

Under the old law, holders had to pay £4 a year for a license, and it was in force for ten years.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): From year to year.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the language of the clause right through assumed that a term was mentioned. He thought the words should be the same as in Clause 12, where it said, "It shall be in force for one year from the date thereof."

MR. LEAKE said it was also evidently intended that business licenses should refer to lands outside townships. It was surely never intended that a man who held a business license should squat down upon a piece of land, that would ultimately become a valuable site in a thriving township, and get for next to nothing what another man would have to pay for "through the nose." He thought the clause could not be satisfactorily dealt with without considerable thought.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9-20 o'clock p.m.

## Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 20th August, 1895.

*Petition of Settlers in the Blackwood District re Railway Route—Use of Dredge on the Canning River—Legislation re Ground Vermin and Bird Pests—Railway and Theatre Refreshment Rooms Licensing Bill; report—Married Women's Property Bill; in committee—Depositing Stone, &c., in River at Rocky Bay; Legislative Council's amendment; in committee—Estimates, 1895-96; in committee—Crown Suits Bill: first reading—Sale of Goods Bill: first reading—Free Railway Passes Granted, 1894-95—Adjournment.*

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

PRAYERS.

### PETITION OF SETTLERS IN BLACKWOOD DISTRICT re RAILWAY ROUTE.

MR. HARPER, on behalf of Sir J. G. LEE-STEELE, presented a petition, signed by Mr.

G. M. Williams and other settlers in the Blackwood district, praying that the route of the Blackwood railway should be *via* Brookhampton and Thompson's Brook.

Petition read and ordered to be printed.

### USE OF DREDGE ON THE CANNING RIVER.

MR. RANDELL (for Mr. JAMES) in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works (1) the time during which the dredge "Black Swan" had been employed on the Canning River; (2) the work done, its cost, and the object for which it had been—and was being done; (3) the amount of work to be done, and the time expected to be taken in doing it.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—(1) Since August, 1892, to date; or, say, three years exactly. (2) Work done.—7,250 lineal feet, or about one and two-fifths miles of channel dredged to a minimum depth of about 4ft. at low water, with the exception of some silted up patches, which will require further deepening. This channel has been piled, staked, and wattled throughout the greater part of its length, and wherever deemed necessary. Minor accessory works have been executed in the way of general improvements. The labor has been practically all convict. (3). Cost to date, £3,113.

### LEGISLATION re GROUND VERMIN AND BIRD PESTS.

MR. PIESSE, in accordance with notice, asked the Attorney-General whether it was the intention of the Government, during this session of Parliament, to introduce a measure dealing with the destruction of ground vermin and bird pests.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) replied that the Government had no intention of introducing a measure of the character referred to in the question of the hon. member.

### RAILWAY AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS LICENSING BILL.

#### REPORT.

Upon the reading of the amendments made in committee,

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that the amendment made in Clause 1 be not agreed to. He said this

amendment was rendered unnecessary by the form in which the Bill had passed through Committee.

Motion put and passed, and the amendment struck out accordingly.

Remainder of Committee's amendments agreed to and report adopted.

MR. RANDELL asked the Attorney-General to have the Bill reprinted with the numerous amendments, so that hon. members might see a fair print of the Bill before the third reading.

THE SPEAKER said he approved of the suggestion in its application to Bills generally, when amended; and the idea had often occurred to him that such a course would be convenient, as a general practice, so that hon. members might see each Bill in its amended form before the third reading.

Ordered, that the third reading be made an Order of the Day for Thursday, 22nd August.

# MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1:

Agreed to.

Clause 2—"Costs may be ordered to be paid out of property, subject to restraint on anticipation":

MR. JAMES asked why the word "woman" was used in the second line, and whether there was an object in so using the word.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said this Bill had come down from the Upper House, where it was introduced by a private member; but although he (the Attorney-General) had promised to introduce the Bill into this House, he had not studied its provisions closely. The word "woman" in this Bill meant a married woman.

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that the words "against a woman or" be inserted after the word "instituted," in the first line. The rule provided in the clause should apply to both cases.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 and 4:

Agreed to.

Clause 5—"Short title":

MR. JAMES expressed regret that no provision was made in the Bill for meeting what he regarded as a scandalous omission in the English Act, which permitted a married woman who had a large separate income to keep it

from the reach of creditors, instead of paying her just debts. Married women were, under the English Act, given a very wide protection as concerned property of which they had not got the power of disposal; but the law went further, for a married woman might have a large income which could not be got at by creditors for the payment of her debts, and there was no means provided by which application could be made to a judge for an order to apply part of the income in such case for the purpose of paying the woman's debts. He regretted that no provision was made in this Bill for dealing with such a scandalous state of things.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) suggested that, if the hon. member desired to propose an amendment in the direction, he might move to report progress.

On the motion of MR. JAMES, progress was reported and leave given to sit again.

# DEPOSITING STONE, &c., IN RIVER AT ROCKY BAY.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE—IN COMMITTEE.

Message further considered.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said it was necessary that this House should present a reply to the message received from the Upper House. He therefore moved that the following reply be forwarded to the Legislative Council:—"In reply to Message No. 1 from the Legislative Council, the Legislative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council that it appointed a Select Committee to enquire into the matter referred to in the said message, and the Committee has reported—'That, in the opinion of the Committee, no further encroachment in the frontage should be made or allowed by tipping sand or stone into the river than would be shown by a line drawn parallel with the yellow line as shown on chart No. 3,720, being at least 10 clear feet within the said yellow line,' and that the Legislative Assembly agrees in the above report." He said it would be well also to send with the reply the chart referred to in the motion.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported.

Report adopted.

Ordered, that the resolution be transmitted by Message to the Legislative Council.

## ESTIMATES 1895-6.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Debate upon Sir John Forrest's motion—that the first vote, "His Excellency the Governor," stand at £1,446—resumed.

MR. LEAKE: In referring to the Budget proposals of the Government at this stage, I take it that it is not desirable that hon. members should dwell at unnecessary length upon the details of the Estimates, and, therefore, guided by that rule, they can shorten the discussion on the first item in a very material manner. Certainly I shall reserve for myself the privilege of criticising the Estimates, and particularly the estimates of the Public Works and Railways Department, somewhat minutely. These Estimates I find, after careful examination, do not materially differ from Estimates of previous years, except in this respect, that the departments are larger, and consequently there are more salaries to be paid, and there is this new departure, that sums are being voted out of the revenue for the purposes of public works. That suggestion, I think, came from the Opposition side of the House during last session, and I am glad to think that the Government have seen fit to adopt it. I am sorry that the hon. member for West Perth should ridicule the idea. I say again that it was a principle which was urged with considerable force on this side of the House, and particularly when we were criticising the loan policy of the Government. I cannot, therefore, but admit that, so far as this principle is concerned, there is little in these Budget proposals for hon. members to cavil at, and I think most hon. members desire to acknowledge that the Government are right when they are right, and to attack them only when members find a proper opening.

MR. SIMPSON: Hear, hear.

MR. LEAKE: There is no such opening for hon. members on this side of the House. With regard to the general principles disclosed by the Budget, hon. members on both sides of the House cannot but congratulate themselves, and congratulate the country, upon the enormous increase that appears to have been made during the last 12 months. It is fortunate, indeed, that circumstances allow us to be as liberal as it is proposed that these Estimates shall be, and I congratulate the country most heartily upon its sound financial position. Circumstances such as these should, and I have no doubt will, be taken ad-

vantage of by Parliament, and it is satisfactory that, at any rate for the time being, the policy of borrowing is checked or suspended. But the Government have still the opportunity of riding what appears to be their favorite hobby, that of spending money. Well, the only question we ask hon. members to consider is this—Is the expenditure justified and merited in the particular circumstances? There is one point which occurs to me in the consideration of these Budget proposals, and it is one which hon. members have heard of before and will hear of again before this session closes, or, at any rate, before this Parliament comes to an end, and it is this, that we should be more liberal than we have been in regard to our taxation; and I affirm most positively that had these Estimates been before Parliament at the time when the Tariff proposals of the Government were passed, there would have been less difficulty in extending the schedule of the Bill, and placing certain articles on the free list, and in adopting the suggestion which I made, to reduce those *ad valorem* duties of 20 per cent. and 25 per cent., which at the present moment are undoubtedly a drag upon the community. We should have had a greater opportunity of reducing the cost of living, and the costs all round, had we known what the Budget proposals of the Government in detail were to be. I am more convinced than ever of the necessity for the reduction of our Customs taxation, and particularly am I moved in this direction when I consider the estimate of the revenue for the ensuing year; and whilst the Premier congratulates himself upon a certainly large increase, and he desires also to be on the safe side in under-estimating the revenue for the ensuing year, I cannot but express the opinion, which I know I am supported in by many hon. members, that the surplus revenue for the next year will considerably exceed the Hon. the Premier's estimate, and will exceed it by a far greater sum than ought, under the circumstances, to appear. I have often heard the hon. member for Geraldton say it is not safe to prophesy unless you know, but I shall not be surprised if we find on June 30, 1896, that the Hon. the Treasurer is able to inform the country that he has a surplus of £200,000, or £250,000. I only hope my prediction will be realised, and hon. members will not, I am sure, blame me for being over-enthusiastic or over-hopeful; but there is nothing whatever to show that the progress of the country

is being hindered in the slightest degree. On the other hand we have evidence to convince us that our progress is really only just beginning, and that we must during next year continue at our present rate or at a greater rate of progress than we are at present experiencing. In many departments there are increases of salaries, and, whilst on this subject, I would express a desire to see some rule laid down with regard to the different appointments in the public service. Instead of having these £10 a year increases, I would much prefer to see attached to each office a certain fixed salary, by which means the service of man worthy of the whole of the salary voted would be secured. The present idea of giving an increase of £10 or £15 a year cannot be satisfactory to the Government. It is unsatisfactory to hon. members, and it must indeed be unsatisfactory to the clerks. I am certain that Ministers must be beset just before the session begins with repeated and frequent applications for increases, and in order to smooth matters over, I have no doubt that they promise an increase of £10 or £15, and so the unfortunate applicant is satisfied for the moment. Of course we cannot settle the question in a debate of this kind, but I throw out the suggestion to the House, as well as to the Ministry, and if hon. members agree with me, we may succeed in passing some resolution which would have the effect of establishing some rule bringing this idea into operation. It will be admitted by hon. members, if they take the trouble to examine critically and closely the Estimates of the public service, that the junior clerks are more than sufficiently paid in comparison with higher officers. For instance, a lad just leaving school is fortunate enough sometimes to get a salary of £100 a year. I notice the Hon. the Premier shakes his head, but the phrase "just leaving school" may, after all, be accepted with certain qualifications; but we find that boys get very fair remuneration for the services they give to the State, whereas men who have been in the Service 10 or 12 years are, as compared with those boys, underpaid. I hope hon. members understand that I am not raising this question with any view of adversely criticising these Estimates, but rather to assist the Government in establishing what should be a proper basis of favor. Regarding the proposed increases, I wish to

make reference to the Medical Vote. A new departure in the Medical branch of the public service was recognised last session by the passing of the Medical Act, and I find that no alteration is proposed in the Estimates, and that there is nothing to indicate whether the Medical Board contemplated by the Act has been appointed, or is at work already; and we cannot gather whether the hospitals are under different control to what they were last year. I think I am right in saying that one of the arguments in favor of the Medical Board was that the hospitals would be taken out of departmental control, and placed under the control of that Board, which was to be appointed, in the first instance, by the Government, and that under the Act those who were willing to subscribe towards the support of the hospitals would have a voice in their management. Possibly during the progress of the items through Committee, the Premier will be able to give hon. members some information on this very important subject. The Police Department has necessary increases proposed to a considerable extent, but not so much as I would have expected. I should have thought it was necessary to appoint more Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors than appear to have been appointed. The districts are increasing, the area to be covered by the police is far greater than ever it was, and their responsibilities are correspondingly increasing. In order therefore that the duties of the police should be efficiently discharged, I should have thought more of the officers I have referred to would have been appointed. If it is determined to increase the number, I hope great care will be taken in the choice of officers. I understand, that under the existing regulations, Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors are placed on the same footing as commissioned officers. I am glad to see that the Commissioner of Police has an increase in his salary proposed, for I think that officer does his work well. We know he is a painstaking officer and has had very considerable experience in the management of the police affairs of the country. I think that if some arrangement could be made whereby detective officers from this colony might spend some time in the other colonies, and that we might import some detectives from Melbourne and Adelaide and engage them for a few months here, good results would ensue by the consequent interchange of views and opinions. We know that,

amongst the very desirable persons who are coming to the colony, there is a fair percentage of the undesirable class, including the spieler—I think he is known by that name—the adventurer, and the gentleman who lives by his wits. They dress in the height of fashion, and are not known either to the local police or to the people; but if the suggestion that I make is adopted, these gentry will become well known to the police directly through our own force, or indirectly through the Melbourne or Adelaide forces. That, after all, is a departmental matter; but I think it is quite within the province of hon. members to make such suggestions, and I trust the one I have made on this question will be considered. Prison discipline was referred to by the Attorney-General last session, when the hon. gentleman promised that the question would be looked into, as well as the question of the remission of sentences; but I do not find that any fresh rules have been established. Indeed I heard the other day of a man whose sentence of death was commuted to penal servitude for life, or for 20 years, who was, after a short period of seven or eight years, set at liberty. That is a fact, but for obvious reasons I shall not mention the name. A hardened and bloodstained criminal should be kept in prison and not be allowed to come out after serving only a few years, and possibly repeat the offence which led to his previous incarceration. This question of prison discipline and the remission of sentences is infinitely more important than hon. members are aware of, and it would astonish them if they knew the leniency which is extended towards those men who are sentenced to long terms of penal servitude. I speak with authority, because I was not practising as Crown Prosecutor in the Supreme Court for upwards of twelve years without acquiring some knowledge of the subject. The Attorney-General recognised the value of what I said last session, when he promised that the matter would be thoroughly considered, and the rules amended. I hope the hon. gentleman will be able to assure us that he has carried out his promise. The hope was expressed last session that we had very nearly seen the last of the Rottneſt Establishment Vote, and that the natives kept there might be kept at work in their own districts, and I hope the time is not far distant when that prison will be closed, so that the delightful island

might be put to better use. As a health resort it cannot be excelled in the country, but so long as it is kept for a public prison, the wishes of the majority of the people to convert it to a proper use cannot be carried out, and I shall certainly ask a few questions on that head when the proposed vote is discussed. With regard to the vote for charitable institutions, some important statements will be made. I was told recently that in one of the Industrial Schools, either in or near Perth, the boys and the girls were kept together. I heard that on fairly good authority, and on that subject the Hon. the Premier may expect to be asked a few questions. I do not say that the whole matter cannot be explained, but the principle of keeping the boys and girls in these Institutions together, does not seem to be a good one. Although it is not my intention to criticise the details of these Estimates, I really cannot refrain from referring to one item, and that is under the heading of Defences, as follows:—“Field Day Expenses and State Ceremonials, £2,856.” Now what in the name of goodness can this refer to?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The pay of the volunteers for parades.

