's Find, sinking shaft, bore, &c.	350	0	0	
Special condenser from Fraser and Co. Southern Cross-Coolgardie Railway survey	446	0	0	
	282	0	0	
	319	11	4	
ALL GOLDFIELDS—				
Expenditure under the administration of Lands Department on works described in Memorandum by Under Secretary for Lands	15880	16	3	
COALFIELDS—				
Collie, boring, sinking, staging, and machinery	3985	7	7	
Collie, railway survey	633	19	7	
Vasse, boring and sinking	842	2	1	
MURCHISON DISTRICT—				
Wells on road, Minginew to Mt. Magnet	99	15	0	
Opening road, Lake Carey to Cne Making wells at Caves on Mt. Magnet Road	74	0	0	
General stationery, &c.	153	0	0	
Clearing road, Esperance to Dundas ..	239	0	0	
Dundas-Esperance Bay road, two condensers	100	0	0	
Esperance Bay, construction of tanks ..	340	0	0	
	60	0	0	
GENERAL—				
Salaries and allowances, not appor- tioned	629	19	0	
[Memo: Numerous small items in list, not read by the Minister, make up the balance.]				
Total	£160553	6	10	

These items, of which I have read out only those showing the more important works, include both the actual expenditure and the outstanding liabilities attaching to them. If hon. members know the Coolgardie road, and will consider the season of the year during which that road had to be kept supplied with water adequate for the traffic, they will see that in these works the country has got value for the money expended. I feel satisfied that the officer in charge of the work did it as economically as he could under the circumstances. Whatever the cost of these tanks may have been, there will also be the line of railway to Coolgardie in close proximity to the line of road, and the whole of these tanks will be utilised for

the railway when constructed; therefore, having this water supply along the route, I think the railway construction will not cost so much, proportionately, as the Yilgarn railway has cost, because the first expenditure for a supply of water has been undertaken, and will not have to be repeated. There has been a large expenditure for providing tanks on the Yilgarn railway between Reen's Soak and Southern Cross, and I may say that about £60,000 was placed on the estimate of that railway for water supply alone. I shall be able to afford further information on the items of expenditure, if desired. I may say, again, the £50,000 we ask for is in no way allocated, and there is no liability upon it. That sum will simply place us in a position to carry on works that may be necessary, having before us the prospect of another very dry summer. We do not know what expenditure may have to be incurred, but we do know we have to keep these goldfields going, no matter at what cost—there is no doubt about that—and it is absolutely necessary that the House should supply the Government with sufficient funds for undertaking these works. The Government could not anticipate, when making up the Loan Estimates, what was likely to be the expenditure for the upkeep and supply of water on the Coolgardie goldfields. The Government, however, did their duty; all the officers in charge did theirs; and I think the country has had good worth for its money.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am afraid that, in speaking on this matter the other night, although I was pretty well acquainted with the facts, I rather made the worst of the case that was possible. I did not try in any way to make the case appear better than it really was, but I rather, perhaps, overstated the case adversely. To-night I have got more information than I had on the previous occasion. In the first place, we all knew in this House that on the 30th September there were no moneys available from loan funds for the development of the goldfields. Anyone who has looked at the public accounts would see that the £70,000 allocated in the Loan Act of 1891 for the development of goldfields, and the further sum of £40,000 allocated in the Loan Act of 1893, were both ex-

hausted on the 30th September last; therefore, all the loan money we had available for these purposes in the future was the £70,000 allocated in the Loan Act of 1894; and we know that £15,000 out of the £70,000 has been allocated to the Pilbarra and Kimberley goldfields. Therefore the whole amount available for the future development of goldfields, on the 30th September, was £55,000. I did not tell the House that it had all been spent, but that it had been allocated, and that the works in progress would exhaust that money. The Director of Public Works has told us that in October last £45,000 was still in the Treasury, but would have to be paid out for works in progress. Therefore it comes to this, that only £10,000 has actually been spent from the 30th September to the time when these accounts were made up—that is to say, paid by the Treasury out of the £55,000 available from the Loan of 1894—but there is £45,000 more in course of being expended for works in progress. In a short time, these works will be completed. They are the completing of tanks constructed along the Coolgardie road, and these works will take £45,000, thus exhausting altogether the vote against which these goldfields works have to be charged. As we know the House is desirous that boring should go on at Coolgardie, also that the water supply should be kept going on the Murchison and Coolgardie goldfields, and that there are bores to be made and wells to be constructed to the Northward of Coolgardie, even to Lake Carey, we find ourselves in this position, that we have no money available for these further works; therefore, we have had to come to this House and state that the £55,000 remaining out of the last loan will be exhausted in a short time, that there are other works to be undertaken—bores and tanks to construct, also the deep boring at Coolgardie—and no money is available for these purposes. The hon. member for the De Grey said, "Why did not the Government ask for more money in the Loan Bill for these works?" That is where the mistake was made; but it will be remembered the Loan Bill was placed on the table very early in the session, and I was not aware there was such a large expenditure required on the goldfields, and did not know that the

£55,000 which we allocated would be spent so soon—indeed, I thought the £70,000 for the goldfields would carry us on for some time to come. If the hon. member for the De Grey had not moved for the £15,000 to be allocated to works on the Northern goldfields—Pilbarra and Kimberley—that money would soon have been also spent at Coolgardie, where the necessities are the most urgent. All the money that has been voted by this House out of loans, for the development of goldfields and mineral resources, is £180,000; and, taking off £15,000 for the Northern goldfields, there remained £165,000. What have we done with that money? We have erected telegraphs, made roads, constructed tanks, wells, and public buildings all over the country. The magnificent buildings at Southern Cross, the telegraph lines to the Murchison and to Coolgardie, the water tanks in various parts of the goldfields, clearing roads, putting down bores, making tanks and wells—everything that has been done in connection with the development of goldfields has been taken out of this amount of money. Therefore, considering that we have been spending a good deal of money on the development of the goldfields during the four years we have been in office, considering also that only £180,000 has been voted for these purposes, that an amount of £15,000 for the Northern goldfields is not yet touched, and that £45,000 more remains to be expended, making £60,000 unexpended, the fact remains that only £120,000 has been expended out of loan votes on these various works on goldfields in all parts of the colony during four years. No district in the colony has been treated better than the Murchison goldfields, and it is not reasonable for the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) to sneer, as he did just now. No doubt there were very exceptional circumstances last year in regard to the water supply on the Coolgardie goldfields; in fact the Coolgardie goldfields have eaten up a considerable amount of this money. In a dry period we were bound to keep open the road to the Eastern goldfields at all costs—every one said that—and we did keep it open in the face of very adverse circumstances. We were also confronted with the difficulty that it was necessary to use every expedition in order to get the

tanks built before the usual period of winter rains. Every one in that district was marvelling at the extreme expedition with which these tanks were built. As fast as the plant could be got together, these tanks were built in the most expeditious manner. But I regret to say the winter rains have not come. That is not the fault of the Government. It has been mentioned that the railway to Coolgardie will go past all these tanks, and I expect that £20,000 or £30,000 will be recouped to the fund for the development of the goldfields, from the Railway Department, as a result of the contract price at which that railway will be let for construction. But, whether recouped or not, in that way, the outlay on these tanks will save expenditure in regard to the railway water supply in the future. It has been asked, how are we going to expend the £50,000 we now ask for, when the money is for new works, and not for anything past? We want to be in a position to undertake necessary works—to build tanks, sink wells, put down bores, because I believe we can get a water supply, if not fresh, at any rate brackish water, on the Eastern goldfields. We are also going to make roads, erect buildings, hospitals, everything that is necessary; and where can the money for these necessary works come from, unless it comes out of this vote? The general work of administration on the goldfields has also to be carried on. We have to supply water to every one—even at Cue the Government have to provide water for the people, and give them cold baths into the bargain. The Government do not get back in the shape of revenue, from those who use the water on goldfields, anything like the price it has cost to supply the water. The Government not only make wells, but pump the water into troughs for public use, charging only a small amount; and we give the people cold baths too. Governments exist upon popular favour, and we cannot tax people to a large extent for supplying water as a necessary of life. The Government are bound to assist the people, in these circumstances, and many of those who use the water are not able to pay for it. I am glad to have had the opportunity of speaking again to-night, because, after all, the Government have not a bad case at all. The

only thing I regret is that we have had to put this matter at so late a period before the House. We ought to have done it six weeks ago. We have not spent the £55,000 voted out of the £70,000, but we are spending it, and it will soon be gone, and how are we then to carry on the necessary work unless we have a further vote of money? If we value the welfare and progress of the country, we must continue the work of providing water and opening up these goldfields. Therefore, I thought it would be much better to come to the House and tell hon. members we would be short of funds, and to ask for a further vote, rather than go on without looking ahead. I thought it was better for us to come here now and explain the position, and ask for your approval of a further expenditure, rather than to spend money after Parliament had risen, and have to ask for the approval of excess expenditure at a future period. I must say, however, that I have been a little disappointed by the great cost of these emergency works, as I thought the tanks could have been constructed at a cheaper rate. Still, looking at the very exceptional circumstances, I really think there is not much to find fault with, and we have had fairly good value for our money.

