

COOLGARDIE WATER SUPPLY LOAN  
BILL.

## SECOND READING—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: I move that this Order of the Day be discharged and made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: I think it is most unfair to country members who have come to town especially for the purpose of considering this Bill. Besides this, I think it is better that we should get on with the work.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I can only say that I am entirely in the hands of the House, and if a majority of hon. members wish to adjourn in order to hear in another place the most important speech of the session I shall offer no objection.

THE HON. J. H. TAYLOR: I shall oppose the adjournment. I am a country member, being 380 miles from here. I have come down twice for the purpose of taking part in the discussion, and I think it only fair that we should go on.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): Under our Standing Orders the question for the adjournment of the debate must be put without discussion.

Question, That the Order of the Day be discharged, and made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House, put.

The House divided with the following result:—

|      |     |     |     |   |
|------|-----|-----|-----|---|
| Ayes | ... | ... | ... | 8 |
| Noes | ... | ... | ... | 6 |

Majority for ... 2

| AYES.                   | NOES.                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| The Hon. D. K. Congdon  | The Hon. H. Briggs        |
| The Hon. C. E. Dempster | The Hon. R. G. Burgess    |
| The Hon. E. McLarty     | The Hon. E. S. Haynes     |
| The Hon. S. H. Parker   | The Hon. A. B. Kidson     |
| The Hon. C. A. Piessie  | The Hon. J. E. Richardson |
| The Hon. W. Spencer     | The Hon. J. H. Taylor     |
| The Hon. F. M. Stone    | (Teller).                 |
| The Hon. S. J. Haynes   |                           |
| (Teller).               |                           |

Order of the Day discharged, and made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House, at 8:10 o'clock, p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, 2nd September, 1896, at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 27th August, 1896.

Question: Assistance to establish Wineries—Companies Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Criminal Evidence Bill: third reading—Streets and Roads (Greenmount and Marble Bar) Closure Bill: in committee—Supply of Water to Municipalities &c. Bill: first reading—Annual Estimates and Financial Statement: in Committee of Supply—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

## PRAYERS.

## QUESTION—ASSISTANCE TO ESTABLISH WINERIES.

MR. CLARKSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether the Government are willing to assist in the establishment of wineries in the larger vine-growing districts of the colony. If so, to what extent?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied: No final decision has yet been arrived at. The Government are in sympathy with the idea.

## COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## THIRD READING.

Bill read a third time, and *passed*.

## CRIMINAL EVIDENCE BILL.

## THIRD READING.

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

## STREETS AND ROADS (GREENMOUNT AND MARBLE BAR) CLOSURE BILL.

The House went into committee to consider the Bill.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Schedule:

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) explained that two verbal errors in the printing of the Schedule had occurred. (Errors corrected accordingly.) Referring to the proposed closure of a road at Marble Bar, he said the particular road had been diverted because a better route was found available. As to the proposed closure at Greenmount near Smith's Mill, the contour of the country was such that the road originally marked on the map

would be too costly to make, and a more practicable route having now been surveyed, it was intended to make a road along that route and close the other road.

Put and passed.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Report adopted.

#### SUPPLY OF WATER TO MUNICIPALITIES &c. BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

At 4:50 o'clock, on the motion of the PREMIER, the SPEAKER left the chair (in anticipation of the Financial Statement).

At 7:30 p.m. the SPEAKER resumed the chair.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1896-97.

A Message from His Excellency the Governor, transmitting the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year 1896-97, was presented and read.

#### THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

##### IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

The House having resolved itself into Committee of Supply, to consider His Excellency's Message and the Annual Estimates, Mr. Traylen took the chair.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said: Mr. Traylen, Sir—This is the seventh occasion on which I have had the honour and pleasure of introducing the annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure to this House, and of placing before hon. members the financial position of the colony. On every one of these occasions, I am glad to be able to say, I have had a very good account to give of our present position and future prospects.

##### *Review of the Past.*

We all know that on the first occasion—in February, 1891—the colony was not in anything like the position it is in at the present time; but, for all that, the Government which I have the honour to represent took a sanguine view of the colony's future, and advocated what I think we then termed a bold policy, with

the object of increasing the facilities of transit throughout our territory, and of placing our producers in a position to compete with producers in other parts of the world. From that day up to the present time the revenue of the colony has been steadily increasing, some times more rapidly than at other times; but still I think I may say the revenue of the colony from that date has been increasing at a rate which has given satisfaction to the members of this House. On that occasion I estimated the revenue for the year 1891 at £444,165, while for the financial year which ended on the 30th June last the revenue actually received by the Treasury was £1,858,694. On other occasions I have taken a sanguine view of the future, and have been able to place before hon. members a statement of our condition which, as I have just said, has given satisfaction to this House; but to-night, sir, I have the pleasure and the honour to place before hon. members a state of things which, I think, has been rarely equalled in any country. In analysing the figures, as I have had to do during the last few days, I have been carried along from point to point, each position appearing even more satisfactory than the former one. I regret that, to-night, I have a long task before me; but I feel sure I will not ask in vain for a careful hearing, while I do my best to place the financial position clearly before this House and the country.

##### *Population and Increase.*

First of all, sir, I shall deal with the question of population. A country cannot be great, and cannot be progressive, unless it has a considerable population. On June 30, 1895, the population of the colony was estimated to be 89,550, on June 30 this year it had reached 122,420, an increase in 12 months of 32,870. If we compare for a moment the present population with what it was on June 30th, 1890, just before this Government came into office, and just before we obtained what is known as Responsible Government, we find that we have increased during the six years from 44,758 to 122,420, an increase of 77,662, or a little over a thousand a month as an average from that date up to the present time. And, up to a year ago, I remember that the average of a thousand a month

had for some time been going on fairly regularly, but during the past year it has nearly reached an average of three thousand a month. As hon. members know, during that year we have attracted some of the best men from the Eastern colonies, who come here in search of business and in search of fortune, and almost every business firm of eminence in the Eastern colonies has, I am glad to say, turned its attention towards us, and the cry is "still they come."

*Past Year's Revenue—A Comparison.*

The revenue for the past year, as hon. members are, no doubt, aware, has been very satisfactory. We began the year with a credit balance of £277,232; the estimated revenue that I placed before hon. members, and which was approved of by this House, was £1,311,150, while the actual revenue received was £1,858,695, an increase over my estimate of £547,545. From my point of view this is indeed very satisfactory. I have no doubt some hon. members may think that it was not a very good estimate, or very good financing, when it was out by such a large sum as £547,545, but I think that so long as the Treasurer, whoever he may be, whether myself or anyone else, is able to place before hon. members the tale I will be able to place before them to-night, they will not be very hard upon him in that he estimated the revenue at very much less than was afterwards obtained. I think not only this House will perhaps forgive him, but I am sure the people of the colony will also do so. It is not very easy, I think—though some persons more gifted than myself may be able to do it—in a colony that is marching at such rapid strides as the colony is at present, to estimate with certainty what the revenue for the coming year will be, and if I err at all I would myself rather err on the side of under-estimating than over-estimating the revenue. The main increases during the year were on the following items:—Customs was estimated at £560,000; it realised £780,901, an increase of £220,901. Land revenue was estimated at £113,700; it realised £151,573, an increase of £37,873. Mining was estimated at £78,800; it realised £135,168, an in-

crease of £56,368. Postages were estimated at £41,500; they realised £63,802, an increase of £22,302. Telegrams were estimated at £45,500; they realised £83,330, an increase of £37,830. Railways were estimated at £360,000; they realised £472,035, an increase of £112,035. Water receipts were estimated at £14,500; and realised £30,000, an increase of £15,500. The stamp revenue was estimated at £30,000; it realised £58,696, an increase of £28,696, and from the smaller items of revenue we received excesses on the estimates, amounting, in all, to £16,040, making up, as I have just stated, an increase on revenue over the estimate of £547,545. Comparing the revenue of the past year, which was £1,858,695, with the preceding year's revenue of £1,125,941, we see the extraordinary increase of £732,754, and if we remember for a moment, and I am sure many of us will remember it, that when we undertook self-government, we had a revenue of only £414,000, surely there is good reason to be satisfied with our present circumstances.