MR. LEAKE: How does that come under the heading of State Ceremonial? This is what may be called the thin end of the wedge for the establishment of a paid force of Militia.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It has been voted every year.

MR. LEAKE: But last year it was only £237; now it is proposed to spend £2,856. If we are going to burn gunpowder and hoist flags to the extent of £2,856, we should, indeed, have some imposing ceremonies, State and otherwise. The Bureau of Agriculture and the Agricultural Bank come in for a fair share of patronage, and particularly the Agricultural Bank, for which £1,129 is asked. From the returns furnished regarding this institution, it will be seen that it has cost several hundreds of pounds to keep it going, and as a matter of fact not £200 has been lent yet. If it has cost us £570 to lend that amount, how much will £1,129 assist us? I am afraid this institution is not going to be the success which hon. members who assisted in the passage of the Bill anticipated it would be.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You will see by-and-by.

Mr. LEAKE: Of course, we shall be met with the argument that we must give the institution a trial, but it is curious that in nine or ten months we find it is not even suggested that it is likely to pay its way. Any one who went into the figures knew it could not, and now we find from the returns of the work the bank has done, that it has not a ghost of a chance of paying its way, and that it must be kept up at considerable expense to the country. The only remedy for this is to repeal the statute, but the time, I admit, has not yet arrived for taking such a course. I am not prepared to say that next session would be soon enough, but the present is soon enough to direct the attention of hon. members to the methods of administration in connection with the Bank, and so avoid hon. members having the excuse to offer, should the repealing Bill be introduced, that the whole question is so entirely new to them that time must be given them to consider it. I ask hon. members to accept the warning for what it is worth, for that is the prediction that the Bank will in the course of the next few years be proved to be an absolute and total failure. The method of collecting fees in the various departments is not as satisfactory as it might be, and in order to avoid the necessity of so much money being handled by clerks, the Government will do well if they introduce a system of stamps. This would apply particularly to Supreme Court fees. The fees for filing affidavits, for instance, are at present collected by the clerks, and there is absolutely no check at all. No Auditor-General will go through the file to find out how many affidavits have been filed during the week, and there are many documents which are simply lodged in the office to be sealed and taken away again. A fee is paid in cash for this, but there is nothing to show that it has been paid. If the practitioners had to purchase stamps, there would be an absolute check on the clerks, while the same principle might apply to the Post and Telegraph Department. It is in force in the other colonies, and I see no reason why it should not be adopted here. It is in force in the other colonies, and causes no inconvenience to the general public. The next branch of the public service to which I wish to refer is that of the Commissioner of Railways. I notice that a very material alteration is proposed to be made, and I am rather surprised that the Hon. the Premier

did not think fit to refer to it in his speech the other evening. I refer to the division of the Departments of Railways and Public Works. It appears from the Estimates that such a course is contemplated, and that it is intended to place these Departments under separate control. At any rate, we find there is an Under-Secretary for Railways at £500 a year, and an Under-Secretary for Public Works at £450 a year. The only inference I can draw is that it is intended to separate Works and Railways. I think that is a move in the right direction, and will, perhaps, in the future, be the means of avoiding such collisions as we know have occurred in the past. It is difficult to say anything on this question until we have heard what the Hon. the Commissioner himself has to say upon the subject, and I can assure him that hon. members will be perfectly prepared to criticise any statement he may make upon the administration of his department generally. It would neither be fair nor generous to deal with the matter until the Hon. the Commissioner has had an opportunity of saying something. I see it is proposed to introduce a new officer, in the person of an architect. I always thought we had one. That evidently means the establishment of a new branch in the Works Department. Then we come to Works and Buildings. Hon. members will see what the Government proposals are in this direction, with regard to expenditure out of revenue upon public works. That is, however, a question we cannot very well deal with unless we go into detail. I may say this at once, there are some districts in the colony that have no ground whatever for complaint. Fremantle, Perth, and a few other places get the lion's share. Albany only gets £500 for a drill shed, for of course the quarantine station is of no local advantage. The buildings there are in the general interest, and to preserve the colony from contagion. Large expenditure has been promised I see, to York, Northam, Newcastle and Beverley. They are each to have a new court-house. We shall probably have some explanation on that point. We find too that Perth is to have new Police and Supreme Courts. Whilst on this subject I would like to suggest to the Director of Public Works, that the new Police Court and the Supreme Court might well be under the same roof. I do not see any necessity for separate buildings, and if it is proposed to spend £2,000 in keeping up the present Police

Court, I do not think the money will be well spent. The piece of land upon which it now stands is far too valuable, and might well be put to better uses. I hope before the Government attempt any more improvements on that site, they will consider the advisability of removing the Police Court altogether. If there is to be a new Supreme Court House, I venture to suggest the old one would suit the purposes of the Police Court admirably, and it has the advantage of being near the lockup. I could detain hon. members for a great length of time, if it were thought desirable to criticise these matters in detail. I do not know whether the necessity has arisen, but it is evidently the intention of the Government to erect Agricultural Halls all over the country. I notice that nearly every district in the colony comes in for something like £250 each. What reclamation in Fremantle and Perth is to be, we do not know, although £5,000 is proposed in each instance. The development of the goldfields and our other mineral resources is allotted £30,000. We shall want some explanation, seeing £102,000 odd have already been spent on the water supply. I suppose this £30,000 is not meant for water supply. I don't think this would be an inopportune time to ask how much the department has lost. Hon. members will remember that just before the close of the session last year we were told the department had lost £50,000. I should like to know, in view of the fact they have spent £102,000, how much the department have lost, because if they have really lost nothing it is a matter for congratulation. I notice roads and bridges have received a considerable amount of attention. York gets a good share in a new bridge, new court house, and new post office I should like to know what York has done to deserve all this attention. I see it is proposed to replace that remarkable piece of engineering, the York suspension bridge, by a more substantial structure. In the Department of the Minister for Mines there is very naturally considerable increase, which cannot be wondered at. I am certain that when hon. members come to deal with this department they will deal with it very liberally. We must consider the very great disadvantages under which the officers of this department have to labor, particularly the Wardens and their assistants, who labor on the distant goldfields, where there is very little civilized life, and where they are away from everything

that is calculated to make life cheerful. I think we should not be too niggardly in seeking to induce the best men to accept these very undesirable billets. A new departure seems to have been made in connection with the Education Department. There was a vote of £500 passed last year for technical education, among other things. That does not appear to have been spent. I see the Government now suggest that we vote £1,000 for the same object. Upon that subject I shall heartily support the Government, because I think technical education, if directed in the proper channel, cannot but do the highest possible good. To educate children in some method, to teach them things that will be useful in after life, is and should be the aim of every good Government. Some of us were at a meeting last night in the Town Hall, where we heard of the good work done by a certain number of ladies in this town, who devote their time to nursing the sick and wounded. I do not think—and I say this with all sincerity, and with as much force as I can command—that we cannot do better than teach our children the principles of “first aid to the wounded,” that is, to treat ordinary ills, how to treat cuts and wounds and broken limbs. I consider that should be a part of every person's education. No one who travels about can fail to be struck with the vast amount of ignorance, which the general public display with regard to assisting their fellows in times of suffering. How many of us are there in this House, I wonder, who could stop a bleeding wound, or bind a broken limb, I do not suppose there are more than two, which shows that our education has been sadly neglected. This question of “first aid to the sick and wounded” is one that might well be considered when the Minister explains the vote for technical education. I hope that some hon. members who know more about this subject than I do will take the matter up, and urge it upon the Government with as much force as possible, because if we teach our children to be humane we teach them to be good men and women. The Post and Telegraph Department is about the last on the list, and, of course, we find the expenditure has increased enormously. The Post and Telegraph Department is likely to come in for adverse criticism during the debate, and it is a pity that the Minister who has control of that department is not for the time being a member of this House, in order that he might hear

the criticisms of hon. members. I do not refer merely to criticisms from this side of the House, but from the other side also, for there are hon. members there who take an equal interest with us in the affairs of the country, and who are not satisfied with the administration of the Post and Telegraph Department, who would like to see some reform. I refer particularly to what seems to me to be the niggardly spirit of those who have the control of that department. I refer to those unfortunate telegraph operators who spend from eight to twelve, or perhaps more, hours a day transmitting most important messages all over the colony, as well as outside the colony. How ill they are paid. I find there are no less than ten who receive only £110 a year, and six others receive only £100 a year. That is not the way to get good work done. If there is any department of the public service which is underpaid, it is the Post and Telegraph Department, and particularly the Telegraph Department. The operators are men who have had to spend four or five years qualifying themselves for their position, and then they find their services valued at from £100 to £190 a year. The chief operator only gets £200 a year, yet these men are supposed to have some knowledge and scientific skill. I do urge the Government to be more liberal in this direction, because these telegraph operators not only require to be skilful, but they must be trusted, not only by the Government, but by the business people of the country. If we do not pay them well, perhaps they will not be able to afford to be honest. When we hear of leakage in connection with the Telegraph Department, it is a sign that something is wrong. I am not accusing the Department of giving information outside, but one cannot shut one's ears, and one hears that valuable information has crept out of the Telegraph Department. That ought not to be, and the cure for such a thing is to have not only efficient but trustworthy men in charge. The Postal and Telegraph Department was never expected to be a directly remunerative Department, yet it seems to me that the Postmaster-General has made it his pride to make the returns as nearly balance as possible. We do not want that. He has never been told to make his department pay, but he has been told to make his department efficient; and so far as he made it

efficient he would not be hindered by the votes of hon. members. I have attempted to refer to the items that seemed to me most important. I regret if I have been somewhat tedious, and if I have tired hon. members, but it is just as well, when considering the Estimates generally, to intimate what our particular line of criticism will be. As I have intimated, I shall not fail to ask Ministers for full and explicit information upon several points in the Estimates. Again I say the Government have followed a proper principle in endeavoring to advance our public works out of revenue. I hope the present Government, or whatever Government may be in power, will be able to carry out the policy which seems now to have been inaugurated in earnest.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not expect to have to speak at the present moment. I fully expected some hon. member or other on the Government side would have been prepared to express his views upon this subject. I did not expect that two speeches would have to be made on this side of the House immediately following each other. I presume that hon. members on both sides of the House are fairly well satisfied with the financial condition of the country. It is hard to cavil when you have too much money in your pocket—at any rate to cavil about the money part of it. In discussing the Budget Speech of any country, it is desirable that the House should take a fair view, and give some serious consideration to the position the country is in, and the tendency of its drift. From this standpoint only I would ask the House to bear with me while I make a few remarks. First of all, I desire to congratulate the Ministry, and this House, and the country, upon the success of the year that has just passed. It has been a year that has exceeded the most sanguine anticipations of the hon. members of this House, even those of us who on this side of the House considered the revenue under-estimated last year, even we hardly expected to see so great a surplus as that to which attention has been called. The general prosperity of the colony shows that we are advancing to a position of which we as the people of the colony may well be proud. I am not surprised that Ministers, placed as they are by the circumstances of the case as governors of the country, through its first great increase and prosperity, should feel something of pride in the success that has attended their efforts, and in the success which the country has achieved while they



have been in power. There is, however, danger arising out of this very success—a danger of supposing that this kind of success will continue, and continue in the same ratio, when all experience tells us it is necessary to be careful of this particular standpoint. Because we have a surplus revenue, there is no reason why we should be extravagant. I have to congratulate the Government that they have checked what I suppose would be to them, as to other members, a temptation to go into lavish expenditure, in consequence of finding themselves with a large surplus. I think there has been a wise and judicious curbing of the natural tendency arising out of the circumstances in which we are placed. I am pleased that the Government, and the Treasurer particularly, seem to have laid hold of the fact that it is desirable to discount the future, and that they have endeavored to curb expenditure in that direction. There was one remark the Premier was pleased to make in his speech, the other evening, which did me an injustice. I do not believe he had any intention of doing me, or anyone else, an injustice. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] We all know the kind heart of the Premier, and know he would not do anyone an injustice if he knew it. In that brilliant speech to which we listened, he said the hon. member for Nannine had told him “it was an easy thing to estimate the revenue of a country.” Well, that is not quite what I said. What I did say was this, that any man who had had a commercial training, and who was accustomed to deal with imports and exports, could easily calculate the prospects of the revenue from the Custom House. That is quite a different question. It is comparatively easy to estimate the revenue from Customs, but it would be very unwise and foolish to say that I, not having the facts or figures before me, could easily estimate the revenue of a country. But any commercial man could have told the hon. the Premier, last year, that he had under-estimated the revenue from Customs by at least £100,000, and I tell the Hon. the Premier again that he has this year under-estimated the revenue from Customs by at least £100,000. Whether the Estimates in every department will show the same increase that they have done in the past year I do not venture to say, but I do say that the Government have under-estimated the revenue that will come from Customs for the year 1895-6 by at least