MR. RANDELL: I misunderstood the Premier when he spoke the other night, for I understood the money he was asking for had been already spent. The one disquieting element, to my mind, the other night, was that we had not had a clear explanation as to how it was the Government seemed to have been surprised at the largeness of the cost of these works. One fails to understand why it is that orders upon the Treasury can come down so regularly, whereas the vouchers for this expenditure cannot come down so quickly. The Works Department ought to have been better informed as to the amount of expenditure that was being or had been incurred. The Director of Public Works has not fully explained that. I understood the discovery as to the largeness of the expenditure was made only a short time ago.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): They commenced to investigate it about six weeks ago.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The Gov-

ernment were advised, and knew some time ago, that the expenditure incurred was more than they had previously anticipated; but we could not get at the exact cost till the vouchers came in from the fields. One reason why these tanks cost more than they would under ordinary circumstances was that the work had to be pushed on urgently in order to get the tanks finished for catching the winter rains, and each separate tank required its separate plant for the work. A good many thousands of pounds might have been saved by working at a more leisurely rate; but as it was necessary to have the tanks completed before the period of winter rains, it was necessary to undertake them all about the same time, and a very large plant had to be purchased. But this is nothing, as compared with the censure that would have been cast on the Government if the tanks had not been completed in time for the winter rains, and if rains had come at the usual period.

MR. RANDELL: We understand these works were undertaken under stress of circumstances, and I agree that the Ministry were bound to do their best to urge on with all possible speed the completion of these works. That is generally admitted. I feel very pleased to see that the Government did realise, and should have been more pleased if they had realised a little sooner, the necessity of endeavouring to secure a good supply of water. But what we want now is to get a reassurance that the expenditure of money on goldfields will not go on without the knowledge of the Government. I understood the Premier to say the Government had given authority for certain expenditure, but that certain amounts had not been charged against the works that ought to have been charged, and that it was only after a certain time had elapsed that the department discovered this had been the case. That created a disquieting impression. I understand now there is about £5,000 a month being expended on these works.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): Not so much now. That has been about the amount previously.

MR. RANDELL: As the Government anticipate—partly from the expression of opinion in this House that bores should

be put down, and additional tanks should be made to secure supplies of water on different parts of the goldfields—that a further vote of £50,000 will be required, we can realise that it would involve a much greater expense to have all these works undertaken at once; but what we want to be assured of is that the Works Department will make arrangements by which it can ascertain, at any moment, not only the amount of orders that come down for payment, but the amount of liabilities incurred in connection with these works. That is the gist of the whole thing; and that is influencing the minds of members in hesitating to entrust to the Works Department the expenditure of the money now asked for.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The difficulty as to the vouchers is that where one man—in this case Mr. Jobson—is in charge of these works on the fields, he cannot remain at one spot for a length of time, but must keep moving about to the different works; and hon. members can understand that as all the vouchers have to be certified by Mr. Jobson as the officer in charge, and as the works have to go on simultaneously at several distant places, he cannot certify to all the vouchers, and cannot transmit them to the office in Perth, with that regularity and precision which is desirable and which hon. members might expect. But what we do have regularly is the weekly or monthly payments of the orders sent down, and these payments must be made. These works have been carried on at long distances from headquarters; there has been no regular means of communication with all the places where works have been in progress; no great staff has been maintained; and as every voucher for all these works had to be passed by one man, hon. members will understand that in these circumstances the vouchers could not come down with the regularity which is desirable. It is possible that in all future works a better system will be adopted—I feel sure of that—but that would not control the expenditure, and the works have to be carried on. Still, we might, by some better system, ascertain a little earlier the actual cost of the works.

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE: I think the most serious part of this question

has not yet been touched upon: that is, by what authority has this money been spent? The Director of Public Works has not touched upon that. We find that £78,000 of loan money has been spent on the work of supplying water to the goldfields without authority from this House, and unknown to the Treasury. The Premier stated last night that until three weeks ago he did not know this money had been spent. Three weeks ago the Loan Estimates had not been sanctioned by this House; therefore I say £78,000 has been expended and never been sanctioned by this House. When the Loan Estimates came before us last year, there was a sum of £40,000 for the development of goldfields; out of that amount, £28,000 was unexpended on the 30th June, 1894, and that unexpended balance has not been sanctioned for expenditure; moreover, £50,000 of further liabilities has been incurred or appropriated—the liability has been incurred. Therefore I say that, if this House is going to lose control over the finances in this way, we might as well not meet here. It ought not to be possible for the Public Works Department to spend £78,000 without the sanction of this House? The Treasurer told us last night that three weeks ago he was not aware that £50,000 had been spent by the Public Works Department. I want to know how it is possible for that to be done if the Treasurer is not aware of the expenditure going on. I say that such a system ought not to be carried on without the Treasurer being aware of it. There is something wrong in the system, and I am sorry the session is so near its end that there cannot be a select committee to inquire and report how this liability has been incurred, and to recommend some remedy for the future.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Honourable the Speaker has rather over-stated what I said. I do not think I said £78,000 had been spent more than had been voted. I am prepared to admit that our procedure as to Loan Estimates is not quite on as good a footing as it should be. I have followed, in the past, the procedure that has been established here. Hon. members know there is no procedure established in this House in regard to excess votes in reference to loan moneys. There ought to be. In other

colonies I believe that when the Loan Estimates are brought in, the Assembly then approves also of any expenditure there may have been in excess of the Loan Estimates. But in this colony we have not had any excess in the Loan Estimates expenditure that I know of. The difficulty arises here from the financial year ending on the 30th June, and the public works being then in full progress, and no provision being made in regard to expenditure that is going on beyond the 30th of June. No further appropriation of loan moneys is made until the next Loan Estimates are passed. In the Loan Estimates, when submitted at a later period, we present our statement of the amounts we propose to expend out of loan moneys for the current financial year. Would the Hon. the Speaker have us stop all the works on the 30th of June? If there was an appropriation necessary under our form, we would ask for a temporary supply on account of loan expenditure going on. I hope that next year we will introduce that system. Under our Audit Act, we are quite authorised to spend moneys on works under contract, without a new vote of Parliament, until we get the re-vote in the Loan Estimates. I have been aware, ever since the 30th of June, that for some of these items of expenditure on our goldfields we had no legal authority. The Audit Office has raised the question in regard to expenditure that has been going on, but I did not wish to bring the difficulty before this House unless attention was called to it. There was a difficulty about it, as to the procedure to be adopted. It has been held by the Attorney General that our Loan Acts are the appropriation of the moneys for particular works; that Loan Acts are in the same position as an Appropriation Act for loan works; and that, therefore, it is not necessary to bring in a new appropriation. I fully recognise that, from the 30th June up to the time when we get the Loan Estimates passed, we have not legal authority for expending loan moneys, excepting those sums that are under contracts. There is a weakness there, and I fully recognise it. The present Government did not institute the form of procedure: we found it in existence; but it is defective. Still, seeing that, as a general rule, all these amounts are spent

upon the strength of a Loan Act, as being the same as an Appropriation Act, there is no great harm done; and, if it is an illegality, it is a technical one, in our having spent money for works which this House and Parliament approved of by having passed the Loan Act. Suppose that, in making a railway, instead of letting the work by contract, we undertook it by day labour. Therefore I say the Speaker was not quite "on the rail" in making his objection, for it is only in regard to works that are not let under contract that there can be any question of a want of authority from this House for carrying them on until we get a further vote. If payment for day labour is within the Audit Act, then we are all right in what we have been doing. The Auditor General has raised the point that work done by day labour is not a contract work. If day labour is contract work, we are absolutely within the four corners of the Audit Act. What I wished to say, the other night, was that I was not aware that £45,000 had been all arranged to be spent. I know a great many more works are necessary besides those already in progress. I did not know, till about three weeks ago, when the Director of Public Works told me, that so much as £45,000 was already arranged for expenditure, and that we should soon be out of funds.

MR. LEAKE: There is not so much objection to the proposed expenditure of the money, but what we do object to is that the Government cannot account really for what has been spent. We have had a very poor explanation indeed—an explanation which really amounts to nothing. I hope that hon. members will not allow themselves to be smothered with figures or with a shower of words which obscure the true state of facts. That is really what we have been treated to by the Director of Public Works and by the Premier. It seems to me the Government, and particularly the Works Department, are repeating the error into which the Lands Department fell, when the latter had the control of the water supply on goldfields. Looking at Return 56 on the table, hon. members will find there was no less than £27,158 18s. 1d. spent on urgent and minor works, of which no details are given by the department; and does not that show there was

some fault in the system? And has there not been sufficient brought forward to put the Government on their guard, and to cause inquiry into the reason why matters were in arrear, and see that the Works Department shall so order its business as to prevent the possibility of a recurrence of the error which was committed by the Lands Department? It seems, from the admissions of Ministers, that this matter has been before them for some weeks. Then why have we not been told of this before? The Premier admitted just now that six weeks ago he was aware of this. Why, then, were we not consulted six weeks ago? But the Premier tells us, when he is cornered, that he thinks it better not to incur unauthorised expenditure, but to come down and ask Parliament for authority. For that I say, "Thank you for nothing. It was your duty to do so." The Honourable the Speaker struck the right nail on the head when he said the blot in this question is that this expenditure really amounts to an unauthorised expenditure.

THE PREMIER: I explained that.