*Past Year's Expenditure.*

The expenditure, sir, for the past year was in keeping with the revenue. I believe you will always find it the case that, however great the revenue, the expenditure will increase with it. The increase of revenue brings increased responsibilities, and that will be seen, I am sure, by hon. members throughout this statement which I make to-night. It will be shown that, while the revenue is increasing, the demands on it are also increasing. The estimated expenditure last year was £1,572,506, and the actual expenditure £1,823,863, showing an increase over estimate of £251,357. Now, sir, seeing that the revenue was £1,858,695, and the expenditure £1,823,863, there was a saving on the year of £34,832. We spent £34,832 less than we received, which, I think, taking all the circumstances of the colony into consideration, is eminently satisfactory. As you all know, we began the year with a credit balance of £277,232, and therefore that amount added to the saving on the year (£34,832) represents the credit balance that we had on June 30th last of £312,064. The principal increases of expenditure over the esti-

mate are made up of the following:—The Medical Department spent £21,896 more than the estimate. The reason, of course, as hon. members are aware, is not far to seek. With the large population existing on the goldfields, and the prevalence of sickness upon the fields, caused, I have no doubt, to a very large extent by hardship and by want of water, and consequent want of cleanliness, it is not surprising, in fact I wonder the medical vote did not exceed the estimate by a greater sum than £21,896. We have a great deal to do on the goldfields, as hon. members know, in trying to cope with sickness prevalent there in the summer time, and the Government have desired to be liberal. We have not tried to pinch in that direction, and, while keeping a tight hand on the purse, we have tried to be liberal and do all that was possible for the suffering people on the goldfields, and I am surprised that the excess has not been greater than £21,896. In the police vote one might have expected a larger increase, but £5,186 has only been exceeded by the Police Department over the estimates for last year. The Admiralty Survey, which was a new item, and included the purchase of the steamship *Victoria*, by which the survey has been carried on very much more quickly and economically, has cost £10,844, for which there was no vote. Customs exceeded the estimate by £6,086, and Miscellaneous Services by £55,511. This £55,511 was made up in part by Sanitation Grants on the goldfields £9,972, the purchase of land, principally in the city of Perth £32,314, and excesses on the Municipal Grant of pound for pound on their revenue, of £6,313, and other small items. Railways and Tramways exceeded the estimate by £40,067. Works and Buildings by £53,580, Postal and Telegraphs by £47,909, and the Mining Department by £6,547. This accounts for a sum of £247,626, and the remaining excesses of expenditure over the estimate amounting to £5,930, are distributed over other items of the Estimates of expenditure. There is one very pleasant fact I wish to record to-night, and I am sure it will be as agreeable to the House as it is to myself. Leaving out the amount expended on the hospitals, which no one can prevent under existing circumstances, as people getting

ill must be attended to, I am glad to be able to relate that the charitable relief vote for the year ended June 30th has exceeded the vote of the previous year by only £853, and has exceeded the estimate by only £691. I think this speaks to us in a way we most desire. It shows that the strong, the self-reliant, and the able-bodied have come to this colony to seek their fortunes, and have left the weak and those in ill health behind them. It is quite clear, from this statement, that few—comparatively few—of the persons who have come to this colony to seek their fortunes have as yet become a burden on the state.

#### *Reasons for Excess Expenditure.*

The expenditure, which I have just stated to have been £1,823,863, no doubt will look very large to hon. members—it is nearly double what the expenditure was for the previous year viz., £936,729. This expenditure exceeded the estimated expenditure by over a quarter of a million, viz., by £251,357, so that hon. members will know that when the next Excess Bill comes before this House, it will be very large, as compared with the Excess Bill of other years. I may say, however, that when the accounts are placed before hon. members in a state in which they can be scrutinised, I feel sure that, taking into consideration the rapid developments, and the circumstances that have surrounded the colony for the last 12 months, the judgment of this House and the judgment of the country will be that the past financial year was not a time when the Government should have hidden their money in a napkin. The Government have tried, during the past year, to keep pace with great changes in the circumstances of this colony which have been going on for the last four or five years, more particularly during the past year. We have been compelled, we have been absolutely compelled, and we have not hesitated, to take the responsibility upon ourselves, to spend large sums of money without the authority of this House, as you may see from the figures I have put before you. We have tried to be economical, and I am quite sure that, when the accounts are before you, there will be very few items indeed, if any, that hon. members can place their

fingers upon and say that the Government have not been careful and economical. For myself and my colleagues, and more particularly for myself, I say I am prepared to justify in this House every item of the expenditure that we have incurred without Parliamentary sanction. The estimated credit balance on the 30th June last, as hon. members are aware, was £15,876; but notwithstanding that we have expended £251,357 above our estimate of expenditure, there was a credit balance on the 30th of June this year of £312,064, instead of £15,876, as we had estimated. It used to be a favorite theme in this House and out of it that the Government were living beyond their means, that we were spending more money than we were receiving; and a good deal of trouble and ingenuity was displayed in trying to prove the fact, but the reply I have always been able to give, and the reply I give now, is that it is impossible for the Government to be spending more money than it has received, for when we entered upon our duties as a Government, at the beginning of 1891, there was a credit balance in the Treasury of £45,600; whereas on the 30th June of this year we had a credit balance of £312,064. I think these facts will conclusively show that we have not been spending more money than we have been receiving, or living beyond our means. We have, therefore, during the six years we have been in office, notwithstanding that we have borrowed £3,376,000, been not only living within our means but have increased our credit balance from £45,600 to £312,064—surely this is satisfactory.

#### *Imports and Increases.*

There are several other important matters I have to deal with in order to place hon. members in a position to understand, as far as I am able to place it before them, the financial position of the colony, before I come to what is, no doubt, the more interesting part of my statement, that dealing with the future. I will refer now to the question of the imports, and the exports, which, among other matters, I have to place before hon. members. I may say that, while our financial year ends on the 30th June, the year for which the imports and exports are made up ends on the 31st of Decem-

ber; therefore it is not so convenient, or indeed possible, to bring matters up to date so well, for comparison as if all our calculations were made on the one basis. The imports for the past year—that is the year ending 31st December last—have, as everyone is aware, increased enormously. This is not to be wondered at seeing the large population that has been attracted to the colony, and the immense quantity of machinery which has been imported for our railways and also for our mines, besides the immense importations generally. The total value of imports for the year ended December last was £3,774,951, as against £2,114,414 for the previous year, making an increase in our imports for the year 1895 amounting to £1,660,537. A few of the principal items I will quote for the information of hon. members. The gold imports, that is sovereigns, amounted in value to £926,770, as against £239,900 for the previous year. This shows that we received back in sovereigns all the gold we sent away. I never pose as a political economist, but I have no doubt there are a good many persons in this House who fancy they are, and who probably may be political economists; and it will be an interesting fact for them to consider this question and work it out, and perhaps they may inform us, by and by, how it comes about that, while our exports are so much less than our imports, all this gold that we send away should also find its way back into the coffers of the banks here. For my own part, I will not do more than mention the fact. The imports of apparel and drapery in the year ended December last, were valued at £353,593, as against £224,034 for the imports of these articles in the previous year. The imports of railway plant were of the value of £180,734, as against £144,293 for the previous year. We imported beer, wines, and spirits of the value of £179,667, as against £125,714 in the previous year. It would appear, from these facts, that the people who are coming to this colony are not all teetotalers.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They are drinking champagne now.

MR. SIMPSON: Because they cannot get water.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Probably the

scarcity of water on the fields may have something to do with it. Ironmongery and hardware were imported to the value of £152,778, as against £107,291 in the previous year; and machinery was imported to the value of £171,857, as against £59,370 in the previous year. The most unsatisfactory fact, in looking through these returns of imports is the large increase of articles of food capable of being produced in the colony. That is a fact which I regret to have had to relate on many occasions, but I believe, and feel sure, that this state of things will not long continue, and that, seeing the good prices ruling, every effort is being and will be made to supply the local market.