£100,000. I twitted the Government last year, that they had under-rated the revenue, and I did so for a very distinct reason. I look upon the under-rating as a distinct fault, when we were going in for a borrowing policy. I contended it was the duty of the Government to make the very best of the resources they expected in order that this House might judge the amount necessary to be borrowed or the desirability to borrow at all. We find ourselves to-day in this position: we have a large surplus of something like £250,000, and yet we have power to borrow a million and a half of money. There has been no necessity for borrowing so large a sum. If the Government had accepted the suggestion I made last year, that during the next four years they would have an increase of revenue of about £120,000 a year, they would not have needed to borrow the £500,000 for unproductive works, which they asked this House to sanction. Now I would like to say a word with regard to the revenue and the expenditure of the future, and at the same time refer to the certain consequences of the colony having a surplus. The fact that we have a surplus, and the knowledge of the people of the country that there is a surplus, mean that great pressure will be brought upon the Government in order to secure works here and there throughout the colony, and it will be very difficult to withstand this pressure so that the Government will not spend more than it desires to spend or proposes to spend. On this point let me congratulate the Premier and the Government on the moral courage they have shown on the present occasion—let me congratulate them that, while being last year at fault, they have this year shown a virtue—last year at fault because they were going to borrow—this year, a virtue because they are going to spend. Many men may be happy on the occasion of going to borrow, but it requires moral courage not to be drawn into too sanguine a view when the money is to be spent. I find, upon going into figures, that last year the Victorian Treasurer had a revenue to deal with amounting to £6,573,356, and his estimate only differed from the actual amount received by £30,000, or within one-half per cent. of the whole. The West Australian Treasurer, on the other hand, only dealt with, in the same year, £873,650, and the estimate of the revenue was out by £252,294, being at the

rate of 30 per cent. Of course, it is a most fortunate thing that in the case of this colony the estimate was on the upper side instead of being on the lower. I say in all seriousness that the Treasurer of this colony, or for the matter of that of any country ought to be able to estimate the revenue of the country nearer than 30 per cent., as was the case here. I will say further that, until we can be provided with more accurate figures, with a more accurate estimate of the probable receipts and disbursements of the country, this House will not have the information necessary to enable it to carry out the business of the country with that safety and caution the positions we occupy demand. I would also like to notice another great principle which is involved in this Budget. I do not refer to any question of detail. As to the details of the Speech the hon. member who preceded me has gone most fully into details. For myself I do not intend to go into details or weary the House at this stage. Details will come in for criticism at a later stage before the Committee. The principle I do desire to say one word about just now is that of taxation as we have it in this country. I notice that in Western Australia in the year 1894-95 there was actually received through the Custom House of this colony, the sum of £513,508. I should rather say that the Treasurer received that amount by means of direct taxation. There was in this country at the period dealt with in these figures, a population of less than 90,000, and you will see that this means there was contributed in direct taxation the large amount of £5 10s. per head of the population. Now to-day, the Victorian revenue through the Customs amounts to £1,809,159, and that is only £1 16s. per head of the population of that colony. I ask the careful attention of the House to the position disclosed by these figures, and to the very large difference there is in the amount of taxation. The colony of Victoria receives £1 16s. per head of population by direct taxation, and this colony receives £5 10s. per head. [AN HON. MEMBER: A good job too.] If, however, we take the last quarter of the year then we find that the Government was receiving through the Customs the sum of £6 10s. per head. It is quite possible that at the present time we are able to afford such a taxation. I think we are able to afford it, but there are very grave considerations raised from the probable effects of this heavy tax. Without

doubt it is a heavy call on the people of this country, and what I desire to impress on the Government and the House is that the money raised in this way, the surplus provided by direct taxation, should only be spent in one way, and this is by carrying on works that can be stopped at a moment's notice, if ever the necessity for doing so arises. There should be no permanent increase in the expenditure of the country only because there happens to be a surplus. There may be a very bright time before us. For my own part, I think it is going to be very bright, but while there will be bright days, none of us can be sanguine enough to suppose there are not going to be any dark days. The wisdom of this House therefore will best be shown by there being no unnecessary increase in the permanent expenditure, and that whatever works are undertaken will be those which can be stopped at once. I do not feel disposed to cavil at some of the increases that are proposed, but speak generally, and in that I must repeat this year, what I felt it necessary to say last year, that the Government must be careful in the expenditure over the Civil Service. I do not ask that men should be underpaid—quite the contrary. I say that the men in the service of the colony ought to be well paid, and I believe the experience, not only of myself, but of every member who has had to do with the employment of large numbers of men is, that for good work you require good men, and that good men deserve to be well paid. It is better to have a few good men well paid than a lot of poor men poorly paid. I say let the salaries be such that the best man in the land can aspire to occupy any position in the service, and if we want good work let us pay good men to do it. While it will be an easy matter to increase the permanent expenditure of the country in this direction, I would like hon. members to bear in mind that we may not always be able to get the people of the country to agree to such a heavy burden of taxation as £5 10s. per head, and then we would find it difficult, if not impossible, to properly reduce the Civil Service, which would have become a permanent expenditure. For this reason, I can congratulate the Government on the fact that they propose to spend whatever money they can on public works of an unproductive character. This is the time to do such work as the building of a Court House. It is our own money, and, when finished, the building

is there. If, on the other hand, we proceed to do such works with borrowed money, we will probably place such a burden on posterity as it may be unable to bear. The Government is acting most wisely in the disposition of its revenue. Without doubt there is ample room to spend money, not only for comforts, but in providing necessities in connection with our public buildings, and these will be unproductive, so that they are such works as should be done out of revenue and not out of loan money. I may state here that, in my opinion, and in the opinion of many other people, the time has arrived, and the hon. member for Albany hinted at this in his speech, when the Departments of Public Works and Railways should be separated. The Railway Department is sufficient, if properly attended to, for the whole energies of one man, and the Public Works Department quite sufficient for the powers of another. The Government acted wisely in its reconstruction of the administration of Departments when it left room for a separate Minister for Mines, Post Office, and Education; but the Departments of Railways and Public Works have too much spending power to be in the hands of any single Minister, or for him to attempt their management, and with all the respect and esteem I have for the hon. gentlemen who fills the position now, I say the country is loading him too heavily when asking him to manage these two great spending departments. Therefore I say the time has arrived when the Government should either appoint another Minister, or else at any rate relieve the Minister of Railways of one or other of his departments. There is one regret I have with regard to the Budget—regret and disappointment, because I find that out of the large sum of money to be dealt with the Treasurer does not propose to make any proposal with regard to the 4½ per cent. Treasury Bills. I find there is £185,088 owing under this heading, and I regret no proposal is made for taking these up.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): They have been taken up, all but a small portion.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am quoting from the figures supplied to me a few days ago by the Treasurer himself. When was this paid?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Oh, long ago.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then what have

these other figures been supplied for. It is very peculiar.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): If you look at the statement you will find that the total amount now owing on account of the 4½ per cent. Treasury Bills is only £14,435.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The figures I have before me give the amount as £185,000, but if the Treasurer says these are wrong I am very glad it is so. I would have said we were doing a wrong thing to spend money on unproductive works, when we could pay off other moneys borrowed at such a high rate of interest. It would have been very wrong not to pay off these Treasury Bills.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Of course, but we have paid them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am very glad of it. Now, I want to say a word or two on a matter that presses very heavily on the Premier and every man in this country, and that is with regard to the falling away of our exports. I want hon. members to recognise particularly the cause of this falling away, and they will be able to trace it to its source. That source is the borrowing policy—our loan policy. I say the falling away of exports is the effect solely of our loan policy. If you take the trouble to notice the figures dealing with the last four years you will find that the exports of the colony have fallen away to the extent of £2,621,521, and that during the same time the public debt has increased by three millions.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Did you say the exports had fallen away to that extent?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I should have said the difference between the imports and the exports had increased by that amount. Of course the real basis of every nation and of every man's position is in being able to pay out as much as he takes in. If we cannot export as much as we import we are going back somewhere.

MR. RANDALL: Not necessarily.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: This question was settled long ago, in the time of Noah, and it is not necessary to discuss it now. In the case of a country borrowing in order to carry on unproductive works, it is really pawning the future. I have said there is a difference during four years between the imports and the exports of £2,621,521, and in saying this I quote from the report of the Commissioner of Customs. The public debt stands at

£3,417,339, but by deducting the sinking fund we have a net indebtedness of £3,278,808. During last year there was imported into the colony £239,990 worth of gold coin, £144,293 in railway material and rails, £15,750 on a dredge, or altogether £400,033 on what are practically Government importations. So far as the gold coin is concerned, that is really brought here through our loan policy. The effect of all loan policies is that the weight always falls upon the weakest productions. In every case where there is a loan policy the weight of the loan policy will fall upon your weakest producer, and at the present time the weakest producing element we have is the pastoral interest or industry, which is most backward of any producing industry and it consequently feels the effects of the loan policy most of all. The weakness of this industry was emphasised by the Hon. the Premier in his admirable Budget Speech, but if trouble is taken to trace the effect to its source it will be found to be in this direction. A loan policy falling upon the weakest presents the secret of the whole matter, so far as the position of the pastoral interest is concerned. There is one more matter I would like to speak about, and it is perhaps natural that I should do so. I want to say a word with regard to the mining industry and to ask the Ministry to stop continually telling us that mining is a burden on this country. I am really tired of the statement.

MR. A. FORREST: The Government have never said such a thing.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They have said it again and again.

MR. A. FORREST: Oh, no; they have said nothing of the sort.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You will find it in *Hansard*. The papers are full of it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Produce it. We have always declared quite to the contrary.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Now, instead of mining being a burden on the community, what do we find? The direct expenditure on mining last year was £102,280. For four years, which practically embrace the whole life of the industry in this colony, the amount expended only reaches £204,055. Now what is shown on the other side? Last year the receipts at the Customs were equivalent to £5 10s. per head of the population, and I am rather under than over the real position when I say there are on the goldfields of the colony over 25,000 people. That is, there are 25,000

people paying through the Custom House £5 10s. per annum each, or a total of £137,500. In regard to the miners' rights we have the figures of what was actually paid, and it amounts to £7,500. The rents for leases must be over £20,000 a year, so that for what we pay to develop the mining industry each year we receive £165,000 back in the way of direct taxation, against £102,280 which we spend.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That is not the whole of what we spend.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The whole on mining. I am speaking of the direct expenditure, and for that I quote the Premier, and of direct taxation, in which I quote the figures of the proper officers.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): But it is not the whole of expenditure on the goldfields.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Premier is very good at being exact when it suits him, and equally good at splitting hairs when he desires to do so. The estimated expenditure for the coming year is £33,536.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): But that is only for one Department.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then, beside all I have stated, how much comes into the Stamp Department from the fields? I am happy to see that the Postal Department shows a large increase in its income during the year. Where does it come from? Hon. members know it comes from the goldfields. There is a large increase in the Telegraph Department, and the Hon. the Director of Public Works tells us, with a smiling face, that the railways are paying. If it were not for the Yilgarn railway, the railways would not be paying, consequently in the general work of this country, the mines are not a loss, and in special expenditure more than pay for themselves. I have no desire whatever to ask for the mining districts more than they are entitled to, but I do ask that they receive a fair proportion, and in this I know the House and the present Ministry are fully prepared to do the mining industry every justice. Therefore, it will be seen that I am not at all disposed to cavil at the expenditure on the mining industry. There is one feature of the Estimates, in particular, to be lamented, and that is in the provision of what I might term "spoils for the victors." The hon. members who have most earnestly supported the Government have

shared well in the distribution of favors under the Budget.

MR. A. FORREST: And what about Nannine?

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): And what about Geraldton?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not know about either, excepting that whenever I have placed any request of a fair nature before any member of the Ministry it has been acceded to. Whatever has been reasonable has been granted. I am quite prepared to say that if the experience of the past in the matter of expenditure in my own district is a guide to what my experience of the future will be, then I am very well satisfied. There is a tendency to cavil at some of the items in the Estimates, but I do not regard the present as the time for entering into details. I will not now speak of items which are to be specially complained about. There are many of these, but they can be dealt with in Committee. I am now only speaking in a general sense. To sum it up, the Government found that the success the country had was far more than the success anticipated, and the Government find themselves with a large surplus. They are acting wisely in the way they are proceeding to dispose of it, and I hope that next year they will be able to tell the House and the country, not only that they have a large surplus, but that they propose to expend the greater portion of it in the same way. It is the more urgent that the Government should adopt this attitude because it is the first Ministry under Responsible Government, and what it does will form a precedent for others. It is therefore the interest of all that the Ministry should be supported in following proper guide lines, and in seeing that the unproductive works are paid for out of the revenue. It will be by following such a wise course as this that this colony will be able to escape the terrible catastrophes that have fallen on some of our sister colonies. I am glad to be able to congratulate the Government upon the wisdom they are displaying in this matter, and upon the fact that what they are doing is to lay the firm foundations of a wise administration, which must lead to a great and glorious future.