MR. LEAKE: Yes, but not to the satisfaction of hon. members. The Government admitted that, out of £70,000 voted in the last Loan Act for the development of goldfields, they have anticipated the whole amount, less £5,000, and also excepting £15,000 allocated for the North. The Premier has said he did not know. They knew it six weeks ago. The Director of Public Works tells us he informed his colleagues of this, and I dare say if he had had his way we should have been consulted. I am afraid that the Government have been trespassing on the indulgence and forbearance of members. There was trouble over these Loan Estimates, and had we known the Government had expended moneys to the extent of £50,000 in the manner admitted, there would have been still more trouble over these Estimates. This matter has been kept from us till the last moment, because to raise trouble like this before the other work of the session was cleared out of the way would possibly imperil some of their more important measures, and it is not a matter of such vital importance to the Government to be defeated possibly on the motion now before the House. We have been hoodwinked. Information has been kept from us, as the controllers of the public

purse; and we have a right to resent that, and to complain in the strongest possible language at our command. All through the session the Government have shown a susceptibility to criticism and to adverse discussion; anticipating, no doubt, that criticism and discussion would follow upon the announcement the Premier has had to make on this occasion, and precluding the matter from being brought before the House at an earlier stage. But when Ministers are cornered, they patronisingly tell us, "We think we had better ask you for this vote." The Premier said, last night, it had taken three weeks to get him to the present pitch; yet three weeks ago we had the Loan Estimates before us, and were all in a state of ebullition over the Bridgetown and Collie railways, and those troubles. Why is it that the Government were not placed in possession of the facts of this expenditure until quite recently? Who is responsible for the system? Is it the Government, or is it the department? The Government must accept the responsibilities which they incur through the faults of any one of their number; and here we find them admitting that it was the fault of the system. They knew of this faulty system, by admission, six weeks ago; and we know they have known ever since this work of the water supply started. When they were forced to give their officer *carte blanche* to keep the Coolgardie road open, they knew they were throwing on him unusual and exceptional responsibility. They must have known full well, considering the great extent of country over which he had to travel, the variety of the works under his control, and their magnitude, that it was more than one man should have undertaken to control the whole of that expenditure, and to send down, in detail, proper accounts, all properly scheduled, showing under what headings the different items should be charged. The Government may make a scapegoat of that officer, but that will never do. They must accept the responsibility. Everybody knows that officer has done his work well. He has had enormous tracts of country to travel over; he has been on the go sometimes all day, sometimes all night, and it was, I dare say, as much as his system could stand to keep pace with the practical part of his work,

and not to be troubled with this question of the finances. But it is admitted that no expenditure was made without his voucher, and yet we are told by the Premier that the vouchers did not show under what authority the expenditure was made. Will the Government come down here and tell us they could not ascertain in the head office under which vote to charge each payment? It is a curious system if they could not.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Orders come in.

MR. LEAKE: Yes, but orders for what? For goldfields work and water supply. What was to prevent the department from charging these sums to their proper headings? Mr. Jobson or some assistant officer must have sent in, and no doubt did send, in a list of his orders from time to time. The Premier told me, just now, I know nothing about it. Well, I am in the same position as he is in that respect. He did not know anything about it. I am arguing for information, and which the Premier unfortunately cannot supply. It is extraordinary that the department cannot contrive some system whereby these items shall be properly charged, and not throw the blame on their travelling officer, who has not got an office, and, possibly, not got pen and ink with him; and they should not excuse themselves by saying "That is the man we blame."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No one has said a word against him.

MR. LEAKE: The Premier said last night that although accounts had been sent down, the officer in charge had not sent down the vouchers.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You copied that from a newspaper report. It was incorrect. I noticed it was wrong in reading the newspaper this morning.

MR. LEAKE: How, then, are the Government unable, apparently, to account for moneys they have spent, and spent without authority? The Director of Public Works tells us this evening that it is impossible to say how the Government are going to spend the £50,000 which they ask us to vote tonight. Then I say this vote ought not to pass until we have had a full explanation. If we are to leave this country under the absolute control of one man or of five, well what is the use of this

Parliament? We will make it one man; but we don't want one-man government—we want Parliamentary government. And we don't want expenditure forced upon the country without Parliamentary authority, and, when liability is incurred or money is spent, this House is entitled to ask for the fullest possible explanation and detail. Now that the Government are forced to come to this House, we find they are very bold in their admissions. They say they have spent the money, and they want to spend £50,000 more, but don't know how they are going to spend it; and so we must leave everything to them—we must forego all our constitutional privileges and trust in the one man. I do not know that I can say anything more that will interest the Ministry. But there was one remark made last night by the hon. member for West Kimberley, that the money had been spent without the knowledge of Ministers. When we get a statement like that, we must give it due weight. Where the hon. member gets his authority for that statement I don't know, but it is a very startling assertion for him to make to the House; and if this money was spent without the authority of Ministers, then I say this House cannot attach too severe blame to the Ministry for allowing the money so to be spent. And that assertion by the hon. member bears out, with considerable force, the argument which was put forward by the Speaker. In conclusion, I again ask hon. members to bear in mind that it is not the expenditure or the voting of this money we so much object to, but we have a right to insist, and we should insist, upon full accounts, both of the estimates and the actual expenditure, when we vote these large sums of money. I think strongly that really the Government are deserving of the severest censure for their neglect in this particular matter.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): It is rather interesting and amusing to hear the hon. member for Albany addressing himself to this question in the manner he has done. The hon. member has blamed the Government for having expended money in connection with the goldfields, when he knows perfectly well that he himself, or some of his friends alongside of him, would have been the very first to blame the Government if

they had not spent that money in the way they have done.

MR. LEAKE: What have they done with it?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Done with it? They have not wasted it.

MR. SIMPSON: They don't know what they have done with it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): They expended the money in keeping open the lines of communication with the goldfields. That is what they have done with it. We spent it in order to save life. We spent it in order to do that which hon. members opposite, if they had been in our position, would have done. Yet they now blame us for doing it. The hon. member knows perfectly well that he would have been the very first to have blamed the Government if we had not done what we have done in this matter. We may have spent it without authority, but we have spent it wisely and judiciously, and done good work with it.

MR. LEAKE: But you don't account for it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): The hon. member says we do not account for it.

MR. LEAKE: Yes, that is the complaint.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Let us hope that the hon. member will be able to account for all his actions at a future day. I am afraid he won't. I can assure him the Government have expended this money judiciously and wisely, and in such a manner that nobody in this House could find fault with it.

MR. SIMPSON: You made a fearful mess of it when it was in your department.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): One now and again has to listen to an asinine remark from a certain quarter. The hon. member has made a remark. He says I made a great mess of it, when I had control of this department.

MR. SIMPSON: A fearful mess.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): The hon. member is very clever, no doubt. But it is very hard to please him. When I had charge of the department, the hon.

member complained that the money was being expended unwisely. Now that somebody else has charge of the department, the hon. member still complains. His complaint now is that the money is gone, and that the works have cost more than we thought they would. Why have they cost more than we thought they would? Because the surrounding circumstances, as has been explained by my hon. colleagues, were such that the Government could not possibly help spending more money than they expected upon these works. Even the hon. member for Albany, I presume, will allow that, under certain circumstances, it is absolutely necessary to spend money without the Government being in a position to exercise absolute control over the expenditure. This money was spent under such circumstances. We were bound to spend this money in order to do that which was absolutely necessary in the interests of the mining community, in order, as I have said before, to save human life. Yet the hon. member and his friends around him blame the Government for spending it. The hon. member knows perfectly well that what he has uttered to-night has not been from his heart. He has spoken simply as the member for Albany, as a member of the Opposition, who conceives it to be his duty, under all circumstances, to endeavour to slate the Government. He knows perfectly well that everything he has uttered to-night has been overdrawn.

MR. LEAKE: It has drawn you, at any rate.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I say the hon. member did not mean what he said, in his heart. Speaking as a member of the Opposition, he made use of certain expressions which I am perfectly sure he would not have used under other circumstances, because they did not come from his heart.

MR. LEAKE: Am I in order in assuring him that I was perfectly sincere and perfectly in earnest in everything I said?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The question which has been raised, and ably raised, by the hon. the Speaker is the real question at issue before the House—the question of unauthorised expenditure. It is all very well for members on the