#### *Exports and Signs of Improvement.*

The exports, although fairly satisfactory, are not increasing in anything like the scale of our imports. The exports for the year ended December last were valued at £1,332,554, as against £1,251,406 for the previous year, showing an increase of £81,148. This is made up in the following way:—Gold, £879,748; copper, £12,952; tin, £9,703; pearls and pearlshells, £47,298; sandalwood—and I am glad to say the sandalwood export is recovering to some extent—amounted to £30,863; wool, £202,098; and timber, £88,146. I am glad, indeed, to know, as hon. members also know, that a great trade is rising up in regard to our timber. In fact, it seems to me the demand for our jarrah and karri timber in London and other large cities, for paving, will have such an effect that probably in a short time this will be one of our greatest items of export. I think nothing could be more encouraging than that; and a great deal of it is due to the fact that we have given means of communication to so many places in the colony where the best jarrah exists, which hitherto it was impossible to work. All along the South-Western Railway, and the railway to Donnybrook, as well as along the railway to the Collie Coalfields, just about to be commenced, and along the railway to Bridgetown—splendid jarrah country exists. With these increasing railway facilities I look forward to a very large increase in this valuable export. I hope we will not leave it

only to the citizens of London and the citizens of Chicago and other places to use this wood for paving, but that in our own colony, particularly in the city of Perth and the town of Fremantle, we may see the municipal councils taking advantage of this wonderfully suitable product. I should like to say, with regard to the wool export, that there were two shipments, amounting to 1,835,141 lbs., not included in the returns of wool exports for the year, as these ships did not leave until after the year had closed. The export of wool, therefore, as the clip for the year 1895, should be 10,115,694 lbs. avoirdupois, as against 9,432,876 lbs. for the previous year, showing we have increased our wool production by 682,818 lbs. I am glad indeed to be able to record this fact. When I first saw the figures it was very disheartening; but, after investigating them and consulting with the Collector of Customs, I am able to show that, notwithstanding all the difficulties the pastoral occupiers in the North have had to contend with, they seem to be holding their own in the matter of wool production, and I hope the increase will continue.

#### *Shipping Trade.*

The shipping trade is an index to the general trade of the colony, and I am glad to say the shipping has increased very largely in the past year. During the year ended December last, 918 ships, having a total tonnage of 1,578,553 tons, came to the colony, being an increase of 197 ships and 249,475 tons over the returns of the previous year. I should like, before I leave this part of my subject, to place on record my appreciation of the valuable and carefully prepared report of the Collector of Customs, which I have had to refer to, and from which I have gained the information I have placed before the House.

#### *Banking Institutions and Deposits.*

In every year, in dealing with the finances of the colony, it has been customary for me to make a few observations in regard to the banking business and the position of the Banks doing business here. This is a very important matter, and will be of interest to hon. members. On June 30, 1895, there was

in the local banks gold to the amount of £1,128,037, and on the same date this year the banks held gold to the amount of £2,305,401, showing an increase of £1,177,365 in twelve months. There was also on deposit in the banks on June 30 this year £4,347,572, as against £2,272,826 last year, or an increase of £2,074,746. It appears, therefore, when we see the banks increase their indebtedness to the public to the extent of £2,074,746 that there must be a good deal of money in circulation and that the people have been able to greatly increase their deposits. It does not appear, however, that the banks have increased their advances to any great extent, as the increase is not much over £100,000.

*The Post Office Savings Bank and Deposits.*

Another item of interest, I think, and also an item that is satisfactory, is that dealing with the transactions of the Government Post Office Savings Bank. Hon. members of course recollect that we have from time to time altered the Act dealing with the Post Office Savings Bank, giving greater facilities to persons to invest in the bank, and allowing a larger amount to be placed there by a single depositor. The amount that a single depositor can place in the bank in one year is, £150, and he cannot deposit more than £600 altogether. That arrangement has, I think, worked very well. The position of this bank should be of very great interest to hon. members as it is to the Government. We all know that any one who deposits his funds in the Post Office Savings Bank has as his security the consolidated revenue of the colony, so that, so long as there is a shilling in the Treasury, so long is the depositor certain of being paid. This Savings Bank money has not been utilised in the best way in the past; and I think it may be utilised in a better way and more to the advantage of the community. The Government, in order to effect the better use of this money, have introduced a measure during this session providing for its being more usefully and profitably employed. During last year the transactions of the Savings Bank showed a large increase. On 30th June, 1895, there were only 8,323 accounts

open, while on 30th June of this year there were 16,160 accounts open, or an increase of 7,837, which must be considered satisfactory. On 30th June, 1895, the Government owed to the depositors in this bank £221,815, while on 30th June this year the amount due to them was £460,610, being an increase during the year of £238,795, the deposits having, in fact, more than doubled in amount. The total amount of deposits received during the year was £520,015, as against £217,930 for the previous year. The withdrawals amounted to £291,744, as against £143,679 for the previous year. This, I think, is a wonderful record, and if hon. members carefully examine the figures they will come to the same conclusion as I have come in the moderate amount of time I have been able to give to the subject. Those figures show that the Savings Bank, during the past 12 months, has more than doubled its operations, and looking at the measure that we have passed through this House during the present session for utilising these funds, it seems to me that the Post Office Savings Bank can be made of much more use to the community without in any way endangering its safety.

*The Agricultural Bank.*

I should like to say a word or two in regard to the Agricultural Bank. It is merely a small bank at the present time, having no large transactions. The principal notice that has been taken of it in this House in the past has been for one or two members to sneer at it, but I think the Agricultural Bank and its elder sister, the Homesteads Act, are doing good work in the colony; at any rate, whatever other hon. members may think in regard to these two Acts, there are no two Acts in the statute book that I have had to do with that I am fonder or prouder of than the Agricultural Bank Act and the Homesteads Act. I believe they will remain in force long after I am forgotten, and will be doing their work for the good and advancement of this country long after hon. members and myself have passed away. The Agricultural Bank Act has only commenced its useful career. It has been restricted, as I said the other evening, by limitations contained in its

provisions, but those restrictions are now removed. This Bank has been only 18 months in existence, and the cost of it in that period has amounted to only £1,527. The advances made by it have amounted to only £7,020, but the Manager has promised to advance £11,080 more. For the £7,020 already advanced 4,206 acres of land have been cleared, 2,468 acres have been ploughed, and 6,858 acres have been ringbarked. When the £11,080 which has been promised to applicants shall have been expended, there will be work done on farms, in addition to that I have already mentioned, as follows:—5,074 more acres cleared, 5,466 more acres cultivated, and 6,249 more acres ringbarked. I think, sir, this is a good record for the 18 months' working of this Bank, especially when we take into consideration the restrictions and the difficulties in the way. I believe that this Bank is only beginning its career, and that the amendments that have been made in the Act will add greatly to its usefulness.

#### *Posts and Telegraphs.*

I should like now to deal with a department which has come in for a great amount of, say, hostile criticism from the general public. I refer of course to the Postal Department. This department is not represented in this House by its Minister. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: It ought to be.] We cannot have every one of the Ministers in this House as the other House must have at least one representative of the Government in it. The department of which I am speaking is not represented in this House by its Minister, and therefore I have to take care that the Minister and his officers are not altogether unrepresented nor misrepresented by anyone in this House. This department, as I said before, has come in for a great deal of adverse criticism, some of it probably deserved, but a great deal of it, I am quite sure, not deserved. I will place a few facts before hon. members in order that they may see what this department has had to contend with during the past year. It is all very well to blame the department, but we should not overlook the fact that it has had to deal with an immense rush of work, for which it was not prepared. People may say that the depart-

ment ought to have been prepared; but whatever may be the force of that remark, I do not think there is any department in the public service that has been strained to such an extent as the Postal Department. I am not going back to ancient history; I am only going to deal with the year that closed on December 31, 1895. If I were able to deal with the figures for the last six months, I have no doubt I would be able to show a better case for this department than when dealing only with the year 1895. The figures for the past six months came to me only this afternoon, and I was not able to get them ready for use to-night. The revenue for the year ended 31st December, 1895, of the Postal and Telegraph Department was £112,654, a very large revenue, as hon. members will see; and the expenditure, exclusive of the erection of buildings, was £108,578; these figures showing that the revenue really was a little more than the expenditure. When I came to look at the figures I certainly was amazed at the tremendous number of letters, parcels, and other documents that passed through the post offices during the year. Hon. members will be able to go into these figures when I place the report of the department on the table of the House, as I hope to do, on Tuesday next. I may, however, mention that during the year 1895 17,611,352 letters passed through our post offices, as against 10,843,200 in the previous year, showing an increase of 6,768,152 letters; of newspapers the department dealt with 17,996,387, as against 9,375,589 in the previous year showing an increase of 8,620,798 newspapers. Then, of packets there were carried no less than 4,079,368, as against 3,143,008 for the previous year, showing an increase of 936,360 packets. The total number of telegrams sent during the year 1895 was 720,992, as against 446,780 in the previous year. Of these the intercolonial telegrams showed an increase from 139,933 in 1894 to 232,086 in 1895; while the cablegrams increased from 4,235 in 1894 to 26,150 in 1895. On the 31st December, 1895, there were 4,577 miles of telegraph poles in existence, carrying 5,670 miles of wire, with 88 telegraph stations, including 15 new ones opened during the year.



