

taken to secure the specimens there shown, with the ultimate idea of sending them to the forthcoming Paris exhibition.

THE PREMIER: That was a very good idea, which would not be lost sight of.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and read a first time.

#### AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, for the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and read a first time.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Director of Public Works: Correspondence *re* Drainage of Harvey Agricultural Area.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:25 p.m. till the next Monday evening.

## Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 13th December, 1897.

Papers presented—Question: Holidays of Locomotive Employees—Question: Water Sellers at Kanowna—Question: Referendum and the Commonwealth Bill—Question: Labour Conditions in Lead, Tin and Copper Mining—Question: Mail Contract, Eastern Colonies—Motion: Leave of Absence—Public Education Bill: first reading—Metropolitan Waterworks Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Fire Brigades Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Crown Lands Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Roads and Streets Closure Bill: third reading—Annual Estimates: Postponement—Dog Act Amendment Bill: consideration of Legislative Council's Amendments: in committee—Underground Surveyors Bill: second reading (moved)—Noxious Weeds Bill: in committee—Registration of Firms Bill: in committee—Agricultural Bureau: Adoption of Select Committee's Report—Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Excess Bill: second reading (moved)—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 7:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By MR. SPEAKER: Report of Auditor General, 1896-7.

By THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Regulations of Government Railway Service.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### QUESTION—HOLIDAYS OF LOCOMOTIVE EMPLOYEES.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, for Mr. Vosper, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways:—1. Whether he was aware that since the present Locomotive Superintendent took office there had been many changes made in reference to the holidays granted to men employed under him. 2. Whether he was aware that four or five such alterations had taken place during the period specified. 3. Whether it was true that Class III. of these employees had had their holidays altered from 12 days annually to 7, and that Her Majesty's birthday and Anniversary Day had been taken off the list of paid holidays. 4. Whether the Minister was aware that serious dissatisfaction existed in the Locomotive Department in consequence of these changes. 5. Whether the Minister considered it desirable to substitute a fixed system of granting holidays, instead of leaving the matter at the arbitrary dictation of an officer.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—1. Shortly after the appointment of the present Locomotive Superintendent, the present regulations governing leave of absence came into force, viz., on 20th August, 1896 (*vide* copy attached). 2. No alterations have since taken place, excepting that as regards the Locomotive Workshops staff, it was found more convenient that leave be taken by all employees at the same time, viz., nine working days from and including the 25th December. 3. Under the previous regulations, 14 days' leave was authorised, but in the revised regulations employees under Class III. are only allowed six days' holiday, and Christmas Day and Good Friday. They are also granted a free pass over the railway for themselves and families. 4. I am not aware of any dissatisfaction, as no complaints have been received from any of the employees. 5. As already stated, holidays

are only granted in accordance with the regulations.

#### QUESTION—WATER SELLERS AT KANOWNA.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, for Mr. Vosper, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier:—1. Why a business license was refused to one James Barlow, a water seller at the Deep Lead, Kanowna. 2. Whether it was the intention of the Minister to prosecute all other persons selling water on the Deep Lead as Barlow was prosecuted. 3. In the event of such action being contemplated, by what means it was proposed to supply the diggers on the lead with water. 4. If it were not the intention of the Minister so to act, and it were the intention of the warden to refuse a license to Barlow, why were others permitted to carry on such traffic in water with or without licenses.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that no information had as yet reached the Mines Department, but inquiries were being made into the matter.

#### QUESTION—REFERENDUM AND THE COMMONWEALTH BILL.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, for Mr. Vosper, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier: Whether, in view of the facts that a referendum of the whole people was likely to be made next year in regard to the adoption or rejection of the Federal Constitution, and that several persons had offered to act as deputy electoral registrars, without emolument, in various parts of the colony, it was the intention of the Government to take any steps for facilitating the registration of electors, either by appointing deputy electoral registrars in the smaller centres of population or by any other means.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that if the hon. member would furnish a list of places at which he considered it would be desirable to appoint deputy electoral registrars, the wardens would be requested to submit the names of some suitable persons to be appointed.

#### QUESTION—LABOUR CONDITIONS IN LEAD, TIN, AND COPPER MINING.

MR. MITCHELL asked the Treasurer, Whether it is the intention of the Gov-

ernment to reduce the labour conditions on leases relating to lead, tin, and copper mining, in the same proportion as the alterations recently made in respect to gold mining leases?

THE TREASURER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government were considering the matter, and were of opinion that a reduction might well be made in the direction indicated, and that one man to every 10 acres would be a reasonable labour condition.

#### QUESTION—MAIL CONTRACT, EASTERN COLONIES.

MR. HIGHAM asked the Minister of Education:—1. Whether there is any contract between any intercolonial steamship company and his department for the carriage of mails to the eastern colonies; if so, what is the nature of this contract? 2. Whether this contract was duly advertised for public competition. 3. Whether it is his intention to send all intercolonial mails to Albany daily, and thence transmitting them by first suitable steamer.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) replied:—1. In the agreement made with the Adelaide Steamship Company for the northern coastal service, there is a clause which provides that the contractors may run two steamships every month between any of the ports of New South Wales, Victoria, or South Australia, free of harbour, light, pilotage, and tonnage dues, on condition that such steamships shall convey, free of charge, all such mails as may be required by the Government, and shall call at the ports of Albany, Vasse, and Bunbury upon each voyage, weather permitting. 2. This was not embodied in the general conditions when tenders were called, but having formed part of the conditions of the previous contract with the same company, was included in the agreement entered into on the 19th October, 1896. 3. This is done already when it is known that steamers are about to call at Albany.

#### MOTION—LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, leave of absence for one fortnight was granted to the member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor).

## PUBLIC EDUCATION BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER OF EDUCATION, and read a first time.

## METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

## FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

## CROWN LANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, for the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and read a first time.

## ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

## THIRD READING.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) moved that the Bill be read a third time.

MR. GEORGE asked the Director of Public Works whether the local authority had been consulted in regard to the closure of the road in Pinjarrah. He understood there was considerable dissent in Pinjarrah about the closure of this road, and it appeared that the local authorities had not been consulted in any form.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: This closure was to increase the school reserve. There seemed to have been no objection made by the people in Pinjarrah, and he understood the closure was being made at their request.

MR. GEORGE said he was informed by the Hon. E. MacLarty that the local authorities had not been consulted in the matter.

THE PREMIER: There was no municipal council at Pinjarrah.

MR. GEORGE: There was a roads board, which was the constituted authority.

THE PREMIER: Did they not want the road closed?