Ministerial benches to tell us that they are justified in expending money without authority. I desire to call the attention of the House to an Act which is a part, and I think a very essential and important part, of the law of this country—the Audit Act of 1891. Section 18 of that Act says that “Separate accounts shall be kept in the Treasury of all moneys which have been or shall hereafter be raised by way of Loan upon the public credit, and shall be kept under such separate heads as specified in the several Acts under the authority whereof the moneys were raised.” Section 19 distinctly provides that “Annual Estimates shall be submitted to Parliament of the proposed expenditure from the moneys standing to credit of any Loan Account, in which Estimates the nature of the proposed work or other objects of the proposed expenditure, and the amount of the proposed expenditure in each case shall be specified, and such Estimates shall include all salaries and allowances to be paid out of such moneys in like manner as in the Estimates of ordinary expenditure.” Now we never had any Estimates of the £70,000 voted for the improvement of goldfields in the Loan Bill,—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You had them, and passed them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am speaking of the time when the money was expended. Up to the time these moneys were expended we had had no Estimates, such as the Audit Act contemplated, showing the proposed works upon which the money was to be expended; and we now find that, before this Parliament is out of session, the greater portion of that £70,000 (which was supposed to be expended during the coming year) has already been expended or allocated, and the Government now come down and ask us to vote another £50,000, without complying with the conditions of the Audit Act, as to supplying Estimates showing the proposed works or objects of the proposed expenditure. The Premier has tried to show this House that there is something special and exceptional in the Act with reference to works let under contract.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Read the 21st clause, and you will see all about it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Has the Government, since they brought in their Loan Bill this session, let contracts to the amount of £55,000 out of the £70,000 allotted for the goldfields?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We are doing the work by day labour.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes; I am aware you were doing it by day labour. The Commissioner of Public Works has told us he will be glad to give the House every information we may require as to this expenditure. I am going to ask him to give us some information with regard to certain statements which have been the subject of a good deal of conversation with reference to the water works carried out on our Eastern goldfields. Certainly, when these things reached my ear, I put them aside as impossible for any Government to have done; but, really, to-night, after the evidence which has been brought forward, and the strange admissions that have been made by the Premier himself, I am inclined to ask whether there is not, after all, some truth in the statements which were current in reference to these matters. Statements have been made about a certain officer connected with the Water Supply Department, named Mr. Renou, who, some time ago, during the administration of this department by the Minister of Lands, was sent up to Coolgardie, for the purpose of making certain estimates as to the necessary tanks. It was stated that he did so, and that he made certain recommendations to the department, that these tanks should be made by contract, at a price which was then named, being so much per yard—from 2s. 9d. up to 4s. 9d.; and it was stated that had this recommendation, made by Mr. Renou, been carried out in time, these tanks would have caught last winter's rains. But, instead of acting upon the advice and recommendation of their own officer, the work was delayed. [THE PREMIER: Why?] Simply because the Government had not the courage to undertake the work; simply because the estimates sent in by Mr. Renou were considered by the department to be too high, and it was thought the work could be done a great deal cheaper by day labour, with the result which we are now aware of.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): Where did you get your information from?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am asking for information. I have a pretty shrewd idea that if we could get certain estimates that were prepared in the Works Department for the information of a certain gentleman, who, if he had been returned to a seat in this House, would have given the Government a very severe gruel— if we could have obtained this information, it would have proved some curious facts in connection with this matter.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The facts would have been against you in any case.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not think they would. I may say, for the information of the Minister of Works, that I, myself, saw what were declared to be absolute copies of these papers, and I think I am not far wrong in what I am stating. I regret to say that the gentleman for whom they were prepared was unfortunately unseated at the late general election, and consequently the Government have escaped a very severe drubbing.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We are not afraid of that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not think the Government are afraid of anything. They know they are possessed of a majority to carry anything, and they care very little for criticism, because with their majority they are not afraid of losing their position. I say it fearlessly on the floor of this House, nothing short of a direct vote of no-confidence—not a simple vote of censure of this kind, affecting one or two Ministers—nothing short of a direct vote of want of confidence would move the present Ministry from their seats. But we have to deal with facts, in this instance; and I do not think the House possesses a better authority than the Speaker, who has declared from the floor of the House—and I have every confidence, with what little knowledge I possess of parliamentary practice, in supporting him—that this money has been absolutely spent contrary to the provisions of the Audit Act, and in defiance of the practice of Parliament. Yet the Government has taken upon itself to come into this House, and seek to make us believe that when they asked for a vote of £70,000 for the development of goldfields the money would be expended during the coming year, whereas we now

find that, within three weeks of obtaining the authority to raise it, they had spent nearly the whole of this money.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Very little of it is actually spent; it is only allocated.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is exactly the same thing. But the point I am going to speak about is this: we have had no Estimates showing how this money is to be expended. 'Take the Ministry's own version of the matter: they say it has not been spent, but allocated. Allocated for what? Has this House had any detailed statement of this proposed expenditure as required under the 19th section of the Audit Act?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes; the Loan Estimates.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Simply the bare statement "Development of gold-fields."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That was in the Loan Bill. You have also had the Loan Estimates.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We have had no statement of the proposed works, or specifying the amount of expenditure in each case. This Act says that before the money is spent, Estimates shall be submitted to Parliament showing the proposed expenditure on loan account, and the nature of the proposed work, and the amount of the proposed expenditure in each case. But the Government here have been spending the money actually before the money is raised.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We can advance it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You not only advance it, you actually spend it. It is no use protesting against it; the money is spent. It is like the man in the stocks, who said, "You can't put me in the stocks"; but he was there. We say to the Government, "You cannot do this under the Audit Act"; but they do it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You have had the Loan Estimates.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: When were they passed? Only a few days ago. But, because they have been passed, you are somewhat independent. I have only dealt so far with the £70,000 included in the Loan Bill. The mistake made by the Works Department was to take this work in hand themselves, instead of having it done by contract. What has been the

result? They have been in utter ignorance of what expenditure they were incurring. I have said it before on the floor of this House, and I say it again, there is constant evidence that the heads of the Works Department, including the Commissioner himself, are not conversant with the works that are going on. The Commissioner himself does not know what is going on in his own department. It is all very well for him to smile. Very soon after I came to this House, I asked him when the Cue telegraph line would be completed, and he coolly told me, from official documents, it would be completed in three weeks. That was sixteen weeks ago, and it is not completed yet; they are only working it with the telephone. Yet the hon. gentleman would have us understand that he knows all about the works that are going on in his department. The Treasurer himself told us he was surprised when he discovered the amount that had been expended in connection with these water works, and that when he came to analyse the expenditure he found that forage and other important items had been omitted from the accounts sent in. It comes simply to this: that the whole thing is done in a haphazard way. The Engineer-in-Chief is supposed to be responsible, or takes upon himself the responsibility. Either he takes the responsibility himself or the Ministry know nothing about it, or the Ministry give him *carte blanche* to do what he pleases, and consequently they know nothing about what is going on. They think a tank has cost a certain sum of money, and then they find that they have been mistaken, and that it has cost twice as much as they thought it had, because the forage and other charges were not included. That seems to be the position of affairs. By their neglect the Government allowed that Coolgardie road to get into such a condition that they could do nothing else than to keep it open at any cost and any hazard. I am not complaining about the money expended in the development of our gold-fields; it was absolutely necessary to have kept that road open—a work of absolute necessity which no Government could escape. I am not complaining at all about the amount spent on the road; but I do say that the Government ought to have been in a position to have told

this House, when they asked for that £70,000 in the Loan Bill, that they wanted it for certain works which had already been begun, and for which tenders had already been let, and the money had already been allocated. But when that Loan Bill was before the House the impression left on the minds of members in this House was that this £70,000 was intended to carry out necessary works during the coming year. That was clearly the impression left on our minds. But now, before even the session has closed, we are not only told that the £70,000 is already spent or allocated, but we are asked for £50,000 more. It is quite possible that this money is necessary; I am prepared to admit that it is; but the Government have not shown us so yet. Nor have they shown us how they propose to spend it. They have brought in no Estimates, as required by the Audit Act.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): This expenditure would not come within that clause of the Audit Act. It is not loan expenditure, nor is it an expenditure legalised by statute, but an expenditure authorised by a resolution of the House. We are prepared to take the risk of that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I believe your Government would take the risk of anything. But members on this side of the House want to know what you are going to do with this £50,000. Here we have to look at what is straight before us. The Government having spent £110,000, asked us, a few weeks ago, for £70,000 more to carry on these works during the coming year, and actually before the Loan Estimates are passed through Parliament, and without any consideration for the provisions of the Audit Act, they coolly spend the money, and come down and ask us to give them another £50,000. And when the Speaker points out that their action has been illegal, and that they have been infringing upon the rights of this House to control the expenditure of the public funds, the Premier begins to talk as if His Honour the Speaker was wrong. The Premier is on the horns of this dilemma: he either knows the provisions of the Audit Act, or he does not. If he knows what the Act requires, and he acts contrary to it, it is a dishonour to him. The most charitable thing to say is that he does not know the

Act. I say that any Premier who spends £70,000, and who proposes to spend £50,000 more, without the legal authority of Parliament, cannot know the Audit Act.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not propose to spend it without authority. I am asking for authority.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You are asking for authority, but you have given us no Estimates; and we are not going to give it to you unless you tell us what you are going to do with it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I have told you.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I want to know from the Commissioner of Lands or the Commissioner of Works how it was they came to dismiss Mr. Renou, and how it was they let him roam about Perth for four months and a half, doing nothing, with his reports in their hands, and the people of Coolgardie calling out for water.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member has referred to what was done some time ago, when Mr. Renou was the officer in charge of the Water Supply Department. I think I was instrumental in that gentleman obtaining the appointment. At any rate I remember that when he was at Coolgardie he suggested that we should spend, I think, £25,000 on tanks; and he had made a rough specification for contracting for the work. At that time Coolgardie was not the place it is now, nor anything like it. At that time, too, we were not in such a flourishing condition as we are in at the present time. At that time all the banking troubles were upon us, and we were in a great state of anxiety, and I admit at once that, under the circumstances, I hesitated to incur an expenditure of £25,000 upon tanks on the Coolgardie road. We thought when it came to spending £25,000 we had better obtain some professional advice, and we transferred the conduct of the Water Supply Department to the engineering branch of the service. We thought if the goldfields expenditure was going to run into figures like that for works of construction, we had better have the Engineer-in-Chief responsible for the work, and that was the main thing which induced the Government at that time to transfer the control of the water supply

from the Lands Department. It was only placed under the control of that department because we never expected it would assume such immense proportions as it has. When the control was transferred to the Works Department, it was found that the specifications which had been prepared were not precise enough to let the contract upon; in fact, we were advised not to do it. Then came the question of whether it would be better to have the work done by contract or by day labour, and we were advised it would be better to adopt day labour, for this reason, that the works could be proceeded with at once. No time would be wasted in preparing plans and specifications and calling for tenders before the work could be put in hand. We could commence these urgent works at once, and prepare the necessary plans and specifications as the work proceeded. I do not think the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) is quite correct when he says that we lost a good season for water.

MR. SIMPSON: You lost two.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He says we lost two. I do not think we take much notice of what the hon. member says. He has tried to stop the Government from doing anything for Coolgardie. He has never had a single good word for Coolgardie or Southern Cross.