*A Defence of the Department.*

As I said just now, there is no department in the public service that has had so great a strain put upon it, owing to the rapidity with which its business has increased, as the Postal Department. This strain has arisen, not merely because there has been a large influx of population, but because of the character of that influx. Our increase of population has arisen from adult people coming here from the other colonies to seek their fortunes; and these people are all letter-writers and newspaper readers. They are, for the most part, intelligent men. [Mr. GEORGE: Well educated.] Well, they can all read and write, I suppose, and their correspondence has increased the business of the post office more largely than could be accounted for by an ordinary increase of population. Not only has this department had great difficulties to contend with, but, taking it altogether, those engaged in the postal service have shown—and I say it fearlessly—a devotion to duty that, speaking as the head of the Government, I consider is to be commended. As to the Postmaster General, who has been burnt in effigy, and treated scandalously at times, I know him to be an upright, honest gentleman, and that there is not a more efficient, zealous, or conscientious officer in the Public Service. He has had difficulties of all sorts to contend with from want of accommodation, from the great length of the telegraph lines through uninhabited country, and along coasts near the sea, and from teams knocking down the telegraph poles, injuring the wires for a mile or two, and the drivers never taking the trouble even to report the matter. All these things helped to throw blame on the Postmaster General when he was really not deserving of it. Looking at the large transactions connected with the Money Order Office and the Post Office Savings Bank, besides the post and telegraph business generally, I think very few people have an idea of the magnitude of the operations carried on under the direction of the Postmaster General. Perhaps I speak more warmly than would be necessary if the Minister representing the department were in this House; but I wish to say that, from the Minister

downward, those employed in that great department have shown a devotion to duty which, whatever others may say, I highly appreciate.

*The Pastoral Industry.*

I come now to another subject that is interesting to most of us in this colony, in regard to which I should like to say a few words, and that is the pastoral industry. Last year I had a very disheartening story to relate in regard to this important industry; and even now, although in some parts of the colony the season has been fairly good, in others it has been very bad. Indeed, I know some places in the colony where the drought is as severe at the present time as during the great drought of some years ago. Viewing the pastoral industry altogether, there is an improvement in the position, caused by the improved market for meat, owing to the increase of population, and also to the increase in the price of wool. Last year I had a good deal to say in regard to this industry, but I do not propose to say very much to-night, except that I fear the position of the pastoralists in the North is not, even now, satisfactory. Last year I drew attention—and felt justified in doing it, although some persons might think it was a matter that did not concern the Government—to the action of some financial institutions in continuing to heap interest on compound interest upon the half ruined pastoralists. I do not know that what I said then has had any great effect on those institutions; but what is the use of their continuing to heap interest on compound interest half-yearly when, by doing so, they are only deferring the day of reckoning? That is the position of the pastoralists in the North. The financial institutions may not have acted harshly towards them, but they have gone on accumulating compound interest on interest, so that the case of the pastoralists is made almost hopeless. I have had an interview with some of them, and I said I should like to give the pastoralists some hope that, if they would do so and so, the financial institutions would meet them in an accommodating way. I believe, however, that, with very few exceptions, nothing has been done in that direction. I believe one of the local institutions did give

some concession; but I think that, as a rule, the action of the financial institutions towards the pastoralists is something like this, that they make heavy charges for commissions of every conceivable kind, and that heavy interest and compound interest continues to be added half-yearly to the debt. I am sure it will not ultimately benefit those financial institutions to go on in this way. I should like them to wipe off all the interest that has accumulated, leaving the debt as it stood to be paid by the pastoralists. By taking that course I believe that, not only would they save many a good man from ruin but would ultimately benefit themselves. If there is any class in this colony who deserve the sympathy of members of Parliament, it is those persons who, having taken up pastoral areas, live far away from the centres of population and lead isolated and comfortless lives; men who, after years of toil and struggle and difficulty, find themselves burdened with debt and surrounded with embarrassment, so that not only have they to contend with bad seasons from time to time, but they are weighted with a load of debt, which they have little hope of being able to pay off.

#### *Land Settlement and Revenue.*

Speaking for a moment in regard to the area of land held under lease from the Crown, I find the area of pastoral occupation in 1886 was 128 million acres, and in 1895 the area under pastoral lease was only 86 million acres, and I am not sure that it will not get less still. The conditional purchasers, I am glad to say, do not suffer in the same way, for they have increased the total area held from 485,947 acres at the end of 1894 to 525,019 acres at the end of 1895. Homestead farms have increased in total area from 11,583 acres to 21,743 acres, and the number of persons holding homestead farms has increased from 81 persons to 150; showing that 69 new settlers have taken advantage of this liberal and excellent law. The land revenue of the colony for 1895 amounted to £153,412, as against £85,492 for the present year, and in these figures the land sales are included. The principal reason for this considerable increase is the large number of town land sales on the

goldfields. The area of land under cultivation in the colony at the end of 1895 was 218,239 acres, being an increase of 25,042 acres over the previous year. This is satisfactory, though I do not know it is quite as satisfactory as could be desired; still we are not going backward in regard to cultivation, for we have got 25,042 acres more under cultivation than we had last year. The number of horses in the colony at the end of 1895 was 58,506, being an increase of 8,505; the number of sheep at the end of 1895 was 2,295,832, being an increase of 163,521; the number of cattle at the end of 1895 was 200,091, showing an increase of 12,877. I may explain, in regard to these statistics of stock and cultivation, that for a long time past this House and the Government have not been altogether satisfied with the way in which these statistics were collected; and the Government propose this year, and have made provision on the estimates, to introduce a more accurate system of collecting stock and produce returns. I am not willing to place too much reliance on the returns as obtained at present, though I believe every care has been taken that was practicable.

#### *Public Works in Progress or Completed.*

Among the public works now in hand, I may mention that the Royal Mint and the Observatory, in Perth, have been commenced, and I hope that both these buildings, in which I take a great personal interest, will soon be completed. I am quite sure the establishment of an Observatory in this colony will do an immense deal of good, and will not only be a great satisfaction to everyone in the colony, but will raise us to some extent in the estimation of the scientific world. Then, with regard to the Mint, it will give some prestige to the colony, and also be a most useful institution, for I believe it will save a considerable amount of expense to the producers of gold which they have had hitherto to pay. It will also remove one difficulty we have in dealing with the returns of gold exported, for there are many complaints at present as to gold not being sent away immediately it is delivered for export, and there appear to be delays from one cause or another, and some is never entered at all. There

may possibly be credited to one month some gold that has been produced in the month before, and so on, whereas, when we have the Mint in Perth, the returns received for each month will be far more reliable than at present. During the year we have completed a magnificent lighthouse at Rottnest Island, and the lighthouse at Cape Leenwin is nearly completed, and before the end of the year will be altogether completed and in use. I think these two important lighthouses, having an influence far beyond the limits of the colony, are works we may all be proud of. I remember when I first introduced to this House the Bill providing for the erection of the Cape Leenwin Lighthouse, I said it would be our tribute to the people of the Eastern colonies of Australia who had assisted us to obtain self-government. I have always kept to that view, and when asked by people why the other colonies should not be requested to contribute to the construction and upkeep of that important lighthouse, I have always said "No; this is the one great work which we will construct and maintain ourselves, and it shall be there as a tribute to the people of the Eastern colonies who assisted us when we required assistance in obtaining self-government." I am quite sure that, besides being an assistance to ships trading along our coast, these two important lighthouses will be a benefit for all time to the thousands coming to Australia, and will thus prove a national blessing.

*The Future Revenue for 1896-7.*

I have now dealt with nearly all the items I intend to mention with reference to the past. It is always much more agreeable to deal with the future which no one knows of, rather than with the past that everyone has had some experience in regard to. Having now dealt with the past, I will refer to the future, dealing with the revenue and expenditure for the current year and with our prospects. I have already told hon. members, in a preceding part of my speech, that we began the financial year (1st July, 1896) with a credit balance of £312,064. The revenue for the current financial year ending 30th June, 1897, is estimated at £2,425,000, being £566,305 more than the actual revenue received last year, and more than my estimate for last year

by £1,113,850. The estimate, therefore, that I made last year, on the 8th August, is just a little more than half the amount of the estimated revenue for the current year. Hon. members who have sat in this House many years, and who are conversant with the affairs of the colony during the last twenty or thirty years, or longer, when they look back on the past and think of the struggles and trials of the early colonists, and when they reflect on the days when Governor Weld was here, and Mr. (afterwards Sir Frederick) Barlee was Colonial Secretary, a period which many of us, and I for one, very well remember, and also reflect that, at that time, the revenue of the colony was not much over £100,000 a year, may realise what a change indeed has come over the country, when I am able to inform hon. members that the revenue estimated to be received in the current year is £2,425,000.