The Chairman left the chair at 6.30 p.m.

At 7.30 the Chairman resumed the chair.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (HON. A. R. RICHARDSON): There are one or two points which have arisen in this debate

I would like to make a few remarks upon. Regarding the statement of the hon. member for Nannine, that the rate of taxation per head of the population of this colony was much higher than that of Victoria, being £5 10s. or £6 10s. to £1 16s. per head, and that that showed that the people were heavily taxed. I would point out that the fact that the people are paying so much taxation through the Customs House is an indication of the big purchasing power or the wealth of the community, because it cannot be gainsaid that before people import largely, they are in the position to purchase. So the fact that the people of this colony are importing to the extent of £5 10s. per head of duty, shows that on the average they are wealthy, or they would not be able to pay such a large duty. In order to illustrate this argument, I shall suppose that in comparing one month with another it is found that the amount of taxation had fallen off by one half, and that instead of £5 10s. per head of duty being paid only £3 is paid. That would not give cause for congratulation, but rather would be deplored, because it would indicate that the purchasing power of the people had been reduced by one half. Another point and an important one, and one which accounts to a great extent for the large percentage of exports, is that a very large proportion of our products is gold, which must be regarded as a large factor in swelling the imports, because, unlike other products it always returns in the shape of imports. Wherever there is a community engaged in the production of gold, that community shows a large amount of Customs duties. In all other industries, farming or manufacture for instance, a large proportion of the products is exchanged for others, so that a very small portion of the national wealth of that community appears either as imports or exports. The rate of a nation's taxation cannot be judged by its imports. If it can be shown, however, that the duties are very high, then it may be inferred that the community is heavily taxed. It is recognised to a great extent now in the other colonies that the imposition of 20 per cent. taxes has had the effect of decreasing instead of increasing the revenue, and that the higher rate of duties re-acts and lessens the imports and the revenue. That has been the sad experience of Victoria. Instead of congratulating themselves that the amount of taxation per head is only £1 16s.,

the enlightened men of that colony deplore the fact and point to it as an index to the cause of the bad state of trade, and say it is a proof of the mistaken fiscal policy adopted in recent years of imposing high taxation. Therefore we in this colony should rather congratulate ourselves that the amount of taxation per head in duties is £5 10s. or £6 10s. When we reflect, Sir, that notwithstanding all that has been said about duties and *ad valorem* duties, the bulk of the duties prevailing in this colony are at the rate of 5 and 10 per cent., and that a minor number of articles are on the 15 and 20 per cent. schedule, we can realise that we are not over-taxed. I also wish to refer to the question of paying railways, and the circumstances that justify the Government in extending the railway facilities. I am not going to deal with the question as to whether the agricultural railways pay or not; but I wish to point out this feature of the question, that we should not regard a railway as a success because it produces a revenue, but that the advantage gained by the community through its construction is where its chief source of profit to the country is to be found. Taking, for instance, a railway carrying 10,000 tons of goods per annum to a distant district, at £5 a ton, the cost of carting to which district formerly was £20 a ton, it will be seen that a distinct and unmistakable gain of £150,000 per annum is made; and if 200 passengers are taken to Southern Cross per week, the saving in the difference of carriage—say £5 per head—means another £100,000. Thus altogether a saving of £250,000 per annum is made, which being capitalised at the rate of 5 per cent. gives a capital value of £5,000,000. That is not an absurd way of looking at the matter. The actual figures are there to support the argument, because the community who formerly had to pay £20 per ton for freight, only have to pay £5.

MR. MORAN: That applies to the farmer.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): Yes, and with greater force to the goldfields. I do not mean to say that the railways are paying an absolute percentage, but I think that if justification for their extension were wanted, it could be found in the saving of the cost of freight. Then there are possibilities of developing the country when the freights are reduced. Especially in this is the case in an

agricultural community, for by the reduction of the charge from £5 to £1 per ton, settlement would be encouraged. I wish also to make one allusion to the few figures given by the Premier, with reference to land settlement. He said there were now 486,000 acres, or about that number, under conditional purchase, while in 1893 there were 409,000, and that in round figures this showed an increase of 77,000 acres of fresh land taken up. Those figures do not state the position accurately, because the number of conditional purchases redeemed during that time have to be considered. These amounted to 26,000 acres, so that the actual increase was 103,000 acres. In a small community like this, I think that is very sound evidence of settlement, notwithstanding the desire to search for gold in preference to the more tedious work of settling the land. Hon. members have expressed regret at the slow rate at which agricultural production is proceeding. No doubt it would be better if the area under cultivation were larger, but the ratio is not so small as is supposed. The amount of land under cultivation at the end of 1894 was 193,197 acres. The population at about that time, not taking the maximum rate, was about 80,000 people, thus showing that there were 2½ acres under cultivation per head of population. It will be interesting to observe that, while the population has been increasing at an abnormal rate—so much so that we could hardly expect the cultivation of the soil to keep pace with it—in 1886, with a population of 40,000, the land under cultivation was 86,000 acres, or two and one-seventh acres per head. So that notwithstanding the rapid increase of the population, the cultivation of the soil has progressed even more rapidly. I shall conclude by congratulating the Premier on having had such a flourishing statement to make, and by joining in the wish that this or any other Government may never be tempted to be extravagant and follow a policy of wasteful and reckless expenditure because of a large revenue. I hope this or any succeeding Government will always bear in mind, as the hon. member for Nannine has pointed out, that while there is a large increase of revenue we should devote it to permanently good works, and not spend it in what I call bricks and mortar. Ever since I have sat in Parliament I have always opposed, and always shall oppose, the expenditure of money on unproductive works. I hope we shall never follow such a pernicious

and suicidal policy, but shall always try to do good with our surplus, so that when hard times come, we can congratulate ourselves on the possession of that which we cannot get at such a time.

MR. PIESSE: I rise to congratulate the Premier and the Government, and also the colony generally, upon the very satisfactory state of affairs disclosed in the Budget Speech, which shows that we have advanced considerably towards permanent prosperity. The hon. member for Albany has referred to the Agricultural Bank, which the Premier alluded to as an institution which will prove of great advantage to the farming industry. I wish to endorse that opinion, in spite of the statement that the Bank has incurred expenses representing a larger amount than it has actually lent. The Bank is only just commencing its operations, and the expenditure incurred is not to be wondered at in view of the procedure which has to be followed by applicants for loans, who are much delayed in consequence of the forms to be followed. I think that after the Bank has had a trial for a year or two, a more satisfactory account will be given of it than those who oppose it anticipate. Up to the present the amounts lent to farmers in my own district, and in other districts, have been advanced on safe security, and the advantages of the loans will be shown by increased production. The hon. member for Geraldton, when he opposed the establishment of this institution—although he professes to be a friend of the farmer—seemed to be under the impression that as soon as it started work, hundreds or even thousands of farmers would try to get all the money available.

MR. SIMPSON: They tried it, and the Manager stopped them.

MR. PIESSE: The Premier has told us that he was rather astonished to find that the people were slow to take advantage of the facilities offered by the Bank; and the reason is that the farmers are cautious, and do not intend to tie a millstone round their necks by borrowing money. I am as confident of the future of this Bank as I am that the man to whom this money is lent, under the direction of the manager, who is a practical man, will benefit thereby, and further, I am certain that the loss to the country will be comparatively nil. With regard to the land settlement referred to by the Premier, it is satisfactory to note that it is proceeding apace. Under a system of

agricultural areas, 135,000 acres of land has been taken up during the last three years. This, calculated with the amount already alienated, and the improvements which have to be made, means that a large area has been brought under cultivation. I think the Premier will soon have no need to provide for the importation of chaff, for by reason of the season we are now experiencing, a large area has been placed under crop, and there will be no necessity to import chaff next year. We have passed through seasons of depression which are unparalleled in the history of the colony, and last season was the worst, but, with the impetus given to the industry by the establishment of railway communication to agricultural districts, and with the splendid season now being experienced, the prospects are that in a short time the supply will overtake the demand. The hon. member for Nannine referred to a falling off in the exports, and in connection with this I would like to draw attention to one item, that of sandalwood, which has suffered through a depreciation of values. The quantity of this article exported last year was valued at £23,430. In 1889, £57,465 worth was exported, while a few years before the amount was £91,000. The volume of export was not much less, but the apparent falling off in the export of the article is accounted for by the depreciation of value, for last year it was valued at £6 per ton as against £10 per ton in 1893. This depreciation is caused through the loss in exchange and the depreciation of the value of silver in countries where sandalwood is exchanged for silver. This has brought about a falling off of £60,000 in five years. Wool has also depreciated in value. I am glad to find that the Premier intends to deal liberally with churches in regard to the abolition of the Ecclesiastical grant. I take exception to the statement of the hon. member for Nannine that the mining industry is more important than agriculture, although it has been the principal cause of the colony's prosperity; but it must be remembered that agriculture is of a more lasting advantage to the country than mining is, and I do not think the hon. member should take all the credit to his constituency for the progress of the colony. The agricultural industry we have always with us, but it has been proved elsewhere that mining is not a permanent industry.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Where would you get your market, were it not for the miners?

MR. PIESSE: We can always find a market.

I certainly think that the practice resorted to by mining members of disparaging one particular industry to benefit another should be deprecated.

MR. MORAN: I never did so.

MR. PIESSE: With regard to the reference made by the hon. member for Albany to the necessity for appointing more Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors in the Police Force, I think that if any appointments are made, the positions should be given to men who have been in the force for some years, and who thoroughly understand the working of the department, in preference to conferring the appointments upon outsiders. The men already in the force deserve some encouragement to do their duty, and I know of instances where deserving cases for promotion have been overlooked. The Education Department seems to be reaching large proportions, and general gratification must be felt at the provisions which have been made for the education of children. The hon. member referred to the need of technical training in the schools. Some provision has been made in the Estimates for the teaching of children in this respect, and no doubt it will be found to work to advantage. I am pleased to notice that the Under-Secretary of Education has an increase in his salary proposed, because he has been underpaid for a long time. The Post and Telegraph Department is also growing, and it is regrettable that the telegraph operators and others do not receive larger salaries, especially those at Perth and other centres where the work is very heavy. At Nannine, for instance, the officer in charge receives £140 a year; and in places far removed from the centres of population, the officers should receive fair remuneration for their services. Some men, who have been in the service for 25 years, are only in receipt of £180 to £200 a year, and that is no encouragement to them to do their duty thoroughly. The Bureau of Agriculture was mentioned by an hon. member, and that is an institution in which I take some interest. Not being a member of that body now, I can speak with less diffidence regarding it, and I must say that I feel that the Bureau has done excellent work in assisting agriculture generally, and also in disseminating knowledge and helping the people in every way. A book has been presented to hon. members dealing with Horticulture and Viticulture, which was prepared by one of the officers of the Bureau. It

is a credit to the Department, and will be appreciated by all people who are interested in the matters it deals with. I think we can well afford the proposed increase in the allowance to the Bureau, and if they continue in the good work they have undertaken—which is carried on without fee or reward—they deserve the thanks of hon. members and of the colony generally. I do not think there is anything else I need allude to. Speaking from an agriculturist's point of view, I hope hon. members will not lose sight of the importance of that great industry, and will afford at all times the help which those deserving settlers need, for I think we have ten or twenty times as much land available for cultivation as is under cultivation at present, and the time will come when we shall be able to supply all the wants of Western Australia.