MR. GEORGE said he understood that the board had not been consulted; and the Hon. E. MacLarty intended to oppose the closing of the road when the Bill reached the Legislative Council.

THE PREMIER: That would be all right. The map would be sent over to the other House, so that members there might see what was proposed to be done at Pinjarrah.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

## POSTPONEMENT.

Order of the Day, for the further consideration of the Estimates in committee, read.

MR. LEAKE: I wish to move that the consideration of the Estimates be postponed.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot move that. I have to leave the chair in ordinary course.

MR. LEAKE: Cannot I move that the Order of the Day be postponed, and that the other Orders be considered first?

THE SPEAKER: It has already been decided that the Orders of the Day be taken after the first five Notices of Motion. What does the hon. member want to do?

MR. LEAKE: I want to move that this Order of the Day do not come on tonight.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member had better move to report progress, when the House has got into committee.

THE SPEAKER left the chair, and the House went into committee to further consider the Estimates.

Vote—Education, £49,945:

MR. LEAKE moved that the committee report progress and ask leave to sit again. Hon. members would notice that the Auditor General's report had only just been placed before them, and we ought to have an opportunity of perusing it before considering the Estimates of the Railway Department. The only other vote which the committee had to consider was that of the Education Department.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): And Posts and Telegraphs.

MR. LEAKE said he meant that Minister's department. Hon. members had placed before them that evening a Bill dealing with education, and he would ask the committee, in the circumstances,

to allow hon. members to peruse the Auditor General's report and also the Education Bill, before going on with the remainder of the Estimates. There was ample business for hon. members to go on with that evening, in the Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion. When he told the Premier that he moved this motion with no idea of delaying the business, he hoped the Premier would accede to his request. He would remind the hon. gentleman that the Opposition had done nothing so far to obstruct the Estimates.

Motion—that progress be reported—put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### DOG ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The House having formally resolved into committee, to consider the schedule of amendments made by the Legislative Council,

Progress was immediately reported, and leave given to sit again on the next day.

#### UNDERGROUND SURVEYORS BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

**THE PREMIER** (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: The object of this Bill, which has come to us from the Legislative Council, is to license surveyors to make mining surveys underground. We have an Act licensing surveyors, and the Bill before us provides that all surveyors who do underground work in mines shall, in addition to being licensed surveyors under the Licensed Surveyors Act, also be licensed for this special purpose of making underground surveys. Of course if this work is to be done it must be done accurately. It is no use depending upon any person who happens to be in charge of a mine to make surveys of this kind, because in many cases they probably would not be able to do the work accurately, and even if they did it they might not be competent to delineate the sections on a map in the manner necessary for a work of this kind. It is very important in this early stage of gold mining in Western Australia that we should have accurate information recorded, in some office in connection with

the Mines Department, of all underground workings in the colony. If we do not take care of this now, we will find, as time goes on, that we shall not know what has been done underground, and the result may be not only that accidents may occur, but that a great deal of unnecessary work will be entailed on persons in the future, which, if this knowledge were properly set forth, would be unnecessary. The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) will tell you that, in carrying on mining operations, it is important to know what has been done previously by others. Take, for instance, the work done at Roebourne. I do not suppose any accurate record has been kept of all the shafts and drives that have been put down by those who have been working there for many years, mining for copper and for lead; and the result is that, if you were going to carry on some work there, you would not know what had been done before, and you might have to do a lot of unnecessary work which would have been saved if you had had a proper map of the underground workings. Then, with regard to the question of safety, it is very necessary, when you are driving underground, to know where the other drives are, and therefore these surveys should be made. I have not given much time to the Bill.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** It will require looking into.

**THE PREMIER:** Hon. members will look into it, no doubt. It is absolutely necessary that these returns should be made. The only question that can arise is whether the obligations imposed on those persons who are to make these surveys are not too great. There was a controversy in the other House on this point. Some hon. members thought it would not be necessary that an underground surveyor should do the work, and that an ordinary land surveyor would be sufficient for the purpose, and that the latter should not be required to go through any examination in underground surveys. I do not think any objection was raised in the other House to the principle of the Bill. Those who have had much experience in mining say that we should insist on having accurate surveys made of what has been done underground for use in the future. The object of this Bill is to carry out this idea. It provides for the appointment

and removal of a licensing board, to consist of certain persons—the Under Secretary for Mines and five others—and the duties of the board are set forth in Clause 5. Examinations are to be held by any two members of the board in January and July in each year. They are empowered to issue certificates of competency in underground surveying to those who shall have satisfied the board, and to issue licenses. Hon. members will notice that the persons to whom licenses may be issued must already hold a license under the Land Surveyors Board. The board may refuse a license if they are not satisfied that the candidate is a man of good character. A register has to be kept in which must be entered the names of all those who are authorised to carry on the work of underground surveying, which list is to be published. Every license issued by the board must be signed by two members of the board and countersigned by the secretary, and, when registered, will entitle the holder to practise as an underground mining surveyor in Western Australia, provided that such license shall not authorise the holder to practise as a land surveyor under the Transfer of Land Act, 1893. When licensed, these persons are entitled to make surveys, and the board has power to deal with them if they do not carry out their work satisfactorily. The decision of the board shall be in writing. The board has power to make regulations and receive fees, and provision is made for the application of the fees. Power is given to the surveyor to enter upon land and survey it. These are the general provisions of the Bill. There may be some details that may give rise to controversy, but there can be no doubt as to the usefulness and necessity of the principle contained in the Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What are the plans for?

THE PREMIER: They are required in the Mines Department.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: For whom are they available?

THE PREMIER: For any one, I think.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Are they available to the general public?

THE PREMIER: They would be of no use unless they were available to the public.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Where is the compulsion to make surveys?

THE PREMIER: The Mines Regulation Act will compel them to do that. This Bill only provides for the competency of the surveyors. It provides that the surveys shall be made by licensed surveyors.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It does not provide for the making of surveys.

THE PREMIER: It provides that licensed surveyors shall make surveys, and the Mines Regulation Act will provide that they must make these surveys, and that they shall deposit their reports in the Mines Department. There can be no objection to this, as there is nothing secret in regard to the shafts and drives of a mine.

MR. GEORGE: Where is the public utility of it?

THE PREMIER: I think it is a very useful thing to have competent persons to do the work. The reports of incompetent surveyors, if you have such, will not be worth the paper they are written on.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra): As this Bill appears to involve a question of considerable interest to the mining community, and as some of the goldfields members are not present, I beg to move the adjournment of the debate on the second reading until this day week.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned for a week.