*Sources of Revenue.*

The principal items of revenue estimated to be received for the financial year ending June next are the following:—Customs I estimate at £908,000, being £127,099 more than our last year's receipts. If hon. members look into the figures, I do not think they will regard as an extravagant estimate, to get £127,099 more from Customs than we received last year. The mining revenue we estimate at £255,500, being an increase of £120,332. The land revenue is estimated not to reach the revenue of last year by £33,573. I hope we may be wrong in anticipating this decrease, but this is the estimate of the department. The land revenue is estimated to yield £118,000, being £33,573 less than we received last year. Postages are estimated at £82,000, being £18,198 more than last year. Telegrams are estimated at £120,000, being £36,670 more than last year. The railways, I have much pleasure in informing hon. members, are estimated to return £734,000, being an increase of £261,965 over the receipts of last year. The stamp revenue we estimate at £80,000, being £21,304 over last year's receipts. Water receipts we estimate at £29,200, being £800 less really than the receipts of last year. That is caused by several of the tanks from which revenue was

received having been taken over by the Railway Department, and some arrangement is being made with that Department to control them, and probably to take possession of them altogether. Harbour dues we estimate at £14,000, an increase of £2,272; licenses £20,100, being £4,783 over last year's receipts, and many other items, making, as I said before, a total of £2,425,000.

*Tariff Remissions.*

I now come to an interesting part of my speech, specially connected with the revenue, and that is the question of amending the tariff. I have no doubt some of my friends in this House have been waiting for this announcement of the intention of the Government in regard to the tariff, and I think it a very opportune time for me, when dealing with the revenue of the colony, to also deal with the question of the amendment of the tariff. I may preface what I have to say by this, which everyone will probably admit, that seeing the great obligations the colony is entering upon, this is not the best time to reduce the revenue. The people of this colony, as represented in this House, have to decide for themselves whether they will have the facilities of transit—railways, and roads—whether they will have water supplies, harbours, telegraphs, hospitals, post offices, and the various public works going on throughout the colony—they have to decide whether they will have these works going on; for if the people want all these things—and I say they do want them, and I do not suppose there is a man in this colony who will say we do not want them—then we will have to pay for them. And how can we pay for them? We must pay for them by contributing to the revenue. I have been thinking over this matter probably quite as much as, if not more than, most people, and I have come to the conclusion that if any man in this colony, whether he be the richest or the poorest, whether he be the highest or the humblest, if he considers the matter thoroughly, he will come to the conclusion that he would prefer to pay duties and have all these facilities and all these public works going on in the colony from one end to

the other; that he would rather have constant employment and good wages, rather than have a little cheapness in the articles he uses, and perhaps no work to do. It is all very well for some hon. members when on the hustings—and then we all have to say pleasant things—to say the people want cheap food; but, I ask, what is the good of cheap food, if you have no money to buy it? As I said just now, I am not a great political economist, but there are political economists in this House—at any rate they think they are so, and that is very nearly the same thing—but I am not so sure that a country where every thing is very cheap is the very best place to live in. My experience, and I have had a little, is that I have found that where food is cheapest the people are the most servile. Take a country like India, or Ceylon, or other such places. [MR. SIMPSON: Take a white place.] The hon. member may be able to give us instances where food is cheap, and where wages are very high. [MR. SIMPSON: In England.] Well, I know the condition of the working man in this colony is far superior to the position of the working man in England. Thousands would like to transfer themselves from there to here, if they could. Here the men have scope for themselves and families; they can feel they have something round them, some space, and that they have a future before them, and a prospect of doing something for themselves and their families, which very few in the old country, I regret to say, have.—[MR. GEORGE: They are getting better over there.]—I do not know about that.—[MR. GEORGE: But I do.]—Well, perhaps they won't come here then. As I said before, I am not so sure that places where food is cheapest are the best to live in, nor am I so sure that the toilers will direct their steps to such a country. I believe that the people of this colony would prefer to have plenty of work, plenty of public works going on, as we propose they shall go on, rather than that we should tinker with the tariff, reduce the revenue, and put ourselves in such a position that we could not carry on public works. That being so, the Government do not propose at the present time to remit many of the tariff duties. We propose to remit duties

to the extent of something like £20,000. Among the items we propose to place on the free list are agricultural machinery, mining machinery of all kinds, and tools of all kinds, and a number of other articles—in fact almost all the articles that are required in local manufactures. This list of remissions is a very small one indeed, as hon. members will see; and it is not intended to be large; but I believe it will give satisfaction to many people, that it will do good, and be generally appreciated. As I said before, the present Government consider we will be acting in the best interests of the colony, and of everyone living in it, if we continue our public works policy, as shown by the Loan Bills we have introduced, and are introducing, as also by the estimates I have placed in the hands of Mr. Speaker to-night. I can only say that, if these estimates of expenditure were curtailed, then of course we could easily reduce the Customs revenue, but so long as we intend to perform all these great public works—these pressing works, then I say it is not possible to do the two things, and the decision of this Government is that we will carry on our great public works policy, and leave the Customs revenue alone.

*Reduction on Unmanufactured Tobacco.*

There is a small matter connected with the revenue which I should like to take this opportunity of referring to—a matter which has caused a considerable amount of discussion in this House and out of it, and that is the question of the duty charged on unmanufactured tobacco. For several years past the proprietors of the tobacco factory at Fremantle have complained that the margin of profit was not large enough. The duty is now 3s. on manufactured tobacco, and 2s. on unmanufactured leaf tobacco. I have hitherto, in this House, resisted the alteration of this duty, as I believed there was a sufficient margin of profit between the 3s and 2s., and that the difference of 1s. was sufficient to induce the industry to flourish in this colony, but for some time I have come to the conclusion that this margin is too narrow, and that the profit is not great. After a careful investigation of the whole matter, and after referring to the tariffs of other colonies, and getting some

actuarial calculations in regard to it, the Government have come to the conclusion that some little alteration should be made. We propose, therefore, to make a reduction on unmanufactured leaf tobacco of a 1½d. in the pound, making the duty 1s. 10½d. instead of 2s. This will place our manufacturers of tobacco in exactly the same position as those of South Australia, where the import duty is 2s. 9d. for manufactured tobacco and 1s. 7½d. for unmanufactured leaf tobacco, a difference of 1½d. This concession will not make much difference to the revenue, but will be an advantage to the proprietors of this factory, and will also be acceptable to my friends the members for Fremantle. I think that, in existing circumstances, it is a reasonable arrangement, and it will also satisfy the manufacturers, who have been dissatisfied for a long time past, and have complained that we have treated them harshly. At any rate I have the assurance of the proprietors that, if this concession is made, and they are placed in the same position as the South Australian manufacturers, they will be quite satisfied. The estimate of revenue I have placed before hon. members may appear large; it may appear a large expectation that we should estimate to receive £2,425,000 from all sources during the current year; but, as an index as to whether the estimate is a reasonable one, I may state that the revenue already received from the 1st July to the 26th August amounts to £416,894, and comparing this with the amount received in the same period of last year, £193,960. You will therefore notice that we have received up to this date more than double what we received last year for the same period, and if it continues at this rate we will receive considerably more than our estimated revenue.