MR. SIMPSON: You cannot find a single word I ever uttered against Coolgardie.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I have a good memory. That has been his cry all along. Perhaps he will change his tune now; but that has been the impression he has left on my mind. I have explained the reason why we did not follow out the recommendations of Mr. Renou, when we placed the control of these works in the hands of the engineering department. No one can say that the works have not been well carried out.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Too well; they are works of art.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No, they are not works of art; they are works of utility—practical and substantial works, so far as I have been able to judge; and I have seen something of works done in this colony, and in other parts of the world. I say they are

good, useful works, and I do not think, considering all the circumstances, that they have cost more than they should. But I will say this, they have cost more than I was informed they would cost. When I saw them, I was very pleased at the smallness of the cost, as I then thought, and I wondered really how such works could have been done for the money. I am not dissatisfied even now, considering the exceptional difficulties of the situation. In regard to the Audit Act, which the hon. member for Nannine says I know nothing about, all I can say is if, after being four years Treasurer of this country, working under that Act, I know nothing about it, I must be very thick-headed, or have altogether avoided my duties.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is worse than what I said.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There is no doubt that, in some particulars, it is hard to work the Act under our present procedure, as regards Loan Estimates especially. From the 30th June, the end of the financial year, until we get the Loan Estimates passed, there is no provision for carrying on works undertaken out of loans, unless they are works already contracted for; and, seeing that these works in connection with the goldfields water supply were carried on by day labour, there has been a difficulty in legalising the expenditure, which would not have occurred if the works were under contract. We must introduce a different system, a system under which the Loan Estimates can be submitted to the House as a Bill and not as a resolution; in that case, any excess of expenditure can be covered by an Excess Bill, and we could get a supply on account of loan money, by a Supply Bill, the same as when dealing with the ordinary finances of the country. But that has not been the practice hitherto, and what members are complaining of to-night in regard to this unauthorised expenditure has been done every year since we have had Loan Estimates. There is nothing new about it, and there is nothing very bad about it. After all, we have been carrying out what the Legislature has authorised us to do, though I admit it is not a satisfactory way of doing things; and I hope to rectify it next year, and put it on a better basis. With regard

to the objection of my friend the hon. member for Albany, and the hon. member for Nannine, as to the Government not having come down to the House sooner with this announcement as to our position, all I can say is—the hon. member can take my words for what they are worth—there was no intention whatever to deceive members or to keep anything back from them. The fact of the matter was, I did not like coming to this House and asking for this sum. I hesitated a long time about it; but, seeing it was impossible to get over the difficulty in any other way, I had to do it. I was in hopes that we might carry out the work this year with the £45,000 we have in the Treasury to pay for works in hand, and the small amount we had unappropriated, but I found it could not be done. Although I hesitated to ask the House to give us this further vote, I hope members will not charge me with keeping back from Parliament anything that Parliament ought to be made aware of. If I had realised that it would be necessary to obtain an additional supply for this purpose, it would have been easy to have added this amount to the Loan Bill. This House would have been as willing to have voted £120,000 as £70,000 for the development of our goldfields; therefore there was no reason why the Government should not have asked for that amount had we known at the time that it would have been required. With regard to the vouchers not coming in to the Treasury earlier than they did, one can easily understand it. They were probably in batches, and were kept back for a time, while the cheques came in more quickly. We are obviating that now. The Director and myself are working at a scheme by which we shall have this altered. I propose that the Treasury itself shall take over the sole payment of the accounts, and we shall be able to insist, perhaps, even more strongly than the Works Department itself, that these vouchers shall come forward and the cheques be drawn in such a way that they shall be ear-marked as to the authorities they represent. All this is very simple.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: When you know how.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes, when you know how. We gain knowledge by experience. I hope mem-

bers will accept from me an assurance that we only desire to do our best for these goldfields, and as quickly as possible. It has been said by the hon. member for Nannine that we have not told the House how we are going to spend this £50,000. I thought I had done so, but I will repeat it. We intend to spend it in sinking wells and in building tanks in different parts on the various goldfields, and we intend to put down bores—one 3,000 feet at Coolgardie, and others on the sand plains North of Coolgardie, and we intend to clear roads to the different mining centres, and we intend to provide hospital accommodation in different places, as the necessity arises, and we intend to build post offices at various centres, if they become necessary; in fact, we intend to do all we can upon these extensive goldfields of ours at the Murchison and at Coolgardie, as the necessity arises. These are what we now propose to do, but it is impossible for us to supply detailed estimates, in the form required, at the present moment. This £50,000 is to be advanced from current revenue, or from any available money in the hands of the Government. We have done the same thing before. I do not like it, for it is as much trouble to get the House to pass a resolution like this as it is to pass a Loan Bill. Next year, or some other time—next year, I hope—we will ask this House to provide some means of recouping us this money, or at any rate to vote the amount either from current revenue, or such other funds as may be available, and so confirm the expenditure. If not in that way, probably we may include it in the next Loan Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The next Loan Bill! Another Loan Bill!

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We certainly shall have to recoup it in some way.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Did I hear you say "the next Loan Bill?"

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Certainly, I said the next Loan Bill. That is my explanation. I do not suppose that members object to the expenditure of this money. Of course if they do, and they won't vote it, we won't be able to spend it. The Government, at any rate, are trying to do the best they can in the matter. If we had come down with a separate Loan Bill for this £50,000 it

would have been more regular; but I did not like to ask the House to pass two Loan Bills in one session, as I think we can find the money from some source other than a loan.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Last night, when the Premier introduced a Message from the Governor's Deputy in reference to this vote, there was surprise and indignation expressed on both sides of the House. To-night a little more light has been thrown upon the subject, and, though the explanation is not altogether satisfactory, still we can now understand the position a great deal better than we did last evening. I must say it is rather surprising to me that the Minister in charge of the department concerned was not in his place last evening to give us the explanation he did to-night. It is anything but satisfactory to members to learn that, through some system of account-keeping in the Works Department, the Government were not aware, as they say they were not aware until a short time ago, that this money had been expended. I cannot help thinking, myself, that the Government were to a great extent aware before now that this money would be required. The Director of Public Works has told us that he mentioned it on a previous occasion, when the Loan Estimates were going through the House, that more money would be required if we wanted to continue with the development of our goldfields and to extend the water supply. If that was so, if the Government were aware of that fact some weeks ago, why did they keep back this information from the House? I think, reading between the lines, we can see the reason why it was kept back. They thought that probably if it was known, when the Loan Estimates were going through, that a further vote would be required for this purpose, it might jeopardise the Bridgetown Railway vote. I think that was the reason why this information was kept back.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I assure the hon. member it was not anything of the sort.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Then it seems very strange, and there is ground for strong suspicion on the subject. It appears to me they simply kept it back, knowingly, from this House and the other House, simply because they thought

it would jeopardise their pet project, the Bridgetown railway.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): How could it interfere with that?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: In this way: the House would have known that £50,000 more would be required for the development of the goldfields, and the money would probably have been taken from that vote. In addition to that, the House would have been influenced by the fact that the Government had actually been spending the money before it was even raised. The Government say they have not spent it; but they committed the country to the expenditure, which is tantamount to spending it, before even the money was raised. Yet the Premier says they have not spent it contrary to the Audit Act. I say his argument is absurd. They cannot get out of the fact that they committed the country to this expenditure, and actually spent a portion of the money before they got the authority to raise the money. The Premier also says he hopes to introduce some better system of account-keeping in future. I think the best thing the Treasurer can do is to take over the Works Department altogether, because I don't think the Minister responsible for that department knows anything about it. I think he is guided entirely by those who are under him. I will acknowledge this, that it is a most difficult department to look after; it requires professional knowledge, and the Minister must, to a great extent, be guided by his professional advisers. At the same time he should insist upon a proper system of accounts being kept in his department, and that no subordinate should be allowed to spend money except under the authority and with the knowledge of the Minister responsible to this House. We have nothing to do with his subordinates; his subordinates are responsible to him, and we hold him responsible to Parliament. With regard to this particular expenditure, we have found out that there has been £55,000 expended without the knowledge of the department.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not expended.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: The works have been let. The money is pledged, and a further sum is now required. I do not suppose the House will refuse to sanc-

tion this supply to the Government, but I do think it is rather trenching too much upon the liberality of members to come down at this late period of the session and ask them to do so. I feel, and every member feels, that this work of providing water supply on the roads to our goldfields should be proceeded with, so as to establish communication between Coolgardie and Southern Cross, and that the wants of other places should be attended to; therefore, I suppose we shall have to give the Government power to expend this money. With regard to the system of accounts in the Works Department, it seems to be a very lax system, because we find that not only in this House, but also (as I notice from the newspapers) in "another place," it is impossible to get returns members ask for, from that department, for the information of Parliament; so that there must be something very lax in the working of the department. In this House members have called for returns—I have done it myself—and it has been six or seven weeks before I got them.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Because they were so elaborate, I suppose.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: They were not elaborate, but very short returns in connection with this very expenditure, out of the last two loans, upon the goldfields. With regard to Mr. Renou, I think the hon. member for Nannine was rather unfortunate in his allusion to that particular case, when he blamed the Government for not acting upon Mr. Renou's advice. I think where the Government ought to have been censured was for employing him at all in the first instance. According to report, he was an utter failure, and according to the return furnished to the House I think there was something like £11,000 unaccounted for, when that officer had the expenditure of this money. I am speaking from memory, but I think it was £11,000, or more, which was unaccounted for. The money was spent, but they cannot account how it was spent. I think a great deal of this heavy expenditure on the goldfields is caused through the Government employing day labour. The Government would find that their money would go further if they let as many works as they possibly can by con-

tract. With day labour, and only one man to superintend it, over a large area of country, it is impossible to exercise proper supervision. The Premier says that if he had put £120,000 instead of £70,000, on the Loan Estimates for these goldfields, the House would have passed it. It is not too late to do that now, by re-appropriating the money put down for the Bridgetown Railway. It would be expended on a much more re-productive work if expended in developing the goldfields than upon this Bridgetown line. While I am in favour of the expenditure of money in developing our goldfields, I do think there is too much done by the Government in trying to find water, and provide other facilities, at their back door, for those engaged in mining. They don't do it for the squatters, or for those engaged in other industries, and why should they do it for these rich mines? It is quite right that they should keep the roads open, but I do not think they are called upon to put down wells for people in the towns, or to supply the mines, who can well afford to sink for water themselves. There is too much of this grandmotherly system of doing things since the present Government are in power. They would not have thought of asking the House to vote all this money under the old form of Government, because they would know they wouldn't get it. The mines would have been left to their own resources, and, if they had, this water difficulty would have been overcome long ago, instead of depending upon the Government to do everything for them.