## NOXIOUS WEEDS BILL.

### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): One of the meanings of the word "clear," in relation to land in this clause, was "to graze sufficient sheep thereon to prevent noxious weeds from flowering." But there were some weeds, such as stinkwort, which sheep would not eat; therefore the mere grazing of sheep on the land would not clear it of such weeds.

Put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 20, inclusive—agreed to.

Schedules and title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and report adopted.

# REGISTRATION OF FIRMS BILL.

## IN COMMITTEE.

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

## BUREAU OF AGRICULTURE.

### SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. SIMPSON (Geraldton), in moving the adoption of the report of the select committee appointed to consider the question of placing the Agricultural Bureau under the control of a Minister of the Crown, said: The evidence elicited from the chairman and secretary of the bureau distinctly points, so far as the committee are able to judge, to the fact that it would be a discreet thing, in the interests of the development of the agricultural industry, to place this institution, which has up to the present time done so much good, under the control of a Minister of the Crown. In the report, the main features to which the attention of the House is directed are "that the development of agriculture will be assisted, and the objects sought by the Bureau of Agriculture furthered, (1) by placing the Bureau of Agriculture under the direct control of a Minister responsible to Parliament; (2) by the maintenance of the Board of the Bureau of Agriculture, and by the creation of subsidiary boards for specific purposes connected with the industry." As the House will observe, this is practically an extension of the system of local government right through the community—an object desired by every member of the House. Particular attention is also directed to the remarks of the president of the bureau with regard to the annual conference on agriculture. The concluding remarks of the president, in connection with this matter, are; "It (the annual conference) has brought men together who have not only learnt to discuss their requirements, but learnt to discuss them with moderation; and it has given an impetus to a desire for working in a practical, political way." I ask the House to support the motion for the adoption of the report.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I gather that the intention of the select committee is to recommend that the Bureau of Agriculture shall be

under the direct control of a Minister responsible to Parliament. But I do not quite understand what is proposed in regard to the maintenance of the Board of the Bureau of Agriculture; whether it is to be an advisory board—[MR. SIMPSON: Hear, hear]—or whether it is to have any control over the bureau. That point is not made clear, and perhaps the chairman of the select committee will be able to enlighten hon. members. My colleague, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, is quite willing—I may say, anxious—to have this bureau attached to his department. The Commissioner thinks he will be able to utilise the bureau and do a great deal of good with it. I have no objection at all to the recommendations in the report. After all, the bureau has not acted altogether without reference to a Minister. The board has been accustomed to submit its proposed expenditure for the approval of the Treasurer, and, of course, the board depends on the votes of Parliament for the "sinews of war." It would be a pity to disband the board, now that it has done so much good. [MR. SIMPSON: Hear, hear.] I quite agree with the chairman of the select committee when he says that the board has exercised a good effect in bringing together annually a sort of Parliament of agriculturists. The meetings in Perth have not only been enjoyable outings for those who live in far-away parts of the country, but have done much good in affording an opportunity for interchange of ideas. I can see nothing but good that can result from the proposed change, so long as the board remains as an advisory body, and continues to take as much interest in the bureau during the future. Whether that will be so or not, of course, it will be hard to say; but the chances are that it will not be so. The members of the board will, no doubt, feel themselves relieved of a good deal of responsibility which now attaches to them, and may perhaps not feel it necessary to attend and look after the business as they do now, when they are practically responsible to Government and Parliament for everything they do. Still, the board will be able to give a good deal of information, and especially will it be useful at the annual conferences, when, no doubt, it will take a leading and control-

ling part, which perhaps the Minister, having other duties to perform, will be unable to do. I do not rise with any intention but that of supporting the recommendations of the select committee; and I only hope that this board, which has so long controlled the Bureau of Agriculture, will continue to take as lively an interest in the work as in the past. I do not like to sit down without expressing the thanks of the Government to the members of the bureau, who have given so much time to a work which I really believe has instilled new life into the agriculturists of the colony. The fact that it is recorded by the committee that the board has been able to gather an annual conference of elected members, and has also been able to form local committees throughout the country, shows that the board has already done a great deal of good. I support the motion.

MR. LOCKE (Sussex): I hope the proposed change is not recommended with any intention of injuring or doing away with the bureau. I am very much impressed with the good that has been done for agriculture by this bureau, and if its efforts be allowed to continue, a great deal more good will, no doubt, be done all over the country. The bureau makes rules and regulations which are extremely useful in the development of agriculture; and the usefulness of the annual conferences, which afford opportunity for a valuable interchange of idea, cannot be over-estimated. I am afraid, however, that the proposed step does not tend in the direction of enabling the bureau to continue to act as in the past. But I am not going to oppose the motion. I suppose the bureau ought to be responsible to somebody, and it may be that the change will be for the better; but I should like an assurance that the ultimate object is not to abolish the bureau.

MR. MITCHELL (the Murchison): As one of the select committee, I can assure the member for Sussex (Mr. Locke)—and I believe I am echoing the sentiments of the other members of the committee, that in making the recommendations now before the House the committee—had not the slightest idea of doing away with the bureau. The idea was to place the bureau under a responsible Minister.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Perhaps it is not necessary to add anything to what has already been said, except to say that I have been moving in this matter in conjunction with the member for Geraldton, and the feeling is to establish the bureau rather than disband it. The idea is that, by making the bureau an adjunct of the Lands Department, we shall be putting it on a firm basis, and removing the bureau from any anxiety as to whether the next Parliament will or will not vote the money required to carry it on. The step is purely one to establish the bureau as an institution under the direction of a Minister, who can give a proper account to the House of the work done, and satisfy hon. members that the money voted has been properly expended. I do not think it is the intention of the select committee to deprive the board of any power whatever, but to remove the financial management.

Question—that the report be adopted—put and passed.

#### MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### IN COMMITTEE:

##### Clause 1:

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The intention of the Bill was to deal with the difficulty as to rights of way. Section 137 of the principal Act compelled all persons cutting up land to leave a right of way 20 feet wide, and the object of the Bill was to alter that. He contended that this clause was not sufficient for the purpose it was intended to carry out. He moved, as an amendment, that all words after "words," in line 3, be struck out, and the following be inserted in lieu thereof: "'or not being a carriage road, be at least 20 feet wide, or any alley or court unless of the last-mentioned width,' are hereby struck out." This would enable people to make a right-of-way of any width that their land would admit of. It would be better to have a 7-foot right-of-way than no right-of-way at all.

MR. JAMES: The effect of Section 137 in the Act would not be altered by the amendment of the hon. member; but he saw no objection to carrying the amendment to enable people to establish private rights-of-way.