*The Future Expenditure for 1896-7.*

I come now to the expenditure, and I am sure that, however interesting the estimated revenue may be to hon. members, the proposed expenditure will be even more interesting. That we should be capable of providing for this immense expenditure at the present time seems to me almost marvellous. The expenditure of a country, as I have previously remarked, always will, I am

sure, keep pace with its revenue. Increased revenue means increased responsibilities, and the demands are enormous that are coming in daily upon the Government. Even now, after making the immense provision upon these estimates for public works all over the colony, from one end to the other, there are many works we would like to undertake which we are prevented from dealing with this year. We have, however, cast our eyes round about this colony, and we are fortunate in having in the Ministry men who are conversant with various parts, if not the whole of the colony, and Ministers are therefore able to bring a considerable amount of personal experience and knowledge to the question of dealing with the wants of the various districts, and we have tried our best to meet the pressing wants of the people in all directions. The estimated expenditure is £2,720,426, which will exceed the actual expenditure for last year by £896,563, and will exceed my estimate of last year by £1,147,920. These are very large figures—figures certainly that we have not been accustomed to in this colony previously. The expenditure includes, besides the general administration of the Government, an immense number of works, buildings, roads, railways, railway surveys, etc. I will refer to some of the principal works: Miscellaneous services, including £20,000 for contributions to municipalities. This sum is gradually going up; new municipalities are springing up all over the colony, and we have to give them one pound for every pound they raise in rates. We are glad to be able to do it, and I only wish they were satisfied with it; but they are not satisfied, for they make demands of all sorts—for town halls, roads, recreation grounds, fire brigades, and many other things. For miscellaneous services, including £20,000 for subsidies to Municipal Councils, we propose to expend £51,151. For harbours and jetties all over the colony we propose to expend £166,400; this total including, together with other smaller items, the following:—Albany jetty improvements, £6,750; Ashburton jetty, £10,000; Broome jetty, £15,000; Bunbury jetty, £4,000; Carnarvon jetty, £8,000; Condon jetty, £4,500; Cossack shipping facilities, £4,000; Esperance

jetty extension, £6,000; Fremantle jetty extension, £6,000; Fremantle reclamation, £6,000; Maud's landing jetty, £9,000; Perth reclamation, £10,000; Port Hedland jetty, &c., £10,000; and Bunbury harbour improvements, £40,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: £40,000 where only one ship comes in!

#### *Bunbury Harbour Improvement.*

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): With regard to the improvement of the harbour at Bunbury, I should like to say a few words. The Government consider the time has arrived when an effort should be made to place this port in a condition to deal with the large export of timber and coal and other produce for which it is the natural outlet. When the railway to the Collie coalfields is completed, and the present railway from Bunbury to Donnybrook is extended to Bridgetown, the ports of Bunbury and the Vasse will be two of the principal places for the export of jarrah and other produce; and, in the opinion of the Government, it is our bounden duty to give every facility that is possible to assist producers. The Government have come to the conclusion that a sum of £100,000 should be expended in giving better facilities for shipping at Bunbury, and the sum of £40,000 is therefore placed on the present Estimates as a first instalment. The Engineer-in-Chief is working out a plan based on these figures, by which a mole will be constructed which will shelter the present jetty and extensions; and, for my own part, I hope and believe the result will be altogether satisfactory. I may say there have been several proposals placed before the Government with regard to the improvement of the harbour at Bunbury; one was an inner harbour and the other an outer harbour. There is no doubt that something must be done, unless we are to desert the place altogether. An inner harbour has many attractions to myself and to other people, because, if completed, and proved successful, there would be a safe and commodious place for shipping in all weathers; but I have come to the conclusion that, in our present condition, and even in our good circumstances, it would be unreasonable on the part of the people of

these districts to expect that more than £100,000 should be voted by Parliament for making a harbour at Bunbury, and therefore I am not prepared to ask this House to vote a larger sum at the present time, or to embark on a project which would be likely to cost more than £100,000 for the improvement of this harbour. That being my view, I have had to get rid altogether of the idea of an inner harbour, which would cost probably £400,000 and no result could come from it until the works were entirely completed. I have had to give my attention to the other scheme, which I think is of a more moderate character; and the result has been that the Engineer-in-Chief has been able to devise a scheme by which a considerable improvement in the harbour facilities at Bunbury can be accomplished for the sum of £100,000, which, as I have said, is the largest sum I am prepared to ask this House to consider at the present time. Of course, it is not possible to do this work quickly; such works take time, and it is a question whether so large a sum as £40,000 can be expended in one year; but, if not, the unexpended balance will lapse, and this House will be asked to vote it again next year.

#### *Roads and Bridges.*

The next item I will refer to is Roads and Bridges, and for this I am glad to be able to place on the Estimates a sum of £168,700. No such sum as this has hitherto found a place on the Estimates for Roads and Bridges. It includes a sum of £50,000 for distribution among the various Roads Boards throughout the colony, also a sum of £21,000 for the Perth-Fremantle Road and £8,000 for Port Hedland Road. It is proposed to lay down a tramway from the jetty at Port Hedland a few miles across the marsh. It will be quite as cheap as, if not cheaper than, a road, and will give the people in these districts, especially the producers, appliances for shipping their wool, and also the large number of stock now on the DeGrey and other rivers close to Port Hedland. Besides this, in the Estimates there is a long list of special grants for Roads and Bridges, amounting to £89,700. Last year we expended £68,940 on Roads and Bridges; this year we propose to expend

£168,700, or £99,760 more than we did last year. I am indeed glad—nothing in these Estimates gives me more pleasure than to be able to place this large sum on the Estimates, which will be of so much advantage to the producers of the colony.

#### *Railway from York to Greenhills.*

The next item in the Estimates of works is Engineering Surveys and Railway Construction, which amounts to £40,500. We propose out of this sum to spend £20,000 on the railway from York to Greenhills, which is estimated to cost £40,000 without rolling stock. [MR. MONGER: Hear, hear.] The reason we place only £20,000 on the Estimate is that it will not be possible to spend more than that before the end of the financial year, as permanent surveys will have to be made, and the rails will have to be obtained, and we think that £20,000 will be as much as we shall be able to expend this year. The Government have carefully considered this matter. We know very well that this is an agricultural railway, and that new railways have to be viewed with great care if there is nothing else but agriculture to depend on for traffic. We know well that unless the land is thickly settled, and a large quantity is under cultivation, the chances are that an agricultural railway will not pay. Still, after having visited the locality, and having the benefit of the experience of persons who are conversant with the place, we think we will not be going far wrong in asking this House to approve of this railway being built out of current revenue. I am the more pleased to be able to advocate this expenditure because I think that the people of York and that part of the country have felt—although I do not think there is any good reason for it—that the present Government have not been in sympathy with them, and have not given them all the advantages we could. I can only say, that, if I can benefit the people of York without injuring anyone else, it will give me great pleasure to do so. Apart, however, from these reasons, if there is any place in the colony where an agricultural railway would be likely to pay, it is the one from York to Greenhills, and the Government, therefore, propose that the first agricultural railway to be made out of

revenue shall be constructed from York to Greenhills.

*Railway Survey, Northam to Quelquelling.*

We propose also to make a railway survey from Northam to Quelquelling. I am able to say, from personal knowledge, that there is no place in the colony where an agricultural railway would be likely to pay better. From Northam to Quelquelling is about 20 miles on the road to Goomalling, and the route runs through an agricultural country all occupied by farmers in small locations, and is one of the best, if not the best, area of agricultural land in the colony. It is just about the same sort of land as that at Greenhills, the only difference being that the line runs from York for some distance through large freehold properties, whereas the line from Northam runs through land in the hands of small owners.

*Survey for Railway from Pinjarrah to Marradong.*

We also propose to make provision for the survey of a railway line from Pinjarrah to Marradong, in the Williams district. We hope these surveys will be finished before the end of the financial year, and that when we next meet it will be possible for us to go on with this work out of current revenue; but we cannot make any promise with regard to that, as all will depend upon the amount of money required after the surveys are made, and also upon the money then available for the work. At the same time, the Government hope that, when this House meets after the general election, it will be found possible to proceed with the work of construction.

*Further Estimates of General Expenditure.*

I will now refer to a few other items upon which we propose to spend money during the year. Amongst these are hospitals and quarantine stations, £66,735; police stations and quarters, £85,500; gaols and quarters, £8,790; industrial schools, £4,000; defence buildings, £3,000; libraries, museum, and observatory, £14,750; Government House, £7,250; lighthouse keepers' and pilots' quarters, £4,300; Customs buildings, £28,930; Royal mint, £14,500; court

houses, £23,010; post and telegraph offices, £67,035; buildings for Mines Department, £30,400; building for Education Department, £38,395; other public buildings, £29,620; municipal buildings and agricultural halls, £18,000; Fremantle market buildings, £3,000; and other items, making altogether an immense number of works and buildings, and extending over all parts of the colony. It would take too long to go further into the details of the Estimates, but I should like to say that the increases on railways and works, on the Mines' Department, and on post and telegraphs, are enormous; but hon. members will see these figures for themselves, and I therefore do not propose to deal with them in detail. Comparing the Estimates of Expenditure for this year under Ministerial Departments with the actual expenditure of last year, I find they are as follows:—We propose to expend under special Acts and the Constitution Act £312,004, being an increase of £68,372 over last year; His Excellency the Governor, £1,035, which will be a reduction of £37; Executive Council £296, an increase of £81; Legislative Council, £2,690, an increase of £523; Legislative Assembly, £4,025, an increase of £810; Colonial Treasurer, £397,645; an increase of £26,389; Attorney General, £39,361, an increase of £9,805; Commissioner of Railways, £1,447,114, an increase of £541,745; Commissioner of Crown lands, £49,391, an increase of £12,542; Minister of Mines, £466,865, an increase of £236,334. The total expenditure under all these heads, each head covering several departments, will be £2,720,426, or an increase of £896,563 over the actual expenditure of last year. I have already told hon. members that we began the year with a credit balance of £312,064. I estimate the revenue at £2,425,000, and we, therefore, expect to have available for expenditure, £2,737,064. Our estimated expenditure, as I have told you, is £2,720,426; therefore the estimated balance on the 30th June next amounts to £16,638. It is no use, in this prosperous and growing colony, to have money and not to spend it. There are no works in this large expenditure that are not necessary. I have given my personal attention to them, and only those works that are absolutely



necessary to meet the requirements of the public have been included.