MR. LOTON: When this Message from His Excellency the Governor was placed before members last night, an expression of surprise was visible on the countenance of almost every member, particularly after the extraordinary statement made by the Premier that out of the sum of £70,000 on the Loan Bill which only passed this House a day or two ago, nearly the whole of that sum (within about £5,000) had already been expended. When that announcement was made to the House, members sat aghast, as well as they might be, to learn that nearly all the money, actually not yet raised, had already been expended.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not expended.

MR. LOTON: Is there any reasonable ground for saying it has not been expended? The hon. gentleman said last night it had been virtually expended, and it is a mere quibble to say it has not been expended. After that extraordinary announcement was made I expected, and we had a right to expect, that the administrator of the department concerned would have given us some explanation as to how this money had been expended or allocated; but what explanation have we had? I gather, generally, that it has been expended in connection with the water supply, in keeping open the roads to the Coolgardie goldfields. That is the general explanation of the way it has been expended.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There is a return on the table.

MR. LOTON: The Premier told us he was not aware until three weeks ago that this extraordinary expenditure of loan money not yet raised had taken place. That is a singular admission for any Treasurer to have to make. It seems to me to disclose an extraordinary state of things that nearly the whole of a vote to be provided out of a loan not yet raised should be expended without the Government knowing it.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): It is only a liability.

MR. LOTON: Only a liability, is it? Will the hon. gentleman explain how much of this money has been actually paid away by cheque in settlement of these accounts up to the present date? Will he let us know exactly what is the total amount actually paid, and how much liability has been already incurred? I do not want him to say what has been advanced to his department by the Treasury, but what has been paid by his department without the authority of this House. Does he understand the question I am putting to him? If he doesn't, I will endeavour to put it sufficiently plain that he cannot fail to understand it. With regard to the legality or otherwise of expending or allocating—expending I prefer to call it—this money, what are the facts? We find from the Loan Estimates placed before the House that, on the 30th June last, out of the £40,000 authorised to be spent on goldfields development during 1893, there was a small credit balance of £555 unexpended on

that date. There were at the same time outstanding liabilities amounting to £11,935—liabilities illegally incurred, and which it was proposed to defray out of the new loan. So that on the 30th June last the Government had already entered upon this course of illegal expenditure to the extent of nearly £12,000. Possibly, it was necessary that they should do so; the fact remains that, five months ago the Government, in connection with this very vote had illegally incurred liabilities amounting to £11,935. In addition to that, sir, we find that since the 30th June another £50,000 has been illegally expended or allocated; and the question arises, have the works upon which this money, or any portion of it, has been expended, been entered upon, or commenced since the 30th June? That they have been entered upon before the money is available, or the expenditure authorised, is patent to anyone who looks into these accounts; and, therefore, the money has been illegally expended. What would be the position of Ministers and of the colony, supposing the loan proposed this session, from some cause or other, had not been sanctioned, with these heavy outstanding liabilities, on account of this particular item alone, to be met? What would have been our position?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What else would you have us do?

MR. LOTON: A nice position to be in!

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What would you have done?

MR. LOTON: It is not my place or my duty at the present time to answer such a question as that. But, I may say this: if I were in charge of a department of this kind I do not think I would have been inclined to overrun the constable to the extent of £50,000, unless I saw very clearly where I was going to get the money from. The Premier told us he was surprised (and well he might have been) when he found that all this liability had been incurred, and he not aware of it. All I can say is, if he was not aware of it he ought to have been made aware of it. The Minister in charge of the department, who I suppose had authorised this expenditure, and who had authorised these works, ought to have been in a position to have informed the Premier, pretty nearly, the amount of the outstanding liabilities in con-

nection with them, from month to month. The cheques came in for payment, and they were paid by the department out of advances made to it by the Treasury; and the Minister in charge of the department must have known—it was his duty to know, and, if he did not know he is not competent to have charge of a department of that kind—he must have known, or ought to have known, that these liabilities had been incurred. There must have been great laxity of control, or negligence, or incompetence in connection with these transactions, otherwise the Government would have been aware of the position of this overdrawn account, to a very much closer extent than they were. I do not suppose that any practical good can result from further debating this question; at the same time I should have liked to have had particulars of the works which have been undertaken since the 30th June last, when there were outstanding liabilities, on this account, amounting to £11,900, increased to £55,000 within the last four or five months. I am rather inclined to think that the outstanding liabilities on the 30th June were much more than is shown on these accounts. The question suggests itself, if there are unknown outstanding liabilities to this extent in connection with this one vote, may there not be unknown liabilities in connection with other votes under the control of the Minister in charge of this department? It is all very well for Ministers to ask us to take their assurances. We want something more than that; we want facts we can rely upon. When we have disclosures of this kind, showing defalcations or shortnesses, amounting to many thousands of pounds in connection with one item, how can Ministers expect us to take their assurances? I do not want, at the end of the financial year, to be told that there are outstanding liabilities amounting to one-half or one-fourth of the colony's revenue; but that is what we are tending to, if we go on like this. With regard to the resolution now under consideration, authorising the expenditure of another £50,000 in this direction, it says that this money is "to be advanced to such extent as may be required during the current financial year from any funds in the hands of the Government, but to be ultimately recouped from

"funds to be hereafter provided by Parliament for such purpose." In voting this money it appears to me that the first thing we want is an Estimate, showing how it is proposed to expend the money. If it is to come out of current revenue, we ought to have a Supplementary Estimate placed before us, and, if the House votes the money, there ought to be a Supplementary Appropriation Bill, authorising the Government to expend the money upon the works specified. That is the proper course to pursue; and, at the present stage of the proceedings, so far as I am concerned, unless I hear something to induce me to take a contrary view, I shall not be inclined to vote this £50,000, except upon some such understanding as that—namely, that we shall have a Supplementary Estimate, showing how it is proposed to expend it. I do not know whether the Premier is in a position to say that he expects to have a surplus of £50,000 over and above the Estimates already agreed to by this House?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I could not say that at present.

MR. LOTON: It seems to me that if we vote the money on the understanding that it is to be repaid out of revenue, we are voting it on the supposition that there will be a surplus revenue available for that purpose. I cannot see how it can be otherwise. How can it be recouped out of revenue if there is no surplus revenue beyond what has already been appropriated, unless the Premier is prepared to bring in a Bill to reappropriate a portion of the loan money already voted for other purposes this session? If he is prepared to do that, then this £50,000 could come out of the money appropriated for the railway to the Collie coalfield, and it would not be missed. That line might stand second to the Bridgetown line. I would sooner see money devoted to the development of an agricultural district than to this coalfield railway. Let the money be reappropriated out of the proposed loan, or else let us have a Supplementary Estimate brought in, and an Appropriation Bill, the same as with the ordinary Estimates. That seems to me the only proper and legal way. I am surprised that the Government, after the experience they have had, should not be prepared to come before Parliament, and

deal in a legal manner with an expenditure of this kind.