MR. LEAKE said he understood that streets for all purposes must be not less

than 33 feet wide. A dwelling-house could be put up in a street of less width, but that street could not be used for general traffic. It could be used only for foot passengers.

MR. HIGHAM: What about using these private rights-of-way for sanitary purposes?

MR. SOLOMON: A right-of-way 15 feet wide would be quite sufficient for sanitary purposes. A cart could go up such a right-of-way.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The present objection to Clause 137 of the principal Act was that persons could not get a plan passed in the Land Titles Office unless there was a right-of-way 20 feet wide. People could not afford to give a 20-feet right-of-way; therefore they did not leave any right-of-way at all. Ten feet would be sufficient for a private right-of-way.

THE PREMIER: The Act provided that a right-of-way should be 20 feet.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The amendment would allow any width of right-of-way. At present persons left no right-of-way, and it was desirable to have a narrow right-of-way rather than none at all.

MR. LEAKE: It had been suggested to him that provision could be made that no building should face a street unless that street was 33 feet in width.

THE PREMIER: What would become of the alley?

MR. LEAKE: It could be used, but buildings could not face an alley. The committee should prevent buildings facing a street, unless that street was 33 feet wide.

THE PREMIER: Why should not a building face a street 25 links wide?

MR. LEAKE: It was not advisable to encourage the making of narrow streets.

THE PREMIER: Some buildings might face the alleys and some might face the streets. The object of the principal Act was to enable the owner of land to have a frontage of 33 feet on a street and 20 feet on an alley.

MR. QUINLAN: From a sanitary point of view, the proposal to reduce the frontage was a mistake. We should insist that all streets should not be less than 66 feet wide. A mistake had been made in Perth in the very street on which the Assembly abutted, but no more similar mistakes should

be allowed to occur in the future. He was quite in accord with the mover of the amendment. As various objections had been interjected by members, he would not go against the evident sense of the committee by pressing his suggestion as to requiring all streets to be not less than 66ft. wide.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. JAMES moved, as a further amendment, that the following be added to the clause, to stand as Sub-clause (2):—"The words 'of less than 20 feet in width,' in line 8 of the same section, are hereby struck out."

Put and passed.

MR. JAMES moved, as a further amendment, that the following be added to the clause, to stand as sub-clause (3):—"The word 'twenty,' in line 9 of the said section, is hereby struck out, and 'thirty-three' inserted in lieu thereof,"

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

New Clause:

MR. LOCKE moved, that the following clause be added to the Bill:—"Clause 157 of the principal Act is hereby amended by striking out the word 'may' in the seventh line, and inserting the word 'shall' in lieu thereof, and in the eighth line of the same clause by striking out the words 'with or.'" At the present time each municipality appointed two valuers every year to assess or rate the property; and it sometimes happened that, after these officers had been employed at considerable expense and had done their work, some of the councillors, being large holders of property, would arbitrarily reduce the valuation by as much as 50 per cent. in regard to particular properties, in spite of the valuers, and thus practically valuing their own properties. Such a system was utterly absurd. Either let there be no valuers, or let the valuations, when independently made, be accepted and enforced.

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member's argument amounted to this, that certain municipalities were corrupt, and that the councillors acted simply in their own interests. On the other hand, if it were made imperative that the council should accept the report of the valuers, then the implication would be that the valuers were corrupt. We were thus on the horns

of a dilemma; and, inasmuch as the municipal councils were more prominent bodies than any combination of valuers, there was a better chance of controlling the council than controlling the valuers. It was hardly possible for a council to act so corruptly as had been indicated, without raising a tremendous storm; and it would be far more easy to bribe the valuers than to bribe a whole council.

MR. MITCHELL: Besides, there was also an appeal against the assessments.

MR. LEAKE: That certainly was an extra check, but he hoped the proposed clause would be withdrawn.

MR. A. FORREST: It appeared as though the member for Sussex (Mr. Locke) hardly understood the matter. Valuers were appointed by the municipalities, and reported to the council the amount which, in their opinion, each person should pay. The municipalities based their rate on that valuation, but every ratepayer had a right of appeal against the assessment of his property. The mayor and councillors sat as a body, and if any case of hardship were brought before them, the assessment could be reduced. That was sufficient to meet the case. Such a thing as the mayor or councillors arbitrarily reducing the rate by one half, in regard to particular properties, might occur in municipal councils in the smaller districts, but it could hardly be imagined as happening in the larger centres.

MR. WOOD: The motion would place too much power in the hands of valuers, for if two valuers combined against any particular member of the council, they could practically ruin him by fixing his assessment at an exorbitant figure. Every municipality should be obliged to appoint two independent valuers, though this was not always done. In Fremantle, for instance, the council sent round its own clerks and supervisors to make the assessment, thus evading the spirit of the Act. This was the method adopted in several other places, and it left an opening for evasion of the Act by levying specially low rates in particular instances.

MR. SOLOMON: The officers appointed at Fremantle were without reproach.

MR. WOOD said he had not spoken a word against them.

MR. SOLOMON: A valuer who undervalued was liable to a fine of £20. The member for Sussex (Mr. Locke) was undoubtedly mistaken. There must be some control over valuers. Ratepayers were well protected, for if they were over-rated they could appeal; or, if under-rated, any ratepayer could compel the valuers to give an explanation, and thus ascertain whether the mistake had been made wilfully. The present system was much better than that proposed to be instituted by the motion.

MR. WOOD: The employment of officers of the council to make valuations was done for economy, and ought not to be permitted.

MR. LOCKE: As to his not understanding the question, the difficulty was, not that ratepayers had not sufficient power to defend themselves in the event of being over-rated, but that, after the valuers had sent in their valuations, some of the councillors, being themselves property holders in the municipality, sometimes decided that their particular properties had been over-rated, and they reduced the assessment in their own case. If a certain property was valued at £500, they might reduce the figure to £250. The valuers were more likely to make a fair assessment than the owners. As the feeling of the committee appeared to be against the new clause, he would withdraw it, but intended to bring it up again at a more convenient opportunity.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause:

MR. WOOD moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:—  
"Section 166 of the principal Act is hereby amended by striking out, in line '10, the words 'the amount payable in respect of rate together with.'"  
It was now difficult for a poor man to appeal against over-rating, as he had to deposit the whole amount of the rate, together with two guineas to cover costs, with the clerk of the local court.

MR. LEAKE: There was force in the observations of the mover of the new clause, but the only object of requiring the deposit of two guineas was to protect a municipal council against frivolous appeals. If the ratepayer succeeded in his appeal, he got his two guineas returned, and the council paid his costs.