MR. THROSELL: The hon. member for the Williams made some allusion to agriculture, and I feel that I should not allow this occasion to pass without saying something about it. I am aware of the very great advance that has been made in agriculture, and I do not wish to weary hon. members by going into details. We are not doing nearly as much as we should in the development of the land. I have ventured more than once, in this House and elsewhere, to draw the attention of the Government to the absolute necessity of advertising the land as any private individual would his own business. People are coming here absolutely ignorant of the capabilities of the soil in this colony, and I regret to learn that the Agent-General complains that he has not been supplied with information on that subject. It is a very great reproach upon us, especially at the present time, and I hope the Government will take such steps as will prevent the Agent-General from speaking on the subject in that strain again. With regard to agriculture itself, I feel very strongly on this point, that while every precaution is being taken to survey the land for settlement, no steps have been taken to settle a desirable class of people around the busy centres of population. I allude to the working men's blocks system that obtains in South Australia. We are embellishing and beautifying the city in every way in order to attract people to it, but we are affording them little or no means of obtaining a livelihood when they get here. The day of reckoning will assuredly come, and we shall then be in the same position as other cities have found themselves in. The first to desert us will



be the artisan, who is a thrifty individual, and just the man who is wanted in a growing country. I hope the Government will give special attention to this block system. I have received a report from South Australia dealing with the progress of the system up to the end of last year, and the result of the work in that colony is sufficient to justify the Government in introducing a similar system here. If we hope to make it a success, we must provide for the working man a piece of land within walking distance of his workshop or his daily labor. Land must be secured for the purpose, around a successful country township like my own, and in order to do this we shall have to face the re-purchase system. I believe that one of the best works the Government could undertake would be to re-purchase the large estates which were given away in the early days. Some hon. members, having extravagant views, would advocate a land-tax, but that method will not burst up these large estates, and if the Government wish to do their best for the development of agriculture, they must devise some means of re-purchasing the large areas of land in the Avon Valley which are alienated from the Crown. They can do so without expending a single sovereign of State money. The land could be purchased on debentures, redeemable in 25 years, say £10 debentures negotiable in the city carrying interest at 5 per cent., payable half yearly. People could take up the debentures instead of putting their money in the Bank, for the investment would be a very safe one. The result would be a 20 years' re-purchase deferred payment scheme, with compulsory improvements, with one-twentieth of the purchase money coming annually to the Government, who could re-expend it in the purchase of other lands or, better still, in buying up our own mortgage bonds. At the end of 25 years all available land in the Avon Valley would be settled on a Compulsory Improvement Settlement Scheme. As to the Budget Speech, I wish to congratulate the Government on the additional amount placed at the disposal of the Education Department. I think that £11,000 is all too small for the growing requirements of the colony. I hope that before the end of the year we shall have the magic six figures of population—100,000—for history tells us that when once the population reaches that figure, the colony will leap forward. In view of this, therefore, I think the amount voted

to that Department is not sufficient. One great cause for regret is the absence of a water conservation policy, not so much for the goldfields, for £43,853 is to be spent there, but for the Eastern districts, where, after a settlement of 66 years, nothing has been spent at all. A sum of £20,000 would give four towns in the Eastern districts a proper water supply, and they have frankly offered to pay 5 per cent. on the cost. What do we see now? In the Avon Valley hon. members will see God's good gift of beautiful water rushing away to the sea and lost to the people, while in the vicinity have to cart their water at half a crown per hogshead. I hope the Hon. the Premier will remain in office, but I venture to tell him that the future policy of his own or any future Ministry, when the railway policy is played out, must be a grand water conservation scheme for the whole colony. I am justified in making these remarks because I find that in the Administrator's Speech at the opening of Parliament the statement was made that the Government were considering a comprehensive scheme of water conservation for the larger towns of the colony. Hon. members will pardon me if I include in the term "larger towns," a certain town which shall be nameless, and which will long remain an important centre of the colony. I will name it, after all. It is Northam, the metropolis of the East. I congratulate the Government on the proposed increase of salaries of civil servants and hope the recipients are worthy of them. I should like to see a system of Life Assurance tacked on to the conditions of the Civil Service, in order that on the death of an employee of the State, his bereaved family should have some means of living. Some hon. members think that £600 is a large salary; but it is not, and I think it is a misfortune for any man in these days to be doomed to work in the Government service. I commend the idea of a State Life Assurance Association such as is in force in New Zealand which has done much good there, to the consideration of the Government. I think it is on record that in New Zealand at the present time, they have nearly two millions of money accumulations in connection with State life insurance, that have been loaned out by the Government. That money is loaned out for the development of the land. Coming to the question of the land again, wonder has been expressed that

further development does not take place. How is it that we may go through the Avon Valley and other places and see so much land lying idle? When hon. members talk of land, and land taxation, they run away with the idea that owners of land would not sell. I say there are a goodly number of owners who would sell if they could, and they would develop their land if they could. With all our boasted prosperity, I want to say, and I want to emphasise it too, that there is no money institution, besides the ordinary banks to which a farmer can go for assistance in the development of his land, and so I hail the well intentioned Agricultural Bank to aid the further development of old and large estates. When you recognise that fact you are recognising the reason why our lands are not being developed more rapidly. I heartily congratulate the Government upon their satisfactory increase of the vote for Roads and Bridges. I am glad to see the vote of £31,000 proposed, being as it is an increase of nearly 50 per cent. on last year. There is one matter to which I would refer before sitting down, and that is the question of the Ecclesiastical Grant, in which we have all taken so deep an interest. I think the settlement of this question is largely due to the hon. member for Geraldton. All honor to him that, upon every occasion when he has stood up in this House he has advocated its settlement upon liberal lines. I congratulate the Government upon having caught the idea of the hon. member for Geraldton, as well as other hon. members of this House, and have decided to propose a ten years' Capitation Grant paid in two instalments. I would like to see some provision made, if we could see our way clear, as to how the money is to be spent. I hope it will not be used to provide fixed salaries for drones in the hive, for men who have mistaken their calling. If it is used for this purpose, I for one shall very much regret it. If, on the other hand, it is used for providing a fund, for the payment of salaries to itinerating ministers of all the denominations, who will go upon our timber stations, and goldfields and such places, I shall think the money has been well spent. I believe the £30,000 odd will be cheerfully voted by hon. members, who will deal with the Churches liberally. If something is not done by the heads of the Churches in this colony, we shall but propagate a system that will be a very serious annoyance in the years that

are to come. I hope the Government will in some way seek to check the spending of the money. I know there are difficulties in the way, but I hope the Government will devise some means for overcoming them all.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I regret to say I have not studied the Estimates this year so much as I have done in the past. I should not, however, like the debate to close without expressing, as one who has known the colony in the days past, my great satisfaction at the satisfactory financial statement that has been placed before us. It is to me a source of very great gratification. I am sure the Government must feel every satisfaction in the delivery of the Budget Speech. The revenue has increased to an extent that the most sanguine never anticipated. But whilst our revenue has increased beyond our anticipations, I see our expenditure has also increased to an almost equal extent, if we may judge by the Estimates. We have been told by the Hon. the Premier that he estimates the expenditure at £1,537,496, which will wipe out our balance of £277,000, or will reduce it to £30,886, so that if the Hon. the Premier's estimate is correct we shall expend this year more than we shall receive. I think, however, the Premier very wisely under-estimated the revenue, and I congratulate him upon having done so. I think it is wise to do so. I do not agree with those hon. members who say the Premier should take a more sanguine view of the revenue. It always seems better at the end of the financial year to have a surplus reported of a couple or three hundred thousand pounds, rather than a deficit of any kind. I think if the Treasurer is erring at all he is erring on the right and safe side. I do not propose to deal with the Estimates in detail, though I notice they have very largely increased. Of course, as the colony goes ahead the requirements will be more, and the expenditure must increase in proportion. I wish to draw attention to one remark of the Hon. the Premier which is rather misleading. It was not done, I know, with the intention of misleading; but in dealing with the expenditure of last year he said we have spent less than the estimated expenditure "The estimated expenditure," he says, "to the 30th of June last was £954,465, and the actual expenditure £936,728, therefore we spent during last year £17,737 less than the estimate." That is quite true in one respect, but it is rather misleading in another. We find this House sanctioned expenditure on works and buildings of £42,210 which was not ex-

pendent. That money ought to have been spent. I do not think the Government can take to themselves credit that they have not expended that amount when it was voted by this House. Then, too, on Roads and Bridges, there was voted £11,749 for necessary works, and there is no doubt but that money has not yet been expended. We find the Government have expended a sum not authorised by Parliament amounting to £36,222.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Where do you get that from?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: From your Estimates.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think you have taken a lot of trouble.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Not at all; I have done it while sitting here to-night. When the Hon. the Premier says he has spent less than the Estimates, he does not say he has spent very much that was never authorised by Parliament. Taking the Miscellaneous Vote, that vote that the Hon. the Premier can put his hand upon at any time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We can give you all the items.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That vote upon which the Premier can lay his hand to give to first one hon. member and then another—I do not like using the word *sop*—but that vote has been exceeded by £4,900 or more. The Miscellaneous Vote has reached £8,377, without Parliamentary authority. I mention that, purely to point out that the statement of the Premier that they spent £17,737 less than was authorised, is misleading. In one respect it is true they have not spent the amount authorised by Parliament upon particular things, but they have spent more than the amount upon other things.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There are always overdrafts and underdrafts.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I notice in the Estimates there are several increases for certain officials. I do not object to increases as a rule, and I quite agree with the hon. members who have spoken with reference to increases for telegraph operators in the outlying districts. There is no doubt about it, that in many instances they are working night and day, and, when there is an interruption on the Encla line I understand they sometimes work for 36 hours. I do not know how many there are who are considerably overworked, or considerably underpaid. I think the principal officials in important districts, where the work is heavy, should have increases. I notice, however, that

some of these increases on the present Estimates are for officials who seem to me to get an increase every year, while some who are equally deserving are left out in the cold. I hope the Government will introduce a Civil Service Bill, so that officials will know the exact position in which they stand. It would be better for the heads of departments, and for the Minister too, instead of being pestered by friends of the officials, or the officials themselves, that they could say there is the Act, without which we can do nothing. Whilst dealing with the Civil Service question I should like to say a word with regard to the Civil Service Commission. If that Commission were not in existence I believe the Government would favorably consider the advisability of bringing in a Bill. The Royal Commission has now been in existence nearly two years. We do not know what they are doing. Before this session is over, if no hon. member moves, I shall move that the Commission be cancelled. The Commission may at the present time be doing good work, but, as far as this House, and the Government are concerned, I think we are all in the dark. At any rate they have had over 12 months to deal with one department, and they have not done it yet. I notice a large increase on the Estimates for the Bureau of Agriculture. In alluding to this question I want to compliment those gentlemen who have the control of that institution—I can hardly call it a department, seeing it is outside the Government. I believe money has been wisely spent in connection with that movement, but we need, as it seems to me, to closely watch it and be very careful. I think when we give large sums of money to private individuals to expend, when we give *carte blanche* to the extent we have done there; we need to watch the expenditure very carefully to see that it is spent wisely. We know at the present time of the enthusiasm of the gentlemen connected with the Bureau. Without enthusiasm I do not think anything could be made a success, and I think the success of the Agricultural Bureau is due to the enthusiasm of those gentlemen who constitute the Board. I say this notwithstanding the remarks made by the hon. member for the Williams. I think, however, it should be insisted upon that the accounts of the Bureau should be audited by the Auditor General. There is a balance-sheet placed before this House, but it is absolutely misleading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The

accounts are always audited.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That balance-sheet is not audited, and it is misleading. It shows they have a credit balance of £256, where as a matter of fact they have nothing of the sort. They have £250 placed on the Estimates for an Inspector of Forests. That is an item that has not been expended by the Bureau. They show a balance of £256, and yet £250 voted for this gentleman's salary is not available, and therefore should not be shown on their balance-sheet as it is. I only mention this to show the necessity of having the accounts of the Bureau properly audited, and so that full information may be presented to Parliament. The Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands, in dealing with taxation argued we are not heavily taxed, and stated that the bulk of the revenue was derived from the lower rates of taxation through the Customs. As a matter of fact the returns show that the heaviest amounts come from the specific rates, and the 15 and 20 per cents. The 10 per cent. yielded £261,000 odd. The 15 and 20 per cents. £345,000 odd.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What is that £345,000?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That is the revenue from Customs.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You are wrong. Page 8 of the Estimates will show.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I cannot agree with those hon. members who say we are not heavily taxed, when we derive so much revenue from Customs. The increase, I think, can be accounted for to a great extent by the influx of population, which has been greater than was anticipated, and by the fact that the agriculturists were not able to meet the demands, principally, of course, through bad seasons. I sincerely trust the prophecy of the hon. member for the Williams will be fulfilled, and that next year we shall derive no revenue from imported chaff, but that our own people will be able to supply the demand. At the same time I feel it is very hard that a heavy duty should be placed on those articles which our own people cannot produce, and I think the duty should be removed, even if it had to be placed on again afterwards. I know there is a difficulty in the way, but it is rather hard on those who have to obtain supplies for other countries, because of bad seasons in this, through which our own people cannot supply the demand. Some remark has been made about the Agricultural Bank. I think it is rather

too soon to speak of its operations, seeing it is not yet through its first year's operations. I consider the record of work hitherto shows that considerable caution has been exercised in the advancement of moneys. I feel perfectly certain that the gentleman who is at the head of that affair will guard the interests of the colony in the matter of securities upon which advances are made. I consider that mining has been the salvation of this colony. Very few will be found to controvert that statement. I must say that I think the mining community have reason to complain that upon the only mineral railway line in the colony there should be differential rates. The return called for by the hon. member for Yilgarn shows the marvellous returns of that line. I do not think that such lines of railway should be penalised for the agricultural lines. Upon agricultural lines every facility is given, and in some instances only half rates are charged for agricultural products and timber.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not half rates.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Yes. half rates for timber.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I do not know what you call full rates.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Timber is taken over the other lines at half the rates charged upon the goldfield railways.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Timber is carried over all lines at the same rates, and there is no difference made for timber being exported. The same rates are charged on timber being exported as upon that being carried up the country, upon lots over 200 tons.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That is an alteration made lately, and I am very pleased to hear of it. I hope the Hon. the Commissioner, who has now done justice in this respect, will go further and put all lines upon an equality, and not penalise one to make up the losses upon others. The hon. member for Northam expressed a wish that the Government would bring forward a water conservation scheme. I hope they will, and I would like to say that, with their large surplus this year, I should like to see a sum of £20,000 or £30,000 put upon the Estimates for artesian boring. That is a matter in which I think the Government would be justified in spending £40,000 or £50,000, even if a good part of it proved a failure; because if only one bore proved suc-

cessful, that would repay all the outlay. The experiment was tried in Queensland, and proved a great success, and a gentleman from there, who knows the truth of what he says, informed me that the discovery of water had practically made a new province. I think the Government should follow the example of Queensland, and send someone to America, or to Queensland, and find out the best methods, and best appliances, and secure the very best expert labor that they can obtain. I am sorry the Government have not yet realised the importance of this matter. There is another thing I should like to say, as we are likely to have a surplus again next year: the Government should be prepared to construct out of revenue some small lines of railway. They should have the surveys made ready to carry on the railway, say from Coolgardie to Hannan's.