MR. MORAN: As I am a little bit interested in that part of the world where this money has been expended, and as I know a little about the history of these tanks, I should like to explain a few matters in connection with this expenditure. It has been said that the Government have expended the money without any authority. I can hardly see that. At the time of the late elections, the intention of the Government to borrow a million and a half of money was before the country, and that policy of the Government was sanctioned by the country at large, or, at any rate, by a fairly strong majority; so that it cannot be said that they were not authorised to raise this loan. Of course, the absolute formality of raising it had not been gone through; but, long before this expenditure was incurred, the loan had been sanctioned by the country, and inferentially by this House as representing the country. The question, then, reduces itself to this: Was the expenditure necessary and urgent, and has the work been done properly? What are the facts, as shown by the returns laid on the table? It appears from the return called for by the hon. member for the Gascoyne, on the 15th August, that at that time there was a credit balance of £3,000 remaining out of the Loans of 1891 and 1893, under this item of the development of goldfields. That was all the money available at that time for expenditure upon these works. Yet members express surprise to find that the Government have overrun the constant. Surely, it must have been well known to every one who took any interest in these matters that, with all the works that have been going on during the last three or four months—six or seven tanks constructed, and bores sunk all over the country—the expenditure must have largely exceeded that £3,000, which was all that was left on the 15th August. Population was pouring in to these goldfields, and the revenue of the country was doubling itself, and it became imperative upon the Government to keep the road to the goldfields open for traffic. The hon. member for the Swan says he wants an estimate, showing how this £50,000 is to be spent. I do not see how it would be possible for any Government to pro-

vide a detailed estimate showing how this money is to be appropriated. It is impossible to predict what may happen in connection with goldmining. There may be a rush to-morrow to some part of the field which has not yet been exploited, and a portion of this money may have to be expended in that locality. This is what I call a contingent vote, for which it is impossible to supply a detailed Estimate twelve months in advance. The greater portion of the expenditure hitherto has been in keeping the road open to the goldfields—a work of imperative necessity that brooked no delay; and if the Government, because this money had not been absolutely voted at the time, had refused to carry out these works until the money was legally available, they would have been blamed by the very men who are now blaming them for undertaking these works. If an estimate were furnished to-day, showing how it was proposed to appropriate this £50,000, things might so turn out that it would be absolutely foolish on the part of the Government to spend the money on the particular works it had been allocated to, because, as I have said, new rushes might take place, and the Government would have to follow them, as the localities where the money had been intended for might be deserted. I certainly am surprised at the hon. member for Nannine, of all people, taking the Government to task, as he did, for spending money in the development of our goldfields, the hon. member being himself a goldfields member.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Goldfields members are not all blind.

MR. MORAN: I am afraid you are, or that you are in the habit of seeing things that do not exist,—mares' nests, to wit. No doubt the Government have made some mistakes in connection with this water supply question, but no doubt their intentions are good, and that they desire to do what they can to help the goldfields. Their greatest mistake, in my opinion, has been their procrastination. With regard to Mr. Renou, I think that gentleman has been unfairly treated in this matter. It is on record that every tank now on the fields has been recommended by Mr. Renou, and it is not fair nor manly for members to cast base reflections upon him, because he had the misfortune to come to loggerheads with

his chief. He is a most estimable officer in many ways, and has served other Australian Governments, and received a large amount of credit for it. With regard to this £50,000 now asked for, I am sure, myself, that this will not be sufficient to keep that great highroad open between the metropolis of the colony and the goldfields metropolis of the East. It will be the duty of the Government to come down next session, perhaps, to ask for more money for providing water on the goldfields. What would have been said of the Government if they had allowed that road to be absolutely blocked up—if people going there representing hundreds of thousands of capital to invest in mining properties had been locked up and unable to get back for want of water?

MR. SIMPSON: I am glad to observe there has been no disunited voice with regard to the desirability of making every provision for water supply on our goldfields to enable us to keep them open. Those members who have taken a higher platform in this debate have done so rather in reference to the question of constitutional procedure. With regard to this motion of the Premier's, I purpose moving an amendment, as an addition to it, in these words: "This House, however, desires to express its opinion that the administration of the departments under the control of the Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands and the Hon. the Commissioner of Railways and Public Works, is not in the best interests of the colony." I do not think too grave attention can be paid to the weighty remarks which fell from the Speaker with regard to this matter. My private opinion is that some man has expended from £40,000 to £50,000 absolutely unauthorised by anyone, so far as I can gather from the statements of the Ministerial bench. We have had several explanations—from the Director of Public Works, from the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and from the Premier; and in one of the Premier's speeches he went deliberately out of his way to state that I had endeavoured, continuously and regularly, to block anything that was proposed in the interest of Southern Cross or Coolgardie. [THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Quite true.] That subservient member of the Govern-

ment, who poses rather as a bit of Cabinet furniture than as a Minister, says it is quite true; but I say there is not a speech or line that will furnish one word or tittle of support to that bold and blustering assertion of the Premier's.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Is the hon. member in order, in using the words "subservient" and "bold and blustering member?" Is the hon. member in order?

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think he is out of order in doing so. It may not be desirable to use such language.

MR. SIMPSON: I see so many amateur Chairmen of Committees arising, that I feel quite timid in expressing my opinion about any matter in this House. It was admitted that representations about this expenditure had been made by the Auditor General. It was also admitted by the Treasurer that until very recently he was ignorant of this expenditure. It was also admitted by the Director of Public Works that the necessities of the expenditure were such that there must be huge drafts on the department, of which they could not be cognisant until some time afterwards. This is dealing with a matter of almost £50,000. We see such huge figures in connection with mining development, that these sums of fifty or one hundred thousand pounds ripple off our tongues as if they conveyed no signification. The Director of Public Works explained; the Commissioner of Crown Lands followed; and then the Premier followed with an *ad misericordiam* appeal that Ministers are only doing their best in the interest of the country. I think that, in the interest of the privileges of every member of this House, and in the interest of the people whom we represent, there should be an exact, definite, and careful explanation of detailed expenditure submitted to this House, and that this House should have the opportunity of passing it carefully and exactly. I remember a little while ago, when an appeal was made to the Treasurer to authorise a trial survey for a railway, his written and telegraphed answer was that he could not authorise the expenditure of funds for a survey.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It was not a question of a few pounds for

a survey, but a question of entering into a great undertaking.

MR. SIMPSON: That was the impression that grew on the mind of the public, that the Treasurer was not in a position to deal with the application, as he could not expend public money unless authorised by Parliament. That was a sum of £2,000 or £3,000; but here we are dealing with a matter of £40,000 or £50,000. I ask, have we any valid or useful information with regard to this expenditure? There is not a member of this House who, when he voted on the £70,000 loan expenditure for the development of our goldfields, imagined he was putting his seal on the policy of the Government to secure a further sum of £50,000 for developing mining in this colony. Then we had the Premier adjourning the business of this House, when important matters were before it, in order that Ministers might attend agricultural shows in the Eastern districts. Just imagine the Premier in England adjourning the House of Commons, just to enable him to go down to Penzance! It is admitted in this debate, by the Director of Public Works, that the money remaining out of the last loan vote of £70,000 has been allocated, though not spent. The Premier admits it, and he also admits that the Auditor General had raised a question about the authority for the expenditure before the Loan Estimates were passed; and it has been contended to-night, by the greatest authority I presume we have in this House, that the whole proceeding puts the question very prominently before us as to whether the expenditure has not been entirely unconstitutional. I have very little doubt—indeed I have reason to believe—the Premier is himself frightened of the Works Department in connection with this expenditure. I believe the Works Department has got beyond the control of the Treasury. The Treasurer imagined that when we voted that £70,000, we voted for it to be borrowed from the British public for the future development of our mining industry. I cannot imagine that this House, or this country, will sit by quietly and placidly, and permit such a state of things as this to go on. It is encroaching on the constitutional usages of the Legislative Assembly; it is betraying the trust reposed in the Ministry by

the people of the country; and it is high time this House reviewed the question very carefully. I would beg of the House, and beg of the country, in their own interest, and in the interest of the country, to cling closely to the procedures which govern our country, and that no Ministry should be allowed to expend money in the manner that has been placed before us by the Ministry to-night.

THE CHAIRMAN: There are two reasons why I am not able to put the amendment: one, that it is irrelevant; and the other, that it reflects upon the conduct of members of Parliament. It would require to be brought under discussion as a formal, substantive motion, of which due notice must be given.

MR. SIMPSON: I beg to move that the House disagrees with your ruling, and that the matter be reported to the Speaker. [Objection, in writing, handed to the Chairman.]

THE SPEAKER, having resumed the chair, said: I think the Chairman of Committees is correct in both his rulings, because, according to May's "Parliamentary Practice," certainly one part of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Geraldton is irrelevant to the motion before the committee, and the other part is such an amendment as can only be brought forward as a substantive motion, and not as an amendment to the motion. Therefore, I must support the ruling of the Chairman of Committees.

THE SPEAKER left the chair.

The committee resumed.

MR. SIMPSON: Will the Government report progress, to allow an opportunity for that notice of motion to be given?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No, I do not think so, unless some one suggests another course to be taken for the consideration of the Government. I have listened with much attention to what hon. members have said. I have listened to the arguments of the hon. member for the Swan in regard to Estimates being supplied, also to the arguments of the member for Namine in regard to Estimates being submitted, and that the House should be informed as to what the further sum of £50,000 is to be expended on. Although I gave the information twice, it does not seem to have met with the approval of those hon. members. In reference to the £70,000

voted recently in the Loan Estimates for the development of goldfields, the whole of the information supplied to Parliament is contained in these words, printed in the Estimates, as showing the progress anticipated to be made during the current financial year:—"Public buildings at Marble Bar, &c.; water supply Coolgardie, Murchison, and other goldfields, supplementary Item 15 of Loan 1891, and Item 10 of Loan 1893." That information satisfied the House when the Loan Estimates were before it in regard to what we intended to do with the £70,000. It does not seem to me that all the information we have given in regard to this £50,000 we now ask for has satisfied the House so well as did that little piece of information in regard to the £70,000 previously voted. As to passing loan votes, I admit at once that the procedure we have adopted, and which is not new, is not altogether a satisfactory procedure; but I do not see that we can adopt a better at present. In asking for this additional vote of £50,000, there are two courses open to the Government. One would be to bring in a new Loan Bill for £50,000, and that would, in the ordinary way, enable the Government to raise the money by loan or to advance the money from current revenue until the loan was raised. The Government considered that plan, but did not like it much. It seemed to me, after having introduced a Loan Bill for £1,500,000 this session, that to come to this House with another Loan Bill for £50,000 or £100,000 more, in the same session, would be an undesirable course; and that is the opinion the Government formed. The next course would be to include the required amount in the ordinary Estimates of Expenditure for the year. But these Estimates, after being on the table a good while, have been passed; and a revision of the Estimates of Revenue would be necessitated if this new expenditure was to be made part of the Annual Estimates. In fact, we would have to increase the items of revenue by £50,000, and I was quite prepared to do that if practicable. As hon. members know, the Estimates of Revenue were based on only a moderate scale, though on a scale sufficiently liberal for me, as Treasurer, to feel that I was on the right side. But to come down