MR. QUINLAN : At the present time the municipality of Perth adopted the custom of allowing ratepayers, in the first instance, to appeal to the finance committee of the council, by whom the appeal was dealt with equitably, thereby often avoiding litigation, expense, and annoyance. This procedure was not according to the Act, but it answered very well ; and it would be wise to legalise this first form of appeal. He had himself adopted this course of first appealing to the council, in regard to property in which he was interested.

MR. JAMES : The section of the present Act had better remain as it was. If the new clause were carried, it would have to be made compulsory on ratepayers to appeal to the council before appealing in the local court.

Clause put and passed.

New Clause—Perth city borrowing power :

MR. A. FORREST moved that the following clause be added to the Bill :—

Section 183 of the principal Act is hereby amended by adding the following thereto :—  
“ Provided always that the municipality of the city of Perth may at all times borrow on the credit of the municipality any sum not exceeding £250,000 in all.”

The present debt of the city amounted to £70,000, and the council proposed to undertake large works, in which they would not be able to receive assistance from the Government. The only possible way of getting money for those works would be to empower the Perth Council to borrow money. Not one sixpence could be borrowed without the sanction of the ratepayers.

MR. WOOD : One merit of the amendment was that it limited the borrowing powers of the City Council to a maximum. On the other hand, it extended their borrowing powers very considerably, and the member for West Kimberley, as mayor of Perth, ought to give the House some further information as to the reasons which induced the municipality to ask for power to raise this large amount of money. The municipality would be responsible for the principal borrowed, and the ratepayers for the interest.

MR. A. FORREST said he was not prepared to give much information on the subject. The session was about to close,

and it was necessary to have the authority asked for to enable the council to undertake some important works. Amongst these works were the drainage of the city, and the making of good roads and footpaths, and a large proportion of the money was required for public parks and the general improvement of the city. Last, and not least, the City Council desired to sell the land on which the Town Hall stood, and to build a new hall. They hoped the amount for which the present Town Hall could be sold would be sufficient to build a new hall, without additional cost to the city.

A MEMBER : Then why borrow more money ?

MR. A. FORREST : The money was wanted for roads, parks, and sewerage. Not one sixpence could be borrowed without the sanction of the ratepayers, and he was sure a great many people would object to the borrowing of any further money. These people were prepared to live in the same way as they had lived for the last thirty or forty years ; but there were others who desired to make Perth a place really fit to live in, so that people who made money on the goldfields would take up their residence here instead of going to the eastern colonies, as they did at the present time. Numbers of people with money had told him they would like to live in Perth, but objected that the sanitary arrangements, the roads, and everything connected with the place, were very bad. These people did not see why they should live in Perth under present conditions, when within a few days' steaming distance they could get into a country where they might have every comfort and convenience, and from which they could come to Perth and transact their business in certain months of the year. He was sure the further borrowing power asked for, if granted, would not be abused. If abused, the ratepayers would have the matter in their own hands, seeing that the members of the City Council were elected for only a short time. He did not desire to run the city into debt, unless some good would come of it. The City Council had the power now to borrow £30,000 more, but that amount would not be sufficient, and he hoped this clause would be passed, because the citizens were fully protected. Hon. members would recognise the difficulty

of a municipal council borrowing money, when the Government were not able to borrow it on favourable terms. The committee would be doing a good thing to allow a small clause like this to pass.

MR. GEORGE said he was about the last man to block the progress of the city of Perth, but hon. members should consider that the new clause really meant the borrowing of £250,000, less the amount that the city already owed. This maximum was rather a large sum for a city with 40,000 inhabitants; and, according to the mayor's statement, the 40,000 citizens were fast dying or clearing out of the colony. The mayor had said the ratepayers could protect themselves. That was true; but what was their experience? Take the last loan of £30,000—how many ratepayers voted on that occasion? The ratepayers blackguarded the councillors and the mayor, but when it came to voting they did not turn up. Hon. members were entitled to further information as to what works the City Council had in view. If it was desired to spend £150,000 for the drainage of Perth, he would say, give it them at once; but if the money was for ornamental purposes, then better leave the borrowing alone. As to parks, there were already Weld and Russell Squares, and the park on Mount Eliza, which was attended to by the Premier and his amateur friends on newspapers. If the money was wanted for roads, the City Council could easily borrow another £30,000; and, with the £25,000 already borrowed for that purpose, this total would be as much as the ratepayers could afford. The present mayor (Mr. A. Forrest) had sufficient backbone not to yield to the clamour of a ratepayers' meeting.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The only objection anyone could properly raise to this proposal was in regard to the difficulty in raising the money at a cheap rate. That was an important matter; but if hon. members admitted that the City Council could raise the money at a reasonably cheap rate, there was no reason at all why the Council should not borrow what money they required. Hon. members had no hesitation in urging upon the Government—to put it mildly—to spend large sums of money on the city of Perth to provide a deep drainage scheme and other things. He admitted that the city of Perth perhaps

had a prior claim—being the metropolis which all the people came to—to have assistance from the Government to enable the council to beautify the city and make it as healthy as possible. It was a big city, and the people should now be capable of looking after it themselves, and capable of raising what money they required to beautify the place and make it healthy. The sewerage scheme, which members would like to see the Government embark upon, would cost £300,000, and, so long as the Government borrowed the money and carried out the work, people thought it was all right because it was anticipated that the day of reckoning would never come. When he (the Premier) proposed to the deputation which waited upon him that the council should borrow the money, a good many people thought that was not as good as the Government borrowing it, because these people were afraid that the citizens would have to provide for the interest. The way to make people careful was to give them some responsibility; and, if the citizens of Perth had the responsibility on their shoulders, they would be more careful, and not borrow more money than they could afford to spend. The fear he had was that the citizens might have to pay more for their money than the Government. At the same time the Government were preparing certain avenues for obtaining money, and the Government might have money to lend. As Treasurer, he did not want to make money out of the citizens: he wanted to lend them money as cheaply as possible. If the Government could help the citizens with cheap money, they would be glad to do so. The Government would have various means for obtaining money. There was the Inscribed Stock Bill, and their old friend the Savings Bank. He rather welcomed the idea of the city of Perth borrowing their own money. He wanted to see the people of the city and other parts of the colony help themselves and not look to the Government for everything. Hon. members would see, when they considered the Excess Bill, how the Government had been taxed last year for grants from all quarters; therefore, if the citizens of Perth were able to borrow the money, they should be allowed to borrow it and spend it in their own way. There was every occasion for obtaining the voice of the