MR. A. FORREST: They are going to do that.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Then we ought to have something on these Estimates for the work. I accept the hon. member's assurance and say, I think the Government should be prepared to lay the track right away when the Coolgardie line is completed, and to do it out of the revenue instead of out of borrowed money. If the money were required for revenue purposes in the future, it could easily then be replaced out of loan. This course would save interest on money borrowed. I think I have nothing further to say. I can only congratulate the country upon its successful and prosperous condition. I congratulate those gentlemen who sit upon the Treasury benches, upon the exceedingly fortunate time they have had since they have been in office; not that I doubt they would be equal to the occasion if adverse times were to come. I hope, however, they will not come too fast. I notice there is a lot of money going into bricks and mortar. I see there is a sum of £25,000 for a Supreme Court. I think a great deal less would do. I do not think we want large ornamental places where comfort is sacrificed to appearances. We want a good building, it is true, that may be an ornament; but we do not want too much money spent upon bricks and mortar. I notice it is only proposed to spend £4,000 this year. I think the Government might have put up a building costing say £10,000, and not merely spend £4,000. It appears to me they do not grasp the situation.

MR. SIMPSON: I am sure the country is to

be congratulated upon the splendid way in which its resources are being opened up. Wherever we look, new enterprise is taking place, and new resources are responding to the efforts of enterprising citizens; so much so that the Premier of the country is placed in a position to give us a statement that appears almost like a chapter from "the Arabian Nights." Huge increases of population are recorded. Our credit is of the soundest, and even whilst the Premier was favoring this country with his financial statement, we heard of the rains falling abundantly to bless the agriculturists of the colony. The Ministry have been so thoroughly congratulated upon their wonderful policy that I am myself almost inclined to believe that the rains were a part of their policy. There is no doubt a good deal in the contention of the hon. member for Nannine, that the people of this country are enormously taxed. I do not say they feel it as an extreme burden, but it is when looked at from a statesman's point of view, an appalling thing to realise that the people are taxed to the extent of over £5 per head. I am not one to prognosticate evil; we know there are good times and bad times in the lives of countries as of individuals, but it is beyond doubt, as it seems to me, that the people of this country will be unable to bear the extreme taxation of £5 per head.

MR. A. FORREST: Take it off, then.

MR. SIMPSON: It is extremely interesting to look at the way all forms of commerce are developing in this country. Speaking of the shipping trade alone, it is gratifying to us, as citizens of this country, to see how rapidly our mercantile shipping trade is expanding. I was much struck with this thought the other day whilst waiting on the Fremantle jetty the arrival of a steamer. It will be remembered that some time ago that huge vessel, the *Bothwell Castle*, collided with the jetty at Fremantle, during some extremely boisterous weather. Whilst I was waiting down there, there were three large steamers anchored out away from the jetty, because of the fearfully tempestuous weather, and at the same time there were three men and a boy employed on the repairs to the jetty. One of the shipowners complained to me very bitterly of the disgraceful neglect that had been exhibited at the very gate of the colony, and said the way the repairs to that jetty were being carried on was a disgrace to the colony.

MR. MARSHON: It was the weather.

MR. SIMPSON: It was not the weather. The hon. member for Fremantle always seeks an excuse for the Government, but he does not always find ready disciples to accept his teaching. Well, Sir, it is a very grave misfortune that the shipping at our chief port is being treated with that disgraceful neglect. A gentleman pointed out to me that the three large steamers that were then lying off could all have been berthed if the jetty had been repaired, as it ought to have been and as it would have been, if the work had been let by contract instead of being done departmentally. I watched this crowd of workers, these three men and a boy, and the boy did not seem to have much to do. That, however, is a small matter except, that it is indicative of the absolute neglect that is going on in connection with many of the important industries of this country. It means there is very large waste, and very much retardation of the development of the country. The Hon. the Premier, in alluding to the pastoral and agricultural industries, deplored the condition into which they had got. The causes of that condition, however, are largely beyond our control. The Premier expressed kindly sympathy, but he failed to hint at any form of suggestion for the relief of those industries. He availed himself again of the opportunity to make very indiscreet remarks about the great financial institutions of this country. I cannot imagine any greater calamity than for the remarks to go forth to the world, that were made by the Premier when speaking the other evening. He spoke of the financial institutions of this country in such a way as I believe was never known in history before. It was the most grievous mistake that was ever made either in this colony or in any other, when the Treasurer impugned the policy of the financial institutions of the country. Why did not the Premier stand up and say they were prepared to reduce the rates of interest and thus assist the people? With regard to agricultural settlement, I am one of those who are in hearty sympathy with the settlement of people upon the land. Allusion was made to me by the hon. member for the Williams, who was good enough to say I was a friend of the agriculturist. I do not follow the hon. member exactly on his lines, because I think many of the forms of assistance to agriculturists have led them into a fool's paradise. The Agricultural Bank has been alluded to,

I never did believe in it, and I never will until it is an established success in assisting the settlement of the land. As to people rushing down to town to secure assistance from the Bank, I can assure hon. members, upon unimpeachable authority, that the gentleman in charge of the Bank was afraid to move because of the security offered him. I believe if anyone can make a success of the Bank the present manager will do it. Following up the remark of the hon. member for the Gascoyne, I exceedingly regret that, with the large resources that are now in the hands of the Government, they have not initiated a large scheme for artesian boring. If they discovered only one artesian supply they would enhance the value of a very large tract of country. No one who knows or who has read the history of what artesian water has done for Central Australia can doubt what the results would be if we could have artesian water in our every district. With regard to the Agricultural Bureau I have only words of praise. My hope is that in the future it may be carried on in the same self-denying spirit and with the same energy that it has been carried on hitherto. I shall not oppose the proposed increased grant. I believe the Bureau is one of the best investments the country has made. It has spread abroad and is spreading abroad the very best of information. With regard to the railway returns, I should like to say, if hon. members look they will see in the Estimates very careful analyses given for every other department, but in the railways the receipts are put down in one lump sum, £293,000. We know there are tens of thousands of pounds that are from wharfwages. They are not railway receipts at all.

MR. MARMION: Fremantle revenue.

MR. SIMPSON: Yes, and other places as well. The rates for wharfage have also been increased since the railway department took the jetties over. These are exact facts. I am glad to see the Government propose to deal with the Ecclesiastical Grant. It may be helpful if hon. members express their views as to how the religious bodies are to be dealt with. I think it will be well for us, when the message comes before us, to consider whether the House should not determine the form of investment into which this fund should be placed. I know that many of the Churches have men who carefully guard the forms of investment into which funds like this shall be put, but I

think it worth while considering whether Parliament should not determine the form in which the funds shall be invested. There is another matter I would very much like to have seen the Government spend a considerable sum upon, namely the development of our timber industry. I think the House fails to realize the enormous wealth there is in the timber industry. I believe before very long our railway department will be very largely employed in hauling timber to our goldfields, particularly on the Murchison and Pilbarra, and other fields. Another small matter is the possibility of working up an export trade in timber for the block system. I think that in the city of Perth £20,000 might well be spent in putting down blocks of timber as pavements in the street to show what can be done.

MR. A. FORREST: Why did you not suggest it before?

MR. SIMPSON: The financial statement that has been submitted is indeed a hopeful one. It makes the country a pleasant one for the native born to live in, and it is equally pleasant for those who have made it their adopted home. The future is bright; and all it requires on our part are care and caution worthy of it. The hon. member for Northam made some remarks on the land question. I suppose there are few men who speak more wisely or with more experience upon the question of the settlement of the land than he. There is very much force in what he suggested, as to settlement upon the land. I congratulate the country upon the splendid way it has responded in every direction to the assistance that has been given to it. I am happy to be a member of the Legislature to welcome the statement put before us by the Hon. the Premier.

MR. LEFROY: I do not intend to protract this debate to any great extent, but the occasion of a debate upon the Budget Speech is generally used by those opposed to the Government, as an opportunity to discuss their policy. There is one thing that is very satisfactory to my mind in the statement laid before us by the Hon. the Premier, and that is with regard to the finances. The financial statement has not been cavilled at to any great extent, by those cultured and versatile critics, the hon. members for Albany and Nannine. That is a very satisfactory thing to me. I feel very certain that from the position those gentlemen hold, if there were a lack of any great improvements they could and would have

pointed them out, in connection with the statement made by the Premier. They would do so in justice to the country. The hon. member for Nannine dwelt very much upon the fact that this colony was at the present moment paying something like £5 10s. per head taxation through the Customs. To me it does not appear strange that it should be so. Hon. members should remember that in this colony there is probably a larger proportion of adult population, than in any other part of the world. They are nearly all adult males who come to this colony. I might also mention the fact that last year, out of the revenue derived from Customs, three-eighths of it were derived from spirituous and fermented liquors and from tobacco. I am quite sure the hon. member for Nannine will not approve of that. I believe if we were to take the duty off everything else, and leave those duties on, we should still be reckoned as paying about £3 per head. I think the amount of taxation does not show anything extravagant when we remember the large influx of a male population. The finances show we have passed through a year of very great prosperity, but I venture to say that never perhaps during the history of the colony was there so much distress among the agricultural and pastoral people of the country. This fact was dealt with very largely by the Premier, and I am happy to know the Government are keeping their eyes upon those interests, and that they are thoroughly aware of the depression in so many quarters. I think a very great deal of the depression will soon leave us, because we are having a better season this year than we have had for many years past. I am hoping we have now left the low-water mark. If only the price of the greatest staple product of Australia, wool, would go up a little, I think our colony would be in a very much better state of permanent prosperity than it is in at the present moment. I do not think it a serious matter that the Hon. the Treasurer should under-estimate the revenue, I think it much better that he should do so. I think it must be a very difficult thing under the present circumstances of the colony to make a correct estimate of the revenue. This is a very different country, and in a very different position, to Victoria, for instance, which is probably stationary at the present moment. I fancy it would be much easier in that colony to come nearer the mark than in this where we cannot possibly foresee what

is in the immediate future. I am not one of those who think it is such a pity to spend certain amounts of public money upon public buildings. I think our public buildings in several respects are a disgrace to us. There is nothing that strikes a stranger to any country more than a noble pile of splendid public buildings. I do not believe in throwing money away. I think in Melbourne they have spent rather too much money in this respect, but some of our public buildings are not in proportion to the position the colony holds among the countries of the world. I am pleased an amount is set down on the Estimates for improvements in this direction. The hon. member for Geraldton had not very much to find fault with, except that only three men and a boy were found working at the Fremantle jetty, and that the Government were leading some of our farmers into a fool's paradise. I hope the people are not so foolish as to be led into a fool's paradise. I think when people go on the soil it is generally after mature consideration. They do not do so hurriedly, like some people take up shares in a gold mine. I hope the people who go on the land will do so to their own advantage, as well as that of the country. I thoroughly believe, with the hon. member for the Williams, there will not be so much chaff and other agricultural products imported this current year, as were imported last year. I think the Premier is quite right in not estimating the revenue higher than he has done. I feel proud to think that our country is in such a flourishing condition; and I am sure, when in future years our children and our grand children read the history of this colony and its gold-fields, it will read to them as some fairy tale. It is most interesting at the present moment to watch the development of this country, and I feel glad to think that we have at the present moment, as members of our Ministry, a body of men moved by patriotic motives, who will, I am sure, do their best to lead this country on to the prosperity to which we all look forward; but if they fail, it will not, I am sure, be done on purpose, but through pure misadventure.

MR. MORAN: After waiting for an opportunity to say something in this debate, I think we may now surmise that the "big guns" on both sides of the House have fired off their charges, and that the smaller artillery may have play. Without complimenting the

Government on the present state of the colony—that being a song of which the House is getting rather tired—my intention is to touch briefly on some prominent features of the Budget Speech. I wish to promise my remarks by taking exception to the oft-repeated assertion of the hon. member for the Williams, that the mining representatives in this House are fond of twitting the agricultural portion of the population with being insignificant and unimportant. Speaking for myself, I must say that never on any single occasion during the two sessions I have been in this House have I opposed any measure brought forward for the benefit of agriculturists. Since the hon. member uttered his complaint this evening, I have taken the trouble to look through the *Hansard* record for last session—[MR. PIESSE: Look through the reports for this session]—and I say that if the hon. member makes such an assertion as to last session, or this session, and does not prove it, the failure to produce proof will discount any assertions of a like character he may make in the future. Speaking for myself, and I think the hon. member for Nannine will be able to vindicate himself as clearly, I do not think any mining representative in this House has shown antipathy to any measure brought in for the benefit of agriculture. The imputation thus cast on the mining members is altogether contradictory to the facts as revealed in the *Hansard* reports I have referred to. I think I have supported agricultural railways when proposed in this House, although, perhaps, they have not had too many recommendations to warrant their construction at the present time; but I supported them from a desire to see justice and fair play, and perhaps a little more than fair play, rendered to the people in agricultural districts, and I have never begrudged my support to them whenever I thought it would be to their advantage that particular works should be undertaken. Therefore I repudiate the complaint of the hon. member for the Williams when he says certain members of this House talk as if the mining industry were the only industry in the colony, and that these members cast slurs on the agricultural industry. [MR. PIESSE: "Twitted," I said.] I hope you (Mr. Piesse) will deal more in fact, for the future, and less in assertion.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Yilgarn is out of order in addressing himself to the hon. member for the Williams.