again to this House and move to put £50,000 more on the revenue is not a good plan, just because £50,000 more is wanted for necessary expenditure. Another Loan Bill would be preferable. However, I am in hope that our revenue may increase beyond the Estimate during the current year; and, if so, we will be able to get a vote next session, from current revenue, to recoup ourselves for this amount of expenditure. I do not think there is anything very irregular about this procedure, so long as Parliament understands thoroughly what we are doing. There is nothing irregular in authorising the Government to spend £50,000 out of any available moneys that may come into their hands. We have done it on two occasions before—one was in regard to the Mullewa Railway, and another occasion was in regard to expenditure on the Eastern Railway, on the Yilgarn Railway, and other places, to the amount of £230,000. We have a large amount of loan funds in hand—in fact, at the present time we have an immense amount in hand, in London and in this colony; so that there will be no difficulty on the part of the Treasury in advancing this money. It will be merely a matter of account in regard to the funds we have in hand, until we get a vote passed under a statute, in order to recoup the amount of the advance. I think that, considering the circumstances, this is the best course to pursue. Those hon. members who think otherwise can have their opinion. If they think it is better to put this amount on the Estimates, to swell the revenue and make it fictitious, I can only say I am not going to put on the Estimates of Revenue £50,000 more than I think can be obtained. Those hon. members who do not want to spend the £50,000 we ask for can vote against the motion. We know we must have this money—that these works must be provided for; and if hon. members will not follow the advice of the Government as to the best course to pursue, but think it will be better for us to bring in another Loan Bill this session, I think that course would be very unwise at the present time. If we were not so near the end of the session, I should have no objection to an investigation into the matter, as suggested by the Honourable the Speaker. There has been a delay in applying the orders that have

been received to the vouchers received. There has been a block in regard to the vouchers that have come down. The orders have come in considerably before the vouchers, and they have come in wholesale, so that the department has not been able to deal with them, sometimes for want of form, sometimes for want of proper authority; references have been required, backward and forward; and the result is that the orders have not been credited to the proper votes as quickly as they ought to have been, and as quickly as they will be in the future.

MR. LEFROY: Members on this (the Opposition) side of the House do not object that a sum of money has been spent upon certain works on the goldfields, but we do object that a large expenditure has been made in this direction without the knowledge of the House, and without the Government being able to explain exactly how the money has been expended. We regret exceedingly that the Government appear to have got into difficulties in regard to expenditure. There is no doubt that, when the Loan Bill was before us, we were under the impression that the £70,000 was to be expended in new works on the goldfields. I am sure that was the intention.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The hon. member for the Swan pointed out that there was then a liability of £11,000.

MR. LEFROY: We did not expect, when this £50,000 was asked for, that £45,000 had been expended already out of the £70,000 voted in the Loan Bill. The Premier made a manful and straightforward admission that the Government had got into a difficulty. I do not say the Government should not take certain responsibilities without the sanction of Parliament, in certain cases; but they should come to Parliament and explain how the money was expended, and, if expended in a proper way, they would certainly have the support of Parliament. A good Government, having the confidence of the country and of Parliament, is an advantage to any country; but when questions of this sort come before us, I regret that any Government in this House should be tending towards losing the confidence of members and of the people, by admissions in regard to this expenditure. It appears to me that some-

one—we do not know exactly who—has had *carte blanche* to spend money in any way he wished, on certain works, without having to account beforehand as to how that money was going to be expended. If any officer was given control of the water supply, he should not have been told he could spend as much money as he liked in discovering water. He should have submitted an estimate of the cost of tanks and other works beforehand.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): The tanks had to be built, no matter what they cost.

MR. LEFROY: We have not been told yet how that money has been expended. I do not think it is necessary for the Government to tell us exactly how much they are going to expend in particular works for providing water supply in the future. It is for them to say, as they did in the Loan Bill, that they are going to expend so much in providing a water supply. But I do object that, in reference to this £45,000 expended, they are not in a position to explain satisfactorily how it has been expended, nor how the excess expenditure has arisen. I feel sure hon. members are not thoroughly satisfied; and it appears strange that, in a matter of this kind, the Government have scarcely any one standing up to support their action, outside the Treasury benches. I regret that the Government are not in a position to inform us how the money has been expended. There is something wrong somewhere. The Premier explained in a straightforward way, as far as he was aware, how the expenditure had occurred; but those who have the management of these works ought to be in a position to explain more clearly how the money has been expended. Before we proceed further I think it is necessary to get more information in order to satisfy hon. members. We, on this side, wish to emphasise the opinion we hold that the money should not have been expended in this way without giving the House a satisfactory explanation, and to express our regret that the Government are not able to do so.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It has been said we have not explained how the money has been expended. Here is a list of the items of expenditure, and

I have no objection to read out the whole list if desired. If hon. members wish to appoint a select committee to inquire into the matter, I am willing. We will place this list on the table of the House, and let hon. members see it.

MR. RANDELL: I should like the Government to consent to report progress, if only to consider whether there is any other way of dealing with the matter.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Government have considered it over and over again.

MR. RANDELL: I think that, on reconsideration, some other means may be provided.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): A Loan Bill is the only other way.

MR. RANDELL: We should have the fullest possible information that can be obtained. A circumstance has occurred, as reported in this morning's paper, in which the greatest possible bungling in road making by the Works Department has been accomplished just outside the city of Perth; and, in view of these circumstances, if the statements published are anywhere near the truth, I say it is most discreditable in connection with the administration of the Public Works Department. To report progress now will only delay the closing of Parliament for one day. The Government can then re-consider this matter carefully, and will be able to speak with greater authority than they can to-night. All we want is to have a proper assurance that the system under which these works are to be carried out is one which Parliament and the country can approve of.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The Government have given all information to show how the money has been expended in the past. Do hon. members expect Ministers to read out to them every item of expenditure on this long list? To do that would take some four or five hours.

MR. LEFROY: We have not had a satisfactory explanation as to why we were not informed earlier of this expenditure.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am quite willing to fall in with the view of the hon. member (Mr. Randell), and

agree to report progress. Unless we arrive at some determination what to do, I am quite sure the Government will come back in the same mind as at present. There is no other course than to bring in a Loan Bill for £50,000. We have watched very closely the revenue received up to date, and I am not prepared to put £50,000 more on to the Estimate of Revenue for the financial year. It would not be honest to do so. Unless a new Loan Bill be brought in, there is no other course than that we have proposed. I am quite prepared to take that course if the House thinks it wise; but I think it very unwise to bring in another Loan Bill, when we have plenty of money in hand to go on with the works. We can raise as much as we like of the authorised loan even at the present time, on favourable terms; and, that being so, what necessity is there for the Government asking this House for power to raise another loan? I should like hon. members to have every information in the matter. The expenditure has been thoroughly investigated, and the department is in full possession of all the facts of the expenditure, so that hon. members will have no difficulty in seeing for themselves how the money has been spent. I have stated that when I brought in the Loan Bill this session, I was not aware that such a large expenditure had been going on upon the goldfields, and I was fully of the opinion that at that time the £70,000 allocated in the Bill for the development of goldfields, &c., was available for works from the 30th of June onward, and I thought that sum would carry us over this year. I should have added another £100,000 to the Loan Bill if I had been aware of the actual amount of expenditure which was found necessary for the goldfields. There is no doubt now that a great deal more money had been spent up to the 30th of June, and more liabilities incurred, than we were then aware of. The hon. member for the Swan was on the right track in his remarks on that point. We cannot know what vouchers an officer may have in his possession, when he is carrying on large works two or three hundred miles away. I move that progress be now reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Question put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again on Monday, 26th November.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

AMENDMENT IN THE MEDICAL BILL.

The following Message was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

"Mr. Speaker,

"The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has agreed to a Bill intituled 'An Act to consolidate the Law relating to Medical Practitioners,' subject to the amendment contained in the Schedule annexed; in which amendment the Legislative Council desires the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

"GEO. SHENTON,

"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber, Perth,
"23rd November, 1894."

Schedule showing the Amendment made by the Legislative Council in "The Medical Bill."

On page 9, Clause 24—Add the following words to the end of the clause:—
"Provided that this section shall not apply to any newspaper proprietor publishing such advertisement."

C. LEE STEERE,

Clerk of the Council.

23-11-94.

Ordered—That the consideration in committee of the foregoing Message be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:35 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Council,

Monday, 26th November, 1894.

Want of Quorum—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 7:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

WANT OF QUORUM—ADJOURNMENT.

Ten minutes from the time of meeting having elapsed, and a quorum of members not being present, the President, under Standing Order No. 9, declared the Council adjourned until the next sitting day, viz., Wednesday, 28th November, at half-past four o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 26th November, 1894.

Medical Bill: consideration of Legislative Council's amendment—Death of Mr. De Haenel—Expenditure of £50,000 upon extension of Goldfields Water Supply: adjourned debate—Suspension of Standing Orders—Motion (Mr. Randell) affirming that the explanations of the Government as to the expenditure in connection with the development of goldfields were unsatisfactory—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

MEDICAL BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

The House went into committee to consider the following amendment made