citizens in a matter of this kind. Surely 40,000 people were able to say whether a sum of money should be borrowed or not. The City Council of Perth was second only to the Government in power and influence, and in its ability to borrow money and spend it. He rather welcomed this idea of the City Council borrowing money: it would assist the Government Treasury chest a bit, as there would not be so many demands made upon it. Perhaps that influenced him a little; but the great thing that influenced him was the desire of the City Council to be independent, and responsible to the people who elected it. No doubt the City Council was not going to borrow this money all at once: it would be borrowed as it was required. The first thing to do with the money was to set about making the city of Perth healthy. He did not know whether it was the intention of the City Council to go in for a deep drainage scheme or not. There was a difference of opinion about that matter. One medical gentleman said that such a scheme was unnecessary and would ruin the place, and another medical gentleman, writing to a newspaper, said a deep drainage scheme was necessary. When doctors differed, what were laymen to do? Engineers did not seem to care whether there was to be a deep drainage or a shallow one: the engineers would do the work, if the order were given to them and the money found. He admired the magnanimous and disinterested spirit of the medical gentlemen who wanted to make the people healthy, so that their occupations would be gone. When people were so magnanimous he had a doubt about the view which they took. Hon. members should assist the mayor and corporation of Perth, who were willing to look after their own business and find their own money for works. He had not consulted his colleagues, but as far as he was concerned he hailed with pleasure the proposal of the city council of Perth to manage their business in their own way.

MR. W. JAMES: If the city council of Perth desired power to borrow money for sewerage works, he would give it them, but the committee should not give the mayor and corporation the power asked for by the proposed new clause. For good or evil, the reputation of the colony was

bound up in the interests of the city of Perth. If the city council could not pay the interest due on a loan, it was as bad as the Government not being able to pay the interest on their loans. Provision was made in the Loan Act of 1896 for commencing a drainage scheme for Perth, and he understood the Government intended to carry the work through. Quite recently a Re-appropriation Bill was brought in, cutting away a large amount of the money from the sewerage scheme, and it was said that the amount had been reduced because the money could not be spent in the year. Nothing was said as to the Government not intending to carry out the sewerage scheme. Now power was asked by the city council of Perth to borrow money for the sewerage scheme, and the proposal was strongly supported by the Premier. What he complained of was that this power of borrowing was not asked for the purpose of carrying out the sewerage scheme. The mayor of Perth (Mr. A. Forrest) had said the city council wanted power to borrow money for making parks, improving streets, and doing works of that kind; but he (Mr. James) asked hon. members not to allow the municipality to go beyond the limit which every municipality had of borrowing, unless the money was to be spent on sewerage, and in that case it would be the duty of Parliament to give large assistance to the city council. Did any member of the committee imagine that the city council would borrow £20,000 for sewerage purposes, when the Government were known to be committed to that policy? It was not proposed to borrow this money to carry out the sewerage, but for other purposes. If the Premier would promise that, when the city council had spent £250,000 on streets, the Government would find money for the sewerage, and absolve the citizens from paying interest on the necessary loan, he would have no objection; but how could the citizens afford to pay interest on £250,000 for street improvement, and £400,000 or £500,000 for the sewerage?

THE PREMIER: Would they spend it foolishly?

MR. JAMES: No; but the citizens could not afford to pay interest on all that money, and he hoped the new clause would not be carried.

**MR. LEAKE:** The new clause was for the specific purpose of enabling the city council to borrow up to a quarter of a million sterling, to be spent on the improvement of the city and on sewerage. If it was intended to raise this money, the committee should leave the question of how the money was to be spent to be determined by the city council. He did not desire to see any part of the money spent on sewerage at present, because he understood some scheme would be brought forward for dealing with that. He wanted to encourage the city council to improve Perth, and until that work was taken in hand seriously by the expenditure of a large sum of money, which necessarily implied a large loan, nothing effectual could be done. The mayor and councillors of Perth would agree with him that Perth could never be made a properly habitable city until all its streets were macadamised to the full width, and that could not be done without a big loan. He urged the committee to grant the power of borrowing this money, believing the city council would spend it in a way that would be most beneficial to the citizens. If they were incapable of doing that, then Parliament would be justified in doing away with that body altogether. A loan of £250,000, in addition to what had been already expended, would not be a penny too much for the improvement and the sanitation of Perth, without talking about the sewerage. He did not wish to be led into a discussion of details. What was of paramount importance, was that the streets of Perth should be put into proper order. It would minimise the cost of maintenance if the road construction were properly and well done.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The citizens of Perth had not yet decided as to whether the loan should be raised or not. Parliament had nothing to do with the way in which the city council proposed to expend it. The council asked for power to raise a certain loan, and Parliament could sufficiently trust the expenditure of the money to the council. If the city council were prepared to take that responsibility on itself, it would ill become Parliament to say that it should not have that power. The council would see that the money was properly raised and properly spent. He would support the proposal.

**MR. KENNY,** in supporting the new clause, said the streets of suburban municipalities in Victoria were kept in splendid condition, and the time had come when the municipality of Perth should be enabled to bring the appearance and comfort of our city into line with the capitals of and the chief cities in the eastern colonies.

**MR. SIMPSON,** in supporting the motion, said the condition of Perth was not a credit to anyone. He recognised that there were a number of useful public men in the city council who gave their time to working on behalf of the citizens, for which they received very little thanks. He hoped that not a shilling would be used out of this loan towards the sewerage scheme; but that the money would be used to improve the footpaths and streets. The member for Albany (Mr. Leake) had pointed out that the proper construction of the roads would mean a large saving to taxpayers, and some expenditure on the parks was absolutely needed. There were many little reserves about the city, the improvement and beautifying of which would conduce to the health of the people. He hoped the committee would agree to the proposal.

**MR. WOOD:** The city members of the House should bear in mind, in the interests of Perth ratepayers, that this loan would mean the addition to the burdens of the city of some £6,300 a year, equivalent to 6d. in the £ added to the rates.

**MR. A. FORREST:** The ratepayers need not agree to the loan, if not willing.

**MR. WOOD:** The ratepayers were so apathetic that any proposal for a loan would be agreed to by them; and a certain percentage of ratepayers must be polled for upsetting a proposed loan.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Was the hon. member speaking for the landlords or the tenants?

**MR. WOOD** said he was speaking from the ratepayers' point of view. It was useless to oppose this amendment; but £250,000 was too wide a limit.