MR. MORAN: I hope the Chairman will protect me against the hon. member's interjections. I will now refer to the revenue derived from the railways, as being the most important feature in the Premier's Financial Statement. I have before me the return I called for on the subject of railway revenue, and it is now almost a part of ancient history, so long a time having elapsed between the time I called for it and the date at which it was laid on the table. I am sorry the return was not furnished some time ago, as I had hoped to have had an opportunity of tabling a motion in reference to it. However, the return shows that the total receipts from Government railways during the last year were £293,000, and that the receipts from the Yilgarn railway alone amounted to £146,000, that one line having produced exactly one-half the total received from all the railways. As to the return itself, I am not altogether satisfied as to the way in which the statement has been made out, but it establishes the fact that the earnings of the Yilgarn traffic over the railway between Fremantle and Southern Cross amounted to one-half of the total earnings obtained from all the Government railways in the colony. I am taking the traffic earnings of that goldfield railway separately as a basis of calculation, for convenience, and I am reckoning the population on the goldfields served by that railway as being in round numbers 20,000—including Dundas and all the different centres on those fields. The return shows that the total earnings of the railway between Northam and Southern Cross was last year £112,518. Then there is the astounding statement that the total traffic earnings of the railway between Fremantle and Northam were £138,161, and out of this total we have to credit the goldfields with only £28,221, leaving to the Northam line as ordinary traffic a balance of £109,940. It is a hard thing to contradict an officially prepared report of this kind, and yet I fear there is some fallacy in it, because if there was £112,518 earned between Northam and Southern Cross, there must be something wrong in the statement of the amount earned over the other length of railway. Later on, I propose to question the accuracy of this official return, and to examine the system on which the totals are made up. I say the department has not credited the goldfields traffic with a sufficient proportion of the

earnings, for I believe the direct and indirect earnings of the Yilgarn railway alone amount to considerably more than half of the total amount of the railway earnings in the colony. I will now refer to a debate which took place in this House last session, and will read just one quotation of remarks made on an occasion which will be well within the memory of hon. members. I was speaking on the question of the high railway rates charged for goldfields traffic, and am reported in *Hansard* as having used these words:—"Finally, he asked the Government to say whether, if they found the Yilgarn railway was more than paying the working expenses, they would reduce the rate of freights to the ordinary scale." The Commissioner of Railways in his place replied, "Yes." Then I added, as stated in *Hansard*, that I hoped the Government would stick to that promise. That is the official record of what was said. [A MINISTER: That is not correct.] Well, there it is, reported in *Hansard*, and I say if the *Hansard* reports are not correct, I wish the Government would take the trouble to see that they are made correct, because a responsible statement of that kind, appearing in the official record of debates, must carry considerable weight. I say the time has come for the Commissioner of Railways to vindicate his promise. I say that if the direct earnings on that line last year were £112,518, as appears in the return I have referred to, the time has come when that promise made by the Minister may, with justice, be carried out. That amount of earnings must be well above the working cost of that railway, and above the cost of interest on the capital outlay. I will endeavor, later on, to place before the House a statement showing what is the exact percentage of earnings on the total cost of construction and the working expenses, and then we shall see what the Minister's promise is worth, and we shall see also how much the Yilgarn railway is paying towards some of the duffer railways in other parts of the colony. I believe that those members who are always laying before this House questions and little requests for the Agricultural Bureau will be pleased to see that we who represent the goldfields are not only willing to give to the agricultural railways and other proposals of that nature their just due, but something more than their due, and these members will, I hope, recognise that the time has come for them to give to the goldfields com-

munity an opportunity for getting our mining machinery and other necessities carried by railway at the ordinary rates of charge, instead of those specially high rates which have prevailed since the Yilgarn Railway was opened to Southern Cross. I hope that, instead of imputing motives to mining members in this House, those hon. members who represent agricultural districts will deal with our proposals in the same spirit in which we deal with theirs. I, for one, strongly supported the proposal to establish the Agricultural Bank. I also strongly supported the proposed agricultural railway to Bridgetown; and I say the goldfields members have supported every practical proposal made in this House for advancing the interests of agriculture. Surely, therefore, when I come forward with a request that justice be done to the mining community which I represent—and we do not want to pay less railway freight than the people who use railways in other parts of the colony—I hope I shall obtain the sympathy and support of every fair-minded member in this House. Passing now to the general revenue of the colony, the amount received from Customs last year was £513,000. The hon. member for Nannine has supplied me with a basis of calculation, in stating that every member of the community pays an average of £5 10s. to the Customs in taxation on dutiable imports. Therefore, taking the population of the Coolgardie and neighboring goldfields at 20,000 persons—nearly all male adults—and reckoning only the same average of taxation per head for these male adults, we find that the Yilgarn district alone contributed last year through the Customs £110,000; and we may expect that, with the increase going on, the amount received from these people will be increased in this current year to £120,000 or perhaps £130,000. Coming now to mining revenue, the total amount paid to the Government last year was £51,049. Taking a moderate estimate of the proportion paid by the people residing on and connected with the Yilgarn goldfields—including as they do Southern Cross, Coolgardie, Hannan's, White Feather, I.O.U., Kurnalpi, Mount Margaret, Black Flag, Siberia, Broad Arrow, and other rapidly growing centres, also including the Dundas field—I am sure my figures are below the mark when I say that the Yilgarn goldfields paid £30,000 out of the £50,000 received. I think that must be

below the mark, considering the revenue which these people pay on account of leases, business licenses, miners' rights, and so on. It may be said again, as it has been said before, that in this House I advocate the mining interest alone; but my answer is that I prefer to mind the business and the interests of those I was sent here to represent, and to look after the concerns of my own constituency; for it is only just to them that facts should be stated in this House, and that when my constituents are paying a large revenue to the country, the Premier and the Government should not pass too lightly over the matter of this revenue. When we see the mining population are paying to the revenue more than half of the total amount contributed by the whole population of the colony, this fact gives a large handle to those who advocate a water supply and other necessary conveniences on those growing fields which have not yet received sufficient attention from the Government or this House. The facts I place before the House, and the remarks which may be made upon them, will be recorded in *Hansard*, and I think the country will recognise the justice of the claims made on behalf of these goldfields. The amount of revenue received from business licenses must be considerable, and I put it down as being at least £2,000; the amount for postal services I estimate roughly at £10,000 received from these 20,000 people on the Yilgarn goldfields, and they are all persons who have some correspondence through the post office. If the amounts I am estimating are considered too high, I challenge contradiction of the figures. Coming now to stamp duty, the total revenue for last year was about £22,000; and, considering the large transactions upon the goldfields in the sale of leases—transactions so large and frequent that this colony had never before seen, or even dreamt of, transactions of this magnitude occurring here until the recent great developments changed the condition of the colony—I estimate that about £7,000 of the total was contributed from these goldfields alone. Coming next to telegrams, if there is one department that the mining industry has kept going and helped in expanding, it is the telegraphic department; for only those of us who are actively interested in the mining industry, and have to send or receive dozens, scores, hundreds of telegrams within a short time can be fully aware of the vast amount of telegraphic business now carried on in connection

with these goldfields. To illustrate, I may mention that on last Saturday, in connection with public business, I received ten telegrams from various parts of my own constituency; the messages and the replies had to be paid for: and I am sure the members of this House who are connected with mining have paid in one month more than £10 for telegrams and cables alone. Every person who is actively connected with shares and mining in this colony does his business by the quick process of telegraphing, for if you want to be up to time in business of this kind you must use the telegraph. Taking £38,000 as the total revenue received for telegrams last year, I estimate that quite £18,000 of this amount, or one-half of the whole, was received for telegrams in connection with the Yilgarn goldfields. For the water supply I take the revenue at £10,000 for the year. Now, putting together all these sources of revenue, as I have estimated them, the proportion paid by the Yilgarn community will be:—Railways £146,000, Customs £110,000, Mining revenue, £30,000, Licenses £2,000, Postal £10,000, Stamps £7,000, Telegrams £15,000, and Water Supply £10,000; making a total of £324,000 paid by the community on these goldfields alone. I think there is a Minister or two left to reply, and surely they will have listened to what I have said, and will have an opportunity to contradict my figures, if that be necessary. Let us have open and fair debate upon facts and principles; and, when we quote figures and facts, we should be prepared to stand by them. But I say the figures I have given are below a fair estimate, rather than above it. Then we have the estimated expenditure for mining purposes during the current year, amounting to £33,000 for the administration of the whole of these goldfields. We have for Water Supply £43,000. [THE PREMIER: £20,000 of that is spent already.] Well, that leaves £23,000 remaining to be expended. We have also the upkeep of railways to goldfields, and of postal services. Turning to the salaries paid to officers in these services on the goldfields, you will find the highest salary is less than £200, and the rest range down to £80, while the total amount paid for the postal and telegraph services on these goldfields is not much. Indeed these under-paid servants are so over-worked that we have succeeded in killing four or five at Coolgardie—killed with over-work. I

have seen these over-worked servants on duty at all hours, and I dare say some hon. members in this House, when visiting the goldfields—probably the hon. member for Albany can bear me out by what he has seen there—have seen these public servants working till three or four o'clock in the morning. I am endeavoring to show, by these remarks, that when we came forward with just claims for the goldfields community, we are not putting forward any extraordinary claims. Indeed on this occasion I am simply vindicating those who have recognised the fact that a considerable revenue comes from these goldfields, and that the colony depends on them very largely for its prosperous and improved condition. There will be further claims for water supply; and I say that, before the coming summer is over, and notwithstanding all the welcome rain that has fallen during this winter, there will be some extraordinary demands on the Government for water supply at the new mining centres of population. There is no doubt that will be so, and, besides that, we must remember that there is a growing agitation in the large centres for the Government to do something for the sanitation of the towns, by making some provision for sanitation outside the boundaries of the municipalities, where large numbers of men are congregated, and where some sanitary arrangements should be enforced for protecting the general health of the community. From Coolgardie and Hannam's, in particular, the Premier will have received representations that there is no precaution taken outside the town boundaries for protecting the public health. The necessity for making this sanitary provision should be looked upon as a public duty. No doubt Perth and Fremantle have both suffered from the fever which has been brought down from the goldfields—not through any inherent unhealthiness of the goldfields climate, but simply from the fact that sanitation is not duly attended to outside the town boundaries. These are the only two items—water supply and sanitation—that I now ask the Government to keep their eye on. When extraordinary demands such as I have indicated are made on the Government, I hope they will deal with them promptly. I cordially support the member for Northam in his agricultural demand that something should be done by way of forcing settlement along the

unused lands of the Avon Valley. I will not detain the House longer. I hope the Government will take the opportunity of replying to what I have said, by admitting the facts stated, or by showing that they are fiction. I have struck what I believe to be a fair proportion, in my estimate of the revenue received from these goldfields, and I have shown that, besides the general impetus given to the trade of the colony by these goldfields, and the indirect revenue received through the Customs, as well as the railway revenue from goldfields traffic, these goldfields have returned to the Government a large direct revenue from leases, licenses, stamps, and miners' rights. In reference to the claim of these fields for a reduction of railway rates to the ordinary level, I intend to table a motion before long with the object of doing justice to the mining community in the matter of railway rates, by enabling these people to have their mining machinery and raw material carried to the fields at ordinary rates. I am sure the increase in trade, and the development of the fields that will follow as a consequence of the reduction in rates of carriage, will more than repay the Government for any immediate loss of revenue on the goldfield lines.

MR. GEORGE: I do not intend to make many remarks in this debate, which cannot, however, be considered to be unprofitable, because so many experts have given us the benefit of their special knowledge, and supplied us with figures which no one has yet controverted. I must draw attention to the fact that there is not a quorum present.

THE CHAIRMAN: I find there is now a quorum present.

MR. GEORGE: I think the Financial Statement given by the Premier is one we can all be proud of—one which the Premier should be proud to have had the opportunity of delivering to this House and to the whole world. It is a tale of prosperity which the last year has given to this colony, and it also gives a fair picture to those persons in other parts of the world who may be looking with interest to Western Australia, as to what this colony has been in the past year and what it is likely to be in the coming year. One part I would draw attention to is the fact that the old idea which was prevalent, that persons coming here from other colonies or different parts of the world would be viewed with jealousy by those who

have been long in the colony, is now dispelled, and the Premier, in his statement, has shown that we are all desirous of inviting and welcoming people who may come here from outside, to cast in their lot with us and help us to push the colony ahead. Another thing I must congratulate the Premier on, and I was pleased that he had the courage to state it so emphatically, and that is the fact that railways in purely agricultural districts can be made to pay in this colony. As a representative of an agricultural district, I am glad to have heard that statement made on such high authority; and I hope that the Premier, feeling the full weight and significance of his statement on that point, will not refuse to other agricultural districts the same facilities that he and his Government have given, with the consent of Parliament, to the south-western districts. [MR. R. F. SHOLL: Your railways will not pay.] I decline to accept the hon. member for the Gascoyne as an expert in railway matters, and, any way, it was a very fair experiment for the country to make, and I hope the country will make a few more such experiments. While the Premier was speaking, I interjected that the £40,000 which he proposed to vote for the purchase of additional rolling stock was too small a sum for the requirements of the present railways; but he assured me, with all the weight of his position, that this sum was all the country could afford to spend at present. I was sorry to hear that.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): I did not say that is all we can afford.