*Comparison with other Colonies.*

I should like to make a little comparison between the money we have available for expenditure this year—that is £2,737,064—and the amount that is available in the great colony of South Australia. I find there is available for expenditure this year in South Australia £2,595,200, so that we, in Western Australia, have £141,864 more available for expenditure than they have in that colony. Let us turn next to the colony of Tasmania, and there we find they have only £786,610 to spend, while we have £2,737,064. These figures show that things in this colony are not what they used to be.

*Harbour Works and Shipping Facilities.*

The main policy of this Government has always been to give facilities of transit, both by land and sea. The railways we have constructed all over the colony are evidence of our policy. The seaward facilities include the great harbour works at Fremantle, having for their object the making of Fremantle the first port of call in Australia, and these works stand out as first in importance on the seaward list. They were begun when we were in humble circumstances—in 1892; and our decision at the time to start those works showed, at any rate, that if our purse was small our hearts were large, and that we had some ambition, some hopes for the future. Without those hopes we would not have undertaken these great works at Fremantle; but we have undertaken them, and the two great objects we all have in view are to have a safe and commodious harbour close to the metropolis, and also to make Fremantle the first port of call for the ocean mail steamers trading between the old country and Australia. We have been waiting patiently from that time up to the present, and the harbour works have been going on steadily. As far as the Government are able to judge, the harbour works at Fremantle will be completely successful; but, until they are completed, we must continue to suffer the disadvantages, the great disadvantages, we labour under at the present time of being off the high road of ocean traffic.

I firmly believe myself that we will not have to wait much longer for the realisation of our hopes, for every endeavour will be made by the Government to hasten on the work; and I hope it will not be long before, at any rate, we have the intercolonial shipping inside the river. Last year the Government promised to give better facilities to the producers all along the coast—to give facilities not only to those who live inland in the shape of railways, but to give shipping facilities at the various ports of the colony, so as to improve the means for shipping produce, and thus give the producers in our colony a chance of competing with the foreign producers. If we have been a little slow in this matter, we have not lost sight of our promises. Jetties are being constructed, or are about to be constructed, at all the important ports of the colony. There are improvements being made, or about to be made, at Wyndham for giving better facilities in shipping cattle; also at Derby work is being carried out with the same object; at Broome a large jetty is being erected; at Maud's Landing another jetty is being erected; at Cossack shipping facilities are in course of construction, but I am sorry to say it is difficult to give good accommodation for ships at that port, on account of the distance the shallow water runs out from the shore; at Condon we are making provision for various improvements; at Port Hedland, not only is a large jetty being constructed, but also a railway across the marsh, while the Admiralty surveyor is surveying the approaches to that harbour, and these works will give better means of transit to the people on the Pilbarra goldfields. Then again, at Carnarvon, we have had a survey made and plans prepared for making improvements in the harbour; at Fremantle, Bunbury, Albany, and Esperance Bay—everywhere, in fact, from one end of our coasts to the other—the Government are carrying on harbour works, or have made provision on these Estimates for carrying them on, our object being to put the local producer in as good a position as possible, so that he may be able to compete with the foreign producer. We are anxious to give these facilities to all places throughout the colony.

*Railway Department and its Expansion.*

There is one large Department in the State that I should like to say one or two words about—the Railway Department. I may begin by saying that the expansion of our railways is one of the most satisfactory signs of the times. On the 4th February, 1891, I made my first Financial Statement in this House, and I expressed surprise at the railway receipts for the year 1890 having realised £53,000. From that time to the present the railway revenue has been increasing largely. In 1894-5 we received from the railways £293,485, while in 1895-6 the receipts were £472,035, and in the present year, as I have already said, we expect to receive from our railways £734,000. This money is to be received notwithstanding that we have assimilated the freights from one end of the colony to the other. The people on the goldfields cannot now complain that they are paying higher railway rates than the people on the coast. I must of course at once admit that if, in spite of the revenue we are receiving, the expenditure had exceeded that revenue, there would not be much to boast of; but I will be able to show that the revenue is exceeding the expenditure, and that we have a splendid record, testifying to the soundness of the Government policy as regards railways. The total amount expended on railways from loans and from current revenue is about £2,900,000, and the interest and sinking fund for this year—we need not go further back—added to the working expenses, amount to about £600,000. As I told you, the railway revenue is estimated to produce £734,000 for this year; and it therefore appears that our railways are at present paying their way, providing a sinking fund, paying working expenses and interest on the cost of construction, and, besides all that, contributing a substantial sum to the consolidated revenue. I think this is a fact that cannot be too well-known from one end of the colony to the other. It gives us great hope for the future, and shows that if the Government of the day are only careful in constructing railways in places where within a few years they will be reproductive, as I think has been the case in the past, we may look to their not only paying their way, but even more than that.

*Gold Export.*

I now come to what has been called the main factor of our prosperity. It has often been said in this House, by the member for Yilgarn, and the member for Nannine, and has also been said not a few times on the goldfields, that our present position is entirely due to the discovery of gold. I am quite prepared to admit that; but, at the same time, it must also be admitted that the Government, with the assistance of Parliament, have done something by providing facilities and means for enabling the people of this colony, and those people who have come here seeking their fortunes, to take advantage of the gold discoveries. We have provided, even in the remote and arid parts of the colony, and in every place where population has settled, railways, telegraphs, postal services, administration of justice, water supply, hospitals, &c.—we have done everything that was possible to keep pace with the times, and to enable these goldfields to be properly developed. And although I am quite willing to admit that the people who are developing our goldfields are still labouring under some disadvantages and some inconveniences, particularly the absence of sufficient water, yet I think there is every reason, even at this early stage in the history of the colony, to try and forget the inconveniences and temporary difficulties they have had to undergo, and to remember only the great advantages they have received in the facilities provided for developing the goldfields, in every part of the colony. The export of gold for the twelve months ended 30th June last was 235,562 ounces, valued at £895,135, and the total export of gold from the time we first found gold to the present date has been 798,690 ounces, valued at £3,035,024. This gold has been obtained from the following goldfields:—From Coolgardie and Yilgarn, which include Coolgardie, Yilgarn, East Coolgardie, North-East Coolgardie, and North Coolgardie, the gold exported from these five fields has been 471,121 ounces, valued at £1,790,259; from the Murchison, 195,127 ounces, valued at £741,484; from Pilbarra, 104,685 ounces, valued at £397,791; from Kimberley, £23,128 ounces, valued at £87,888; from the Ashburton, 2,628 ounces, valued at

£9,988; from Dundas, 2,004 ounces, valued at £7,614; these exports of gold altogether making a total of 798,690 ounces, valued at £3,035,024. Prior to the introduction of self-government in this colony, and when the goldfields first came into notice, the total export of gold did not exceed about £180,000 worth. From the time the present Government took office it appears these two things came together—self-government and the gold discoveries—and they have been working together ever since, and have resulted in great advantage and prosperity to the colony.

*Indebtedness of the Colony.*

There is only one other subject I propose to deal with before I conclude. I have left it till the last because it is one of the most important, and that is the question of the indebtedness per head of the people of the colony. It is a matter so important that I am sure every member of this House, and every member of the Government has given it careful consideration. I know for myself I have it always before me, because nothing whatever would give me so much unrest and be so painful to me as the thought that I had been the means of burdening the people of this colony with debt which had not been profitable or reproductive. The people of the colony, and sometimes perhaps hon. members, may think it is no great responsibility for the Treasurer, and especially when he happens also to be the Premier—to bring before this House large schemes of expenditure having for their object the promotion of some good to the colony, as he supposes; I can, however, assure hon. members that I fully realise the responsibility I am taking in asking the people of this country to follow me in schemes that may burden them with debt. That responsibility is ever present to my mind. There is no getting away from the fact that borrowing money means getting into debt. We all know how it affects us individually, and we all recognise the principle that, whether it is the case of a country, or the case of a private individual, the money borrowed has to be repaid, and the interest has to be forthcoming periodically so long as the debt continues. I am afraid that some people do not think

sufficiently of this. I do not say that members of this House, accustomed to political life and its responsibilities, do not think of it; but I am afraid the people of the colony, when they advocate huge works being constructed from Loan funds, do not sometimes think of it sufficiently. The public accounts of the colony have to be watched just as carefully as a private banking account. When the present Government took office nearly 6 years ago, the public debt at the end of December, 1890, amounted to £1,284,079, or about £28 per head of the then population. The total debt of this colony is now, according to the published accounts which are in the hands of hon. members, £4,736,572. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Including the last loan?] Yes; including the last loan of £1,500,000 and all we have power to raise at the present time. Following out the practice I have adopted on previous occasions, in order to arrive at the actual debt of the colony on the 30th June last, I will deduct the sinking fund in hand, amounting to £175,033, and surely it should be taken from the public debt as being money we can obtain to-morrow if we want it. I also take away the money we have in hand and actually available as unexpended balances on loans, amounting to £740,427. These two sums amount to £915,460; therefore, deducting that amount from £4,736,572, the gross indebtedness, we find our actual public debt on the 30th June, 1896, arrived at by the same method as I have used before, that is by deducting from the gross debt the amount of sinking fund and the moneys in hand as unexpended balances of loans, was £3,821,112. Our actual debt on the 30th June, 1895, was £3,194,238, being at the rate of £36 per head of the population; so that during the past twelve months we have increased our public debt by £626,874. But I am glad to be able to tell hon. members that, after having increased the debt by that amount, the actual indebtedness of the population on the 30th June last was only £31 per head, as against £36 per head last year, and as against £28 per head in 1891. In fact, although we have borrowed all this money our indebtedness has increased only £3 per head during the  $5\frac{1}{2}$  years. That is a very satisfactory statement to

be able to make to this House. As hon. members are aware, our last appeal to the London market for three-quarters of a million at 3 per cent. was very successful indeed, for it realised £100 16s. 8d. per £100 bond, being the best price ever obtained for an Australian loan. That is a matter we may congratulate ourselves upon.

*Comparison of Indebtedness.*

I will now compare our present position with that of the other colonies of Australia, and in doing so I shall be able to show that our position is very satisfactory. The public debt of Queensland at the present time is 32 millions, or £70 per head of the population; the public debt of South Australia is 22 millions, or £62 per head of the population; the public debt of New South Wales is 62 millions, or £50 per head of the population; the public debt of Tasmania is eight millions, or £50 per head of the population; the public debt of Victoria is 48 millions, or £41 per head of the population; and the public debt of Western Australia is four millions, or £31 per head of the population. When we remember another important fact, that the debt of this colony at the present time is not equal to two years of our annual revenue, while the debt of Victoria is equal to seven times the annual revenue of that colony; the debt of Tasmania is equal to 11 times its revenue; the debt of Queensland is equal to nine times its revenue; the debt of New South Wales is equal to seven times its revenue; the debt of South Australia is equal to nine times its revenue; and that the total debt of the whole of Australia is equal to seven times the total Australian annual revenue; and when we remember also that we are going ahead and are increasing in numbers and in the development of our resources, that we are, in fact, only beginning our career as a self-governing colony; I do not myself see that there is any occasion for us to be afraid of our indebtedness. Of course we have often, in this House, had the other side of the picture painted for us in dismal colours; but I do not intend to-night to go into that matter, and I shall only ask this simple question: Who, in the past, has been right? I do not want to boast, but I simply ask, who has been right all through these five and

a half years in regard to the future of the colony? I wonder if some hon. members in this House remember what they said on the subject of the Loan Bill of 1891, and the Loan Bill of 1894. I have a recollection of what some members said—I will not mention their names to-night, because I wish to be friendly and courteous—but if some hon. members will read the speeches they delivered on those occasions, well—I do not think they would like to make the same speeches again. I think however, we may all congratulate ourselves that the forecasts of the Government have been fully justified.

*Indebtedness of other Colonies.*

I should like, however, to say that when I introduced the last Loan Bill, on the 20th August, 1894, I estimated that by the end of June, 1898, our population would be 125,000, and that if we did not borrow more our debt would then be £36 per head. But already the population, on the 30th June last was 122,420, there being still two more years of that period to run, and the present indebtedness is £31 per head. I do not desire to-night—in fact it would be very ungenerous of me—to compare the position of this colony with that of any other colony for the simple purpose of self-glorification; and my only object in doing so is to place our position clearly before hon. members, so that I may dispel all fears from their minds, not only in regard to the expenditure as proposed in these Estimates, but also the expenditure under the Loan Bills being considered this Session. In the past we used to have to compare ourselves with other colonies, and in doing so we used to try and compare with them in some slight degree; but the relative positions seem to be changing now. Last year I said we had already overtaken one colony and it seemed to me we would soon overtake another. That is a fact to-night. We have already overtaken and distanced the colony of Tasmania, and our revenue is already three times as great as hers, while our debt is but one half of her debt. In regard to the great colony of South Australia, we are now alongside, as our revenue is abreast of hers, while our debt is but one-fifth of hers. These are satisfactory facts which we cannot

get away from, and which any hon. member can examine for himself.

*Review of the Position.*

I have said now all I intend to say to-night in regard to the financial position of the colony. I have come to the end of my story. It has been a long record, but I think that, taking it all together it is a satisfactory one. There is not one dark cloud of any magnitude that I can see on the horizon; but, for all that, there is a great responsibility resting upon all of us. I feel it heavily pressing on me, and I am sure, in a lesser degree perhaps, the responsibility must press on every hon. member of the House. In times of great prosperity we must be specially on our guard not to sacrifice the future for a little temporary advantage. But there is the other side also; and that is not to be afraid, and, by being afraid, lose the great opportunities that are within our grasp. Our population on June 30th last was 122,420; and is there any reason why it should not go on rapidly increasing? The colony is only becoming known to other places in the world; its reputation is only becoming established; and I see no reason why the population that has come to us during the last few years should not come in very much larger numbers during the next year or two. Our revenue is expanding at a marvellous rate, as I have shown to-night. The figures I have placed before hon. members have been arrived at after much care. They are not my figures only, for they come to me as the results of the investigations and the recommendations of the several departments. Still, I have scrutinised them closely, have reduced some of them, but in no single instance have I added to them. And, when we remember that, notwithstanding the large proposed expenditure of revenue for the year, over two and a half millions, there will also be an immense expenditure of loan moneys going on in this colony during the next three years; when we also remember that our gold-fields are only just beginning to progress, and that the gold obtained has been for the most part got by scratching about here and there on the surface and from shallow depths, and that the quartz crushing machines are only beginning now to turn

out the gold; when we remember, too, the difficulties these gold mines have to encounter in regard to a sufficient supply of water, I ask: what will be the result when we have overcome those difficulties, and when a plentiful and good supply of water is provided for the mines? Everything, as far as I can see—and I do not wish to be too sanguine, but I cannot help being sanguine with the facts and figures before me—points to a prosperous future for this colony.

*Conclusion.*

In conclusion I desire, on behalf of this Government, to cordially thank hon. members on both sides of the House, and also the members of the other branch of the Legislature, the Legislative Council, for the support and consideration you and they have given to us during so many years. I hope that the good feeling which has existed among the members of this House during all these years will continue in the future. As far as I am able to judge, the path before us seems clear. I ask hon. members to go with us along that path, full of bright hope and confidence. Let our watchword be "Forward;" let the timid and half-hearted be left behind; and I firmly believe that, as in love and war, fortune helps the brave, so shall it be also with us, and we shall be able to leave to those who come after us "Footprints on the sands of time" which will remain to our everlasting honour. (General applause.)

On the motion of MR. ILLINGWORTH, the debate was adjourned until the next sitting.

Progress was reported, and the committee obtained leave to sit again on the next Tuesday.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:56 o'clock, p.m., until the next Tuesday.