**MR. A. FORREST:** The hon. member forgot that the city of Perth was not asking the Government for money, but simply for power to raise money, if required. He (Mr. Forrest) was not prepared to say the City Council would attempt to raise a loan of £180,000 immediately. Such a proposal would have to be considered by the council, and

submitted to the ratepayers. The most pressing works were the roads and footpaths and public parks. The streets must be macadamised from one side to the other, and not merely in the centre. Some of this loan might also be devoted to drainage; but the works he had indicated must be attended to first.

MR. WILSON said, as a member of the City Council of Perth for several years, he had been repeatedly met by the assertion that the council was powerless either to make roads or to maintain them. The truth was that the ratepayers' money had been spent on the construction of roads and footpaths, whereas it should have been expended only on their up-keep. Parliament should have given the council power to borrow money to make the roads properly to start with; whereas now the heavy traffic soon destroyed the roads. The streets in the centre of the city should be paved with wooden blocks. The surface drainage was also a most urgent work, and he hoped the new clause would be carried, as the citizens had a veto on any proposal that might be made for borrowing money.

MR. SOLOMON: This was a matter for the citizens of Perth, who, if they desired additional rating, had a right to impose it on themselves. The fact that the mayor of Perth was asking this committee to grant power to borrow the money should be a sufficient assurance that the money was required for the city. As for the apathy of ratepayers, that would not last for ever, particularly if the burden of rating increased.

MR. GEORGE: In speaking about the City Council, hon. members should not allow themselves to be led by the newspaper organ of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), which only threw mud at the council in the hope of getting a circulation.

MR. A. FORREST: It would not throw any more now.

MR. GEORGE: The valuation of Perth would continue to increase, and there was nothing to prevent the raising of the loan required. He disagreed with those who said this was not a question which Parliament generally had a right to discuss; for this was, in effect, a proposal to pledge the credit of 25 per cent. of the inhabitants of the colony.

MR. SOLOMON said the population of Fremantle, which was not more than half that of Perth, had a debt of £60,000; and, seeing that the Perth municipal debt was only £80,000, it was palpable that the city was entitled to increase its debt considerably before it could be said to have exceeded the limit of prudence.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

#### EXCESS BILL, 1897.

#### SECOND READING (MOVED).

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I rise to move the second reading of what is termed the Excess Bill, for the year ending June, 1897. This terrible Bill, which we have heard something about during the session, has been before hon. members for some time. I am glad to say to-night we have the Auditor General's report on the table, so that we are in a position to deal with this matter. I do not propose to ask hon. members to assent to the second reading to-night, but it is just as well I should make the few observations I have to make in regard to it, so that these may be considered at the same time as the Auditor General's report. No doubt it may appear to hon. members that the excess is a large one as shown in the Bill, being no less a sum than £655,734; but I may point out that if the Government had so desired they might have considerably reduced this excess, and still kept within the law. Hon. members, if they refer to the Audit Act of 1891, will see that the 17th section provides:

If the exigencies of the public service render it necessary to alter the proportions assigned to the particular items comprised under any one subdivision in the annual supplies, it shall be lawful for the Governor-in-Council to order that there shall be applied, in aid of any item that may be deficient, a further sum out of any surplus arising on other items in the same subdivision; and every such order shall be delivered to the said Auditor General, and a copy thereof shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament within fourteen days after the signing thereof, if Parliament is then sitting, and if not, within fourteen days after the next meeting of Parliament.

Well, the first time there was an excess of expenditure—in 1892 I think it was—the Government applied that pro-

vision to the accounts; but it was a practice I did not like, and therefore I abandoned it. Hon. members will further notice that in the Excess Bills that have come before Parliament from that time to the present, every item on the Estimates from one end to the other shows whether the amount voted was expended, or whether there was an excess or an underdraft. If hon. members look at the Estimates before them, and compare them with Appendices (b) and (c) of the Auditor General's report, they will see that every item on the Estimates shows whether or not there has been an excess. For the sake of explanation, we will take the very first item in the Estimates—"Incidental expenses (including travelling expenses) in His Excellency the Governor's establishment." In that item there was an excess expenditure of £34 Os. 11d. In Item No. 8, "Incidental expenses" in the Estimates, page 17, it will be seen that the amount voted was £100, and that the amount spent was £134 Os. 11d., showing the very excess which appears from the Auditor General's report. And so it goes on through the Estimates. Hon. members may say they had not the Excess Bill for last year before them until this session, but, as a fact, they have had it before them in the Estimates submitted to Parliament. These Estimates show, not only the vote but the actual expenditure during the financial year on every item, and also show the amount expected to be required for the coming year. This Excess Bill, as I have said, provides for £655,734 on account of the consolidated revenue of the colony. But there are underdrafts of £536,672, so that the actual amount we expended more than we had authority for was, in the total, £119,062. The revenue of the country increased very considerably above the Estimates during last year. The estimated revenue was £2,425,000; whereas the amount we received was £2,842,751; being no less a sum than £417,751 more than was anticipated. The expenditure was estimated at £2,720,390, but the actual expenditure was £2,839,453; showing a difference of £119,063. As I have already said, had we applied Section 17 of the Audit Act, almost the whole of this excess would have been wiped out; but I think the plan we adopt is the better one.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Audit Act does not contemplate such an expenditure as this.

THE PREMIER: I think it does

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No, no.

THE PREMIER: I think it does, although I do not believe in that law myself. Let us look at some of the causes of the excess. The expenditure under the head of "Medical" is one over which we had not very much control, under the circumstances which existed last year. We had an excess of £42,886 and an underdraft on that item of £3,387. On the Police, there was an excess expenditure of £9,487 and on that item there was an underdraft of £2,389. On Customs there was an excess of £6,943; and, as everyone knows the Customs department was taxed to the utmost last year, it will not be surprising that there has been an excess expenditure in that department. There was, on the other hand, an underdraft of £1,619. Under the head of "Miscellaneous" there was an excess of £125,871 over the vote, while the underdraft amounted to £6,785. It will be as well to refer to some of those items under the head of "Miscellaneous" in order to enable hon. members to judge whether the Government could very well have avoided the expenditure. On page 291 it will be seen that a lot of money was spent in buying, for the purposes of a central police station, a site which was in the market. It is true that the building has not yet been commenced, but we have acquired a magnificent site, and a station is very much required. I think there is something on the Estimates this year for the purpose of making a commencement. We bought Perth Town Lot Y23 for £4,276; the north-east moiety of lot W24 for £1,300, and lot V25 for £6,160. All this expenditure was in the purchase of a site for a police station, and I think the site obtained is one of the best in Perth for the purpose. There was £14,330 for incidental expenses, the items of which are set forth on page 290 in some detail. Amongst these items are exchange on bank drafts, London and Westminster Bank interest, interest on advance to loan funds, and other items. The Government increased the subsidy to municipalities to the extent of £14,833. That was not under our control, as the Government have to pay one pound for every

pound subscribed by the various municipalities. There was £8,000 for the Whitty Falls site for a lunatic asylum, and that expenditure was not arrived at until after due consideration by a Commission.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Had the Government no other land?