MR. GEORGE: Well, I so understood it; and I think the interjection I made, that the amount was too little, was fully warranted by the fact that the railways in this colony have not sufficient trucks for working one half the present traffic properly. The state of disrepair in which the rolling stock—the locomotives, the trucks, and the coaches—are in now is absolutely disgraceful to the department; and when we find that only £40,000 is put down in the Estimates for additional rolling stock—when we find also that it is almost impossible to get imported goods conveyed away from Fremantle as the great receiving depôt of the colony—then I say my interjection was quite justified, and is deserving of more than passing note. There can be no question as to the rolling stock being in the state of disrepair that I

have described, for if any hon. member who understands the matter, or has even a little superficial knowledge, will take his stand near the railway, say in Perth, and see and hear the locomotives knocking and knocking as if they were old tin-kettles, or if he will go to Fremantle and see the dreadful state the locomotives there are in, and will observe the way they knock and rattle like old concerns, that practical observation will convince him that £40,000 is far too little for the purchase of additional rolling stock. And I say this state of things is a disgrace to the department which pretends to supervise these old locomotives and trucks, which are the things that should earn freight for making the railways pay. The Commissioner of Railways may deny that this is so, but the facts are there to be seen.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The £40,000 is for additional rolling stock.

MR. GEORGE: Yes; but I say the locomotives being in this bad state of repair, £40,000 will not provide additional rolling stock sufficient for immediate requirements. It is a notorious fact that stuff imported into Fremantle is lying there spoiling, because you have not sufficient rolling stock for conveying the stuff up the line to Perth and other places. Two years ago there was a great outcry in this country about the want of trucks and the consequent block at Fremantle, and when the Commissioner of Railways went there to see the state of things for himself, what did he find? Goods were lying outside the sheds exposed to the weather, and no tarpaulins even for covering them temporarily. Then a great effort was made to build more sheds, and they are available now; but the imports have been increasing, and the sheds are filled with goods which cannot be conveyed away fast enough for want of railway rolling stock. Only the other week at Fremantle, I saw huge piles of imported produce which this country does not yet grow in sufficient quantity, though I think it will do so before long, and this imported produce was uncovered, without even tarpaulins to protect it from rain. I say that proper management would have had the foresight to arrange for the erection of sheds sufficient for the increasing traffic, in order to prevent the loss and ruin that are going on now. With reference to the cost of constructing new railways in this country, the latest contract let was at the very low cost of £500 per mile for construction. That is a circumstance which we cannot hope

will continue in this colony; but I ask the Government to consider that the amount of money they will save between the actual amount of the railway contract and the amount of the departmental estimate for the work might be fairly and equitably devoted to providing the requisite rolling stock required for carrying on the railway traffic of the country. If the Government can apply the money in that way, I, for one, shall be well pleased. There is another item in the Estimates for additional improvements to opened railways, £40,000. I do hope some information will be given us before we commence to debate each item, and that is an item which might fairly be explained.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We will give all the information.

MR. GEORGE: There is another item I would like to see, in connection with the Public Works Department—that is I would like to see in the Estimates some item from which compensation could be drawn in cases where the unjust and stringent clauses of contracts press hardly on contractors, and under the conditions of which redress for contractors is practically out of the question. During this session we have had an attempt made to bring into this House a notorious case wherein a contractor has been dealt with unjustly and unfairly by the Works Department. The man is now left out in the cold, pressed by conditions which are absolutely unjust and tyrannical—conditions under which no honest contractor can do justice to the work and justice to himself, without finding himself brought before the very man who made the conditions, to decide the points at issue. This is the only country I know of where the Engineer-in-Chief is allowed to be the sole arbiter on conditions he himself made in a contract. It is a scandal, and prevents a better tone obtaining among the contractors for public works in this colony. To show how the system operates, there is an estimate prepared, say, by the Public Works Department; and the whole reputation of the departmental heads being dependent on the question whether the amount of the estimate is exceeded or not, there is no care whatever as to what expedient is used, provided the work is kept within the amount of the estimate, but if exceeded at all, and something has to be paid which is not provided for in the estimate, still if, by hook or crook, the Department can

manage to screw a contractor down, they do so, and it is nothing to the Department if they ruin him, so that he finishes the contract.

THE CHAIRMAN (referring to an interruption): My conduct having been challenged this evening for allowing any interruption at all while a member is speaking, I shall be glad if hon. members will allow the hon. member for the Murray to have absolute silence during the continuance of his speech.

MR. GEORGE: There have been recent washaways on the South-Western railway, and I would like to point out that, in making surveys for new railways, it would be well for the department to give some attention to representations made by the "oldest inhabitant" in the district as to the rainfall. That authority as to the weather may be looked upon by skilled officers of the Works Department as being merely a mythical individual; but, all the same, I say that if "the oldest inhabitant" in the South-Western railway district had been consulted as to the quantity of rain falling at periods, there would have been given to the department valuable information, which might have prevented these washaways. There can be no question about the correctness of any of my statements, because they are based on facts. If there is one thing more than another that the public works policy tends to foster, it is that the present system of the department is causing to grow up a huge system of day work. What on earth do the heads of the Works Department mean by it? Instead of fostering private enterprise and encouraging a race of small contractors, who would form a nucleus of their own several staffs of workmen, and be able to do the contract jobs let out by the department in a cheaper and more economical manner than the Government could do the work, on the contrary, there seems to be a feeling on the part of the Government to go on extending this policy of doing work by day labor, instead of letting it out in small contracts. There are, for instance, the Fremantle harbor works, about which we hear so much; and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that this work, if let out to contractors, could have been done at a much less cost to the country, and up to the full demands of the Engineer-in-Chief. But the department prefers the policy of doing this and other works by day labor, and, by allowing it to go on, this

House will be multiplying the staff of officers, who have to be paid large salaries; and, what is more dangerous, you will be gathering around you a large crowd of day workers, who may find here, as has been found elsewhere, that their very existence depends on the election or continuance in power of a party, or a Government, which will pursue a policy of borrowing and spending on public works, in order to provide employment, at any cost, for the crowds of workers attracted here by this dangerous policy. We have seen the evil results of that system in Victoria, and I hope this colony will take a cautionary lesson, and will bear in mind what has been the misfortune of other colonies which have depended too much on loan expenditure. I know that, in Victoria, £56,000 was spent on the construction of one railway, and within nine months of its completion the Government, finding they had made a huge mistake, that there was no traffic or revenue to speak of, suddenly changed their plan, and pulled up the rails and sleepers which had been laid; and there are now 18 miles of earthwork, with bridges, standing useless to this day, as a monument to the folly of carrying out this most suicidal policy of political log-rolling. I hope and believe the Premier here has too much sense to allow himself to be carried away by such influences; and I do hope the idea of making the Government in this colony a huge employer of voters whose very existence depends on the carrying out of a public works policy at any cost, will be stopped and done away with entirely. I would also like to see some rule—and in this matter some older politicians than myself can probably say whether the idea is practical or is not, though I am perhaps too young a member to speak with authority and weight on the matter—I would like to see some system by which each electoral district should be able to ascertain, from year to year, how much of the public money available it should have spent on works within its area, instead of the people in any district being made to feel that, whatever they may get now as the result of importunate solicitations by their member or by deputations, it is given to them as a favor. As far as my own district and its wants are concerned, I can freely say that the Premier has been very kind whenever I have gone to him and put any public requirement before him. I do not know whether it is due the fact that I

have not asked for anything unreasonable; but still I would like to feel that as to the district I represent, what is granted to it is given at a right and not as a favor, and not that I should have to go to a Minister and importune him into giving me that as a favor which should be the right of the district. The hon. member for Northam spoke of the increases of salary to various officers. I am not an advocate of poorly-paid servants, and have never, as an employer, paid a poor wage, therefore I would like to see better salaries paid to good servants, and I would like to see fewer men employed, and of a better class, to carry on the Public Works Department. I would like to see more individual action on the part of officers, and less of red-tape formality. I do not like to see, as it has been my ill-fortune to see while acting as a member of the Civil Service Commission was enquiring into the Works and Railways Department, huge piles of paper referring to matters of routine, and what are they all about? They are about small matters which an ordinary man of business would dispose of in a much shorter way. I say, put at the head of a department better men; who will know how to get through the work expeditiously, without piling up these heaps of paper records, instead of spending £25,000 in building a new Supreme Court, we shall, if this red-tape system goes on, have to spend £250,000 in building a record room of sufficient capacity for storing these accumulating heaps of useless paper, and then probably have to vote £25,000 annually for clerks to keep the record in proper order. We may, by the way, have to start a paper mill for ultimately grinding up these paper records, which are being piled up now in all directions. There is another matter. Recently the Commissioner of Railways called on me to bear witness and to bless the fair treatment his department mete out to contractors; but, as I could not conscientiously bless, I did my best to do the other thing. I now re-assert, with all the weight I can, what I previously said as to the way in which public accounts are paid in connection with the Works and Railways Department. I say again the system is a disgrace to the department; and I say it without fear of contradiction. I say that, if the Treasurer would only look into the matter, he would earn the thanks of the community; for the fact is that, at present, after persons have done work for that department, they cannot tell when they will get the

money. The excuse may be that the account is not passed, or the voucher has been lost, or some such excuse. That sort of thing occurs more particularly in the Public Works Department; and there have been some great instances of it within the last few months. After I had referred to it in this House on a previous occasion, I found that one of the largest accounts was paid two days afterwards, and I believe the Commissioner had himself inquired into that case. The Treasurer would earn the thanks of the people by investigating the cause of these delays and putting a stop to them as soon as possible. My remarks in this debate, have been addressed to the Government, with the object of showing how the Treasurer's financial statement has struck me; and although many of us may differ from the Premier on various points, still our remarks, if taken in the proper way, should be of considerable use to him for the information they convey, and I hope that on this occasion they will result in some good.

His Excellency the Governor, £1,446:

MR. R. F. SHOLL said some attention should be drawn to this item, and it appeared as if some explanation from the Premier was necessary. There had been laid on the table of the House certain regulations controlling the expenditure in connection with Government House. He failed to see that the provisions in these regulations were borne out in the Estimates. Under the Estimates a clerk was to be paid £250, but that amount was different to what was stated in the Regulations and the gardeners were also to be brought under other control. It would be far better for the Estimates to carry out the Regulations.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir. J. Forrest) desired to point out that the Regulations referred to were not yet in force, nor would they be so long as the present Governor held office. The Estimates were prepared before there was any resignation—in fact, Sir William Robinson was at present the Governor, and until he resigned or vacated the position, the Regulations could not be brought into force. The expenditure was really the same as it would be under the Regulations, only it appeared under different headings to what it would when another Governor was appointed. The alteration would be made as soon as there was a change in the Governor. So far as the clerk referred to was concerned, he really did Government work, and not what might be called the per-

sonal work of a Governor.

MR. R. F. SHOLL would much prefer that the Regulations were adhered to instead of the old order of things being retained.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) emphasised the fact that the Regulations would be followed out in the Estimates whenever a change in the Governorship took place. It could not be done with the present Governor.

MR. R. F. SHOLL enquired who the present Governor was. Did the colony have a Governor at all? Was he getting paid?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He is receiving half salary.

MR. R. F. SHOLL felt it necessary to urge an extraordinary fact—or at least; it appeared to him extraordinary, in the extreme—that a Governor of the colony should be permitted to be a director of a gold-mining company, and also of a bank. He knew the Governor was receiving money from several companies, and it appeared that he was getting half-pay as Governor, as well. When Lord Hopetoun, the Governor of Victoria, went away on six months' leave of absence, and was appointed to another position before it expired, he immediately informed the Government of that colony that he would not accept anything further. To my mind the Ministry should at once telegraph its protest against the Governor acting on the boards of companies while Governor of this colony.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the leave of absence was granted by the Imperial Government—not by this Government. He pointed out that there was nothing in the Estimates contrary to the Regulations, and these Regulations would be enforced as soon as a new Governor was appointed. Sir William Robinson's leave of absence had been extended to August 16th, but the Ministry had not been informed whether he had resigned, or whether a further extension of leave had been granted. They fully expected to hear something about the matter without delay, and he could see no reason to object to the Estimate in its present form, when the House was assured that the Regulations would be adhered to in future.

MR. R. F. SHOLL believed that even now the vote should be strictly in accord with the Regulations. The keeping up of the Grounds and Gardens, and other items, were to be taken out of the control of the Governor, and

that should be done right away. There had been an occasion where a Governor had appropriated the vote for gardeners in order to pay his domestics, and the Regulations would prevent that sort of thing.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) hardly understood it to be possible for the vote to be appropriated in this way, even under the present system. It could only have been done when the vote was, as a whole, for Government House, without details. However, he assured the House that the vote would be in accordance with the Regulations as soon as a fresh Governor was appointed.

Vote put and passed.

Executive Council, £255:

Put and passed.

Legislative Council, £2,145:

MR. R. F. SHOLL noticed that among the increases was one of £50 to the *Hansard* reporter. Was he over-worked in that Chamber?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He has certainly been poorly paid.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### PROTECTION AND RECOVERY OF CROWN PROPERTY BILL.

Introduced by SIR J. FORREST (in the absence of MR. BURT) and read a first time.

#### SALE OF GOODS BILL.

Introduced by MR. JAMES and read a first time.

#### FREE PASSES ON THE RAILWAYS.

MR. JAMES, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid on the table of the House showing:—

1. All persons to whom railway free passes have been given between 1st July, 1894, and 1st July, 1895.

2. The reasons, in each case, why the free pass was given.

3. The duration of the free pass.

This return not to include free passes to railway officials in connection with departmental work.

Agreed to.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.30 o'clock p.m.