THE PREMIER: None suitable for the purpose.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Oh, dear!

THE PREMIER: At any rate, a Commission was appointed to consider the matter, and it reported unanimously in favour of the site, and the Government acted on that advice. Then there was the resumption of land at Mount Eliza for the Perth Park, and for which more was paid than it was worth.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was worth about £3,000.

THE PREMIER: It was worth about £4,000, and we paid £15,206 for it, which was a very large amount. I do not suppose the Government would have bought it if they had known they would have to pay so much. But I do not regret the expenditure, because I believe in days to come future generations will bless the Government for having secured the view of Perth water from Mount Eliza. Page 292 of the Auditor General's report records a whole sheet of grants to the towns on the goldfields. The sanitation grants, which number about fifty, range from £2,000 to £50. On page 293 are shown a great many other grants for clearing the streets and improving goldfields townsites. The celebrations in commemoration of Her Majesty's diamond jubilee cost £11,353, and the total expenditure under the head of "miscellaneous" was £125,871. Hon. members may think that the goldfields have made great demands on the Treasury. It must be remembered, however, that in a great many cases the Government received large sums for town sites, and it would seem hard indeed if some portion of that money could not be devoted to clearing the streets and promoting sanitation in the different mining localities.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: These were main streets—main roads?

THE PREMIER: No doubt a lot of money has been spent on the goldfields, but it had to be expended in order to do

justice to those parts of the colony. Now we come to the Railways and Trains. There is £140,372 excess expenditure under this head, and £37,176 underdraft. If hon. members, on looking through the item, see where any expenditure could be avoided, they see more than I can. I see no reason why this money should not have been expended. The revenue much exceeded the estimate, and as more work was done, more money was required. Item 166, on page 295 of the Auditor General's report, shows £32,647 for wages of guards, porters, etc.; and item 171 shows £14,622 for materials and incidental expenses. The item 191 is £11,229, for materials and incidental expenses. Hon. members will see that there are matters on which it would be impossible for the Treasurer to curtail the expenditure. Other items I might instance are No. 329, guards, porters, etc., £17,076 12s. 4d., and No. 357, materials and incidental expenses, £5,038, and so the figures go on until the total of £140,372 is reached. We must not forget that, although the Railway department spent more than was estimated, there are underdrafts of £37,176 to be deducted, and that the department did a very large business and made an immense profit during the year. The business was much larger than was anticipated, and, if more money was spent, more money was made. It was a very successful financial year indeed for the Railway department. Now we come to Public Buildings, in which we find an excess of £56,829; but there were underdrafts amounting to £160,729, so that although we spent £58,129 without authority, we left undone what we ought to have done to the amount of £160,729. Hon. members can look at the items, and see how the amount is made up. Then we come to public buildings, £110,119. Hon. members can see for themselves that there were underdrafts amounting to £173,603, so that a considerable amount less was expended than was voted. In Lands and Surveys the excess is £15,287—no one can grumble at that; and there was an underdraft of £2,066. In the Mining department £32,361 was spent more than was voted, but the underdrafts amounted to £9,765. In the Postal department there was an excess of £44,992, while the underdrafts amounted to £55,723. Then there were

interest and sinking fund in excess of £36,335, and underdrafts amounting to £35,232. Hon. members will see, when they come to analyse the figures and look at the Auditor General's report, which gives in detail the reasons, that it will puzzle anyone to put his finger on an item and say, "Here is money which has been expended, and should not have been expended in the interest of the country." With regard to the Loan Estimates, hon. members know very well the excess was £92,149, but there were underdrafts to a considerable amount. How was this £92,149 used? For additional improvements to opened railways, £25,797; harbour works, Fremantle, £52,770; charges and expenses of raising loans, £10,327, and some other smaller items which amounted to £92,149. I hope hon. members opposite, as well as those sitting on this side of the House, will look into the accounts. I hold myself responsible for all these excesses, and I do not think hon. members will be able to find very much to find fault with. I admit more than anyone else that the Excess Bill this year is very large. The lateness of the session has a great deal to do with this. When we meet in June next we shall not have an Excess Bill like the one I am moving the second reading of this evening: in fact, I do not think we shall have an Excess Bill at all. We have got into more regular times now, and there is not the hurry-scurry and block at Fremantle which we had in the early part of last year, when everything was upside down. Things have settled down now, and I do not think we shall have an Excess Bill next year—well, scarcely anything to speak about. We are getting a tighter hold on our financial arrangements. There is one thing I have never done. Whatever may be said about spending money without authority, it can never be said I spent money we had not got. We always had the money, and when a man has plenty of money he is not so tight-fisted as when he has not the money. That is one of the reasons why last year and the year before I complied far more willingly than I did before. I should not have been able to comply at all if we had not had the money. The requests made for the goldfields, for telegraph lines, tanks and postal services, were willingly complied with because we had the money. The

money which had come was largely due to the influx of population and to the goldfields, and the Government had to be equal to the occasion. If we have expended money without authority, we have not spent money we had not got. Last year we expected to finish up with a credit balance of £16,000, but we finished up with £300,000 in hand, which must be as satisfactory to hon. members as it is to me. If I had to come and ask hon. members to sanction an excess expenditure of £120,000, money which we had not got, that would have been a much more serious matter than asking the House to sanction an Excess Bill of £655,734, when we have underdrafts to the amount of £536,672. It is only reasonable and fair to the Government to consider the conditions which existed last year, when such a great impetus was given to everything: there was a large increase of revenue, and consequently a large increase of expenditure. The Government estimated to receive last year £2,425,000, and we did receive £2,842,751. The estimated expenditure was £2,720,390, and the actual expenditure was £2,839,453. In other words, we expended £119,000 more than we expected to expend, and we received £417,000 more than we expected to receive, and we wound up the year with £300,000 more than we anticipated. Hon. members, on looking at the Auditor General's report and the Bill, will come to the conclusion that, having the money we had, there was only one course open to us. We could have called Parliament together and asked for authority to expend the money, but we were not justified in sitting down and not expending the money, when the people who had done so much to promote the prosperity of the country were in need of it. I beg to move the second reading of this Bill.

On the motion of Mr. Leake, the debate was adjourned until the next Monday.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:55 p.m., until the